



BOOK CITY ★Roanoke

Notes for

Dar Williams'

*What I Found in a Thousand Towns*

**POSITIVE PROXIMITY:** Living in close quarters doesn't have to result in conflict and loss of privacy. A community can use proximity to its advantage to integrate the talents and skills of residents. We have it 'positive proximity' in Roanoke and can strengthen it.

"First: there are **SPACES**, indoors and out, that naturally maximize the number of good interactions in a town. Generally these spaces have some individual character while still being open enough to accommodate the desires and interests of good citizens."

### CHAPTER TWO! Natural Space and our Outdoor Identity

- ★ "Outdoor spaces can galvanize a sense of positive proximity." (35) "Natural beauty can be a transcendent community tie." (49)
- ★ Moab, UT: Can a community "handle its international popularity while still remaining an enviably cool, little community with its own distinct character, that benefits from its variety of natural assets? (36) ... An axis of stability? (40)
- ★ How does an outdoor life, life beyond the doorway of people's houses contribute to contribute to strong civic identity? (37) "They knew their town inside and out (mostly out) and took responsibility for it. That's positive proximity." (39)
- ★ "My index of success is not based on how well people get along. I see how people get the job done." (37)
- ★ Visitor viable and resident relevant—V:R. There should be spaces that don't overlap. (41)
- ★ Back of Beyond Books - the role of the bookstore as a link between nature as a common experience and nature in the larger context of history and poetic reflection (41).
- ★ Moabites as experts, stewards. (44) "We're only going to do things for the people who live here." (47)
- ★ Outdoors as reinvention (45) "Moab has created an economic structure, outside of the hospitality service sector, that benefits from nature. And its citizens participate in it. (46) "Most beautiful dump"(51)
- ★ "A natural space just outside of town creates a vantage point, a place to have a contemplative conversation, and an experience that combines our observation of nature and human-made habitation." (59)

"Second, there are **PROJECTS** that build a town's **IDENTITY**—socially, culturally, and /or historically—helping them become...themselves. These projects bring out the advantages of proximity by attracting the passions and skill sets of people who are like-minded in some ways but very different in others, cross-pollinating abilities and personalities. Citizens tend to see past their partisanship and biases when they're trying to accomplish something they can't do alone..."

"Third...**TRANSLATION** is all of the acts of communication that open up a town to itself and the world...the ability of a place to incorporate every willing citizen's contributions, and in so doing, find ways to make life more interesting, welcome the outside world, and provide stability for those who need support."

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NEXT Session: Chapter 4, **HISTORY**

Center in the Square Community Room – 20 Church Ave.  
Monday, October 30 – 6:30 gather, 7 PM conversation

