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Rushing to return to what, exactly?

by MARK PAVILONS

As COVID-19 restrictions are lifted world-wide, there's a mad dash to get out and return to ?normal.?

But there's the rub, as the Bard once said. There is no ?normal,? at least not at this point.

We should, as many suggest, consider which parts of normal we're rushing back to.

?Normal? ? drunken beach parties, flocking to the shopping mall for those must-haves, and even mob gatherings ? are not what the doctor ordered.

Hey, I get it. Everyone's been itching to get out, socialize and break the bonds of seclusion and isolation. We want to get out and enjoy the summer

But let's face it, the summer of 2020 will be anything but normal, traditional or routine.

Sure, many will be able to get back to their cottages and lake-side villas. Public beaches may open fully, but with certain safeguards. At this point, air travel and of course, cruises, are off the table.

We may be able to fly again within Canada as provinces open their borders. But whether we begin allowing international visitors, or an influx of Americans, is another matter.

The Province has extended the state of emergency until at least July 15. Yes, every province has its own set of rules and Quebec seems to be opening a bit quicker, which is odd given its high COVID-19 numbers. Brazil, and other hard-hit nations, are also quick to reopen, mostly to kick-start their economies.

We've already seen examples in Florida, Texas and California where a rush to the fun and games has led to a rash of new COVID-19 cases. In some areas, restrictions were quickly reinstated to prevent another big spike.

Perhaps the worst is over, but the sage advice of ?slow and steady??never steered anyone wrong. It's something for all of us to keep in mind.

Sure, ours kids had a list of things they were hoping to do this summer. My oldest may still travel to BC?with her boyfriend and his family, but that's still many weeks away. My son and his friends desperately wanted to rent a cottage, and perhaps that will happen, too.

My wife and I are celebrating our 25th anniversary this August, but things are still up in the air. It's unlikely we'll be travelling to the Caribbean but I?keep telling her I?had this amazing trip planned, LOL. Truth is, I can't really plan anything.

I've tried to subtly ask her about diamonds, restaurants and strolls in the park. Her wish list consists of repairs to her mini van so she can once again enjoy air conditioning and have a remote that works!

Funny how priorities change over the years.

I'm one to talk. I don't like to be showered with gifts for many reasons, not the least of which is that my tastes are a bit, shall I say, specific and eccentric. My ?collections??consist of Roman coins, medieval crosses and ancient swords, things you just can't get at Walmart! Being a Virgo, I'm also quite particular, so let's just say I?prefer gift cards and e-transfers (yes cash is a thing of the past).

As I just pointed out, another thing left in the dust by COVID-19 is the all mighty dollar. I haven't had so much as a toonie in my possession for months! The other day my youngest asked for $20 but I simply didn't have it. I?don't carry the stuff anymore. Every purchase is done via debit or credit.

I'm hoping to take my wife to her favourite patio restaurant very soon.

We've had months to consider our inner and outer selves and I?fear much of this time has been wasted. How many of you made any progress on those massive to-do lists? We have a couple of projects that are still ?in the planning stages.?

Our kids have been on edge and it's been a bit of an emotional roller coaster ride at home. I've been at the helm of the BBQ more lately and spend a few more minutes each day in the back yard, just admiring nature. I try to remain upbeat and put things in perspective.

I count my blessings each and every day that everyone in my family has a source of income. I?consider us lucky that I?can be at the helm of our BBQ and I can provide for my charges.?Lately, I've stopped wanting ?more.?

We've had ample opportunity to nourish our minds and souls and hopefully we've at least considered it.

I hope we can continue to work on strengthening family bonds. I would like us all to forgive past regrets and start anew.?I?think we've all learned through this that we have to be flexible and open to change. After all, change is the only constant in the universe!

I think we've also learned that we have to be realistic in our expectations. I?tend to get stressed over little things and get really bogged down when things don't go as planned. I am trying to celebrate every little success and every bit of progress.

Humans have a great capacity for adapting to change and for learning from our past mistakes. We all can get better each and ever day and take those baby steps to full recovery.

I?think we should take the next week or two and gently ease back into some sort of modified routine.

There will be plenty of time to celebrate in the weeks to come. There's nothing wrong with intimate backyard gatherings with close family and friends, maybe rekindling some of that love.

As we enjoy that backyard BBQ, we should also reflect on those who've lost more than they've gained. We should count our blessings, be more compassionate and carry on.