

Safe, not safe, never safe

By [Martha Spong](#)

June 12, 2016

My wife and I are in Maine for a memorial service celebrating the life of the grandfather of my children, my beloved father-in-law from the first go-around. The collection of his children and grandchildren, and his wife's clan of three generations, includes a handful of other LGBTQ people. It's been a wonderful experience, living into the way we've all worked so hard to make our two household-family work for 20 years now. We've visited favorite outdoor spaces and eaten favorite local foods. We've cried and laughed and worshipped God and said goodbye to Papa.

And in the midst of all this, my wife and I have had the odd experience of feeling both safe with the family and safe in the Portland area, safe enough to touch each other in public, even to exchange a restrained kiss or two.

[After yesterday morning it sounds crazy to claim safety anywhere](#). On MSNBC, they were reporting yesterday that the alleged shooter's father told a story about his son taking offense when he recently saw two men kissing in Miami.

I'll confess, the first moment in which we relaxed our guard this weekend, I thought, "I wonder who is looking?" We watch ourselves at home in Pennsylvania, where we always watch how we interact with each other, where we both work in churches where some people disapprove of our "lifestyle," where we know we are not safe, not really.

Here, though, I felt safe. Sort of.

What I failed to wonder about is the impact of our actions on other people. When you feel moved to kiss the person you love, to act out your affection in a quick motion, do you think about who you may be setting off?

Maybe we are never safe.

But don't we want that to be different?

*Originally posted at [Spong's blog](#)*