

How does one have an intimate moment in public? There are people everywhere. Someone is always watching from a corner. You couldn't possibly monitor every single one of the 360 degrees surrounding you. There is no such thing as intimacy in public.

But what if there could be?

What if we didn't care about the people watching us? What if we stole kisses from our loved ones, even in the limelight? What if, despite the awareness of others around us, we still laughed and shared as if there was nothing holding us back? Some people do live that way.

I stare out my window down to the bay. Hotel rooms are lonely in the most subtle ways. Like the buzzing of the air conditioning: it's only noticeable when it goes away or when it's pointed out. I happen to catch a group of people having an intimate moment. Not through a building window or anything, but out there on the dock. In public. In the open. With no awareness that someone else is sharing this moment with them from the outside. It's a group of three people, probably friends enjoying a casual Saturday by the water. One of them props up their phone on a tall potted plant while the other two wait. I watch as the first person taps some things on their phone and then darts off to the other two people. I realize it was a timer. They are taking a photo. But I'm distracted by the three of them hesitantly raising their arms up and down, as if coordinating something. I can't figure out what they are doing, until I see them jump. I smile as the three of them land and fall into fits of laughter. One claps, another throws their head back, and the other runs back to the phone. They look happy.

Most people live their life this way, unaware of and undisturbed by the world watching them. Enjoying every moment they have with their loved ones as presently as they can. Some people aren't weighed down by a pestering voice between their ears and behind their eyes telling them to be on the lookout. Telling them to watch for the people judging them for their every movement. Their every facial expression or quick exhale. Some people just live.

In theory, we can all live that way.