



DAN TYNAN

AWARD-WINNING WRITER, EDITOR, & CONTENT STRATEGIZER

Dan Tynan has published literally thousands of stories about the intersection of technology and humanity. His work has appeared in more than 100 publications, including Adweek, Consumer Reports, Fast Company, the Guardian, Men's Health, Parade, Playboy, Popular Science, Wired, and many more.

In previous lives, Tynan was Editor in Chief of Yahoo Tech, a columnist for US Airways magazine, and a regular contributor to Family Circle. He's appeared on Good Morning America, the CBS Morning Show, and NPR's All Things Considered, and been quoted in the New York Times, Newsweek, and the Wall Street Journal.

Tynan is a two-time finalist for a National Magazine Award and has a closet full of other trophies and medals from various other press associations that like to hand out awards.

Finding the Divine in Ordinary Things

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When I was asked to compose an elevator pitch for the existence of God, my initial thought was, is this elevator going up or down? Am I vaulting toward the heavens or plummeting into the abyss? I'll leave that question for you to decide.

I was raised Catholic by an Irish-American mother who lived in abject terror of, well, practically everything, but most especially God's wrath. She had enough pull with the priests in our parish to get me confirmed three years ahead of schedule. So by the time I was eleven, my passport to the hereafter had already been stamped.

But the God who inspired quaking fear in my mother made no sense to me. And that's without even getting into the whole story about Him sending His Son to earth just to be brutally tortured to death—an act for which I was somehow personally responsible, according to the pastors at my church. Even today, I'm still visited by random spasms of guilt, as if I've murdered someone but can't remember who.

From an early age, I realized that organized religion and I were not a good match. At the same time, I felt there was more to existence than just... existing. The atheists I'd met over the years were a little too smug—like they knew something the rest of us didn't. In my mind, life held far too much mystery for that degree of certainty.

One day, flying back from my first trip to Europe, I sat next to a Hasidic rabbi and we got to talking. He informed me that his specialty was persuading people, at the very end of their lives, to let go. Apparently, this made him unpopular with many families within his congregation, who wanted to hang on to their loved ones for as long as possible.

Suddenly he announced, "Pop quiz! Do you have a soul?"

I thought about his question for a minute, and then declared with more certainty than I actually felt, "Yes. Yes, I do."

"WRONG!" he thundered. "You are a soul. What you have is a body."

That's about as close as I've come to any kind of belief system. In the years that followed, I've had experiences that don't fit neatly into a scientific model of the universe—glimpses into worlds I cannot easily dismiss. There's too much beauty in creation, too much elegance in the design of things, to simply be the unintentional byproduct of a very large explosion, 13.8 billion years ago. Life is too persistent to be a happy accident.

Want to find God? Don't go looking in a church, mosque, or temple. Gaze into a sunset. Count the waves lapping gently against the shore. Stand before a giant redwood and feel the immense weight of its silence. Surrender yourself to whatever comes next, after our bodies have forsaken us.

I have no idea what that will ultimately look like. But I'm dying to one day find out.