

**Sandy Reay, Author**

## **July 2023 Newsletter**

**The word for this month is choice.**

**No matter what happens, I get to choose how I respond.**



### **Depth Perception**

I watched a video of Neil deGrasse Tyson talking about time being the fourth dimension. Unlike the three dimensions of space (width, height, depth), we can't move around in time. But if we could, we could travel in time.

I was born blind in my left eye. I have some peripheral vision, but I have no innate depth perception. In Junior High School, I had to make something for the Science Fair. I discovered optical illusions when I was in eighth grade. I faithfully reproduced them and explained why we see size differences of the same object with different backgrounds. Some backgrounds can fool us into believing a straight line is curved and make concentric circles look like spirals. Some can make us see the same object as different colors or size.

The following year, my view of optical illusions focused on techniques artists use to make a two-dimensional surface (width and height) look three-dimensional. I didn't get great grades on my projects; no judges or teachers thought I did anything special. I didn't know why I was fascinated by these illusions, but when I learned to drive, I had knowledge that helped me cope with my lack of depth perception.

Fast forward seven years. I married an engineering student who had a passion for racing cars. We bought a Triumph TR-3, and he raced it. We bought a real race car, and he raced it. I learned first aid, how to cut a driver out of a burning car, and worked corners. I staged race cars for entry on to the track and checked cars for problems that might cause accidents. But, I wanted to race, too.

My husband taught me what he knew. We started with gymkhanas—racing one street-legal car at a time. He walked me around the track designated by orange pylons (traffic cones) in mostly-empty parking lots and abandoned landing strips. After each run in our TR-3, he suggested ways I could improve my time: cut the corner closer in turn two, start accelerating sooner coming out of the slalom, and go about fifteen feet deeper at the end of the straight before braking for the turn.

Whoa! I couldn't see well enough to visualize fifteen feet. My brake point was a white rock on the right side of the track. "How much time is that?"

My husband was an engineer. I could almost hear the gears turning in his head, or the slide rule sliding. "About three-quarters of a second."

My next run, I lined up with the white rock, counted "three quarters," turned the wheel, and thought, "I'm going to die."

But I didn't die. I learned I could go a fractions of seconds farther than that.

I don't see depth; I experience it. I thought I was the only one until I read Jimmy Buffett's autobiography. When someone asked him how far it was to fly from Key West to Miami, he told them he measured the time by the number of songs he could listen to on the flight.

My world is defined by width, height, and time. Time is my third dimension because I lack the ability to perceive depth except by moving in it.

That makes me wonder about your world, the world in which time is your fourth dimension. If you had the ability to move around in time, the way you do in space, would you have a fifth dimension? What would that be? How many dimensions would be possible after that?

## **The Sinister Umbrella**

I'm writing **The Sinister Umbrella**, a novel about a young woman whose life is destroyed in a car accident and her struggle to build a new life. It's a young-adult horror story, with a touch of humor and a twist (or three). There's more info on my website. Just click on the link above.

I apologize. My current streak of "bad luck" plus another concert and songwriting workshop has given me more than I can handle. I'd hoped to get back to this book and my memoir by this week. Instead, I'm disassembling a 26-year-old dishwasher to recycle the metal, waiting for the replacement for the 24-year-old refrigerator to be delivered, and trying to keep a freezer of food edible. If you want more details, click on link, above.

And that brings me to choice. I got to choose the replacements in my kitchen: the dishwasher was a floor sample, installed by my handyman. We agreed that the refrigerator was too big for the two of us, so I ordered a new one to be delivered and installed, and the old one taken away. I hope that someone might want to install a new motor and salvage the old fridge.

And, I made another choice: to be happy that I had 24 years of no problems with both appliances, rather than rant and rave about my bad luck.

## **My monthly (I hope) email.**

I'm on track, I think. This month. As long as I don't do yard work. Or spend too much time dismantling the old dishwasher. Or get food poisoning from eating what's in the slowly-warming freezer.

**If you wish to unsubscribe, please reply and put “unsubscribe” in the subject or text.** I won't send another. Unless you reply after the next monthly email, which might be done by August 15, if I choose wisely. **If you want to read past newsletters, check out Archives.**

### **Necessary blah blah**

I add content to my website when the inspiration strikes and mention what's new on the home page. Check out [my author website](#) more than once a month (well, I haven't done that, again, this month). And for those of you who are worried about the “Not Secure” message at the top: that means I didn't pay for a certificate because I don't do online commerce. All my websites display information. I don't collect or save your information **unless you choose to email me.** (I've been building web sites since 1998; I keep 'em simple and watch out for suspicious files on my server.)

[Sandy Reay, Author](#) – ideas to encourage creativity, where to find inspiration, short stories, micro & flash fiction, true stories, and a memoir (in progress for a decade—don't hold your breath)

[Colorado Sandstorm Music](#) – songs and poems written and co-written by Sandy Reay and Friends, and an online Cowboy Poetry Book: [Another Horse to Saddle](#)

[Colorado Sandstorm Productions](#) – info about all the other websites plus concerts and songwriting workshops by national touring songwriters

[AcousticByLines](#) – when and where you can hear musicians, co-writers, and find Sandy (sometimes)

[YouTube Sandy Reay and Friends' songs and poems](#)

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