

?Do or do not? is a wise sentiment

by Mark Pavilons

?Do. Or do not. There is no try.?

Without sounding too much like a sci-fi geek, who doesn't love one of the most famous movie quotes of all time?

Master Jedi Yoda urges the iconic hero Luke to focus and concentrate. He's really telling Luke to unlearn what he has been taught, and try a new approach.

This bit of advice, albeit from a small, green puppet, is something we can all use.

Faced by any modern-day dilemma, there are really only two choices: face it or fear it. It's the proverbial fight or flight response.

There's little sense worrying oneself into a frenzy. Look at the problem and decide among the options, or possible solutions. There are usually only two ? fix it and move on, or don't fix it and leave it alone.

Sure, maybe neither are palatable, enjoyable or even affordable. But those are, as they say, the cards we were dealt.

Something as simple as a leaky car tire is an example, since it happened to one of our family vehicles.

Look at the tire. It's low. Fill it with air. It's better. A few days later, it's low again. There's a leak, albeit a slow one. The solution??Keep filling it with air or take it in and get it fixed.

Did I want to spend a \$400 before Christmas on new tires??No. Did I?have a choice? No, not in the long run anyway.

Sure, there may be shortcuts, cheats or quick fixes, but we all know what the real solution is.

Lately, I've been approaching things as Yoda would have recommended.

Whether it's hiring a plumber to fix the pipes under the kitchen sink, or renovating a bathroom. Do or do not. There's no in between unless of course you do something half-way, but this seldom works out for the best.

We humans were instructed, from a young age, that if we do something, we should do it right.

We know this, but given the fact duct tape is one of the best selling items of all time, some of our ?fixes??may be temporary.

Our parents tended to be handy, not because they were all skilled tradespeople, but because they had to be. Economics and practicality dictated that they had to find solutions themselves to common, everyday household problems.

My dad was notorious for those odd-looking repairs that combined a branch from a tree in the back 40, with some rusted metal bracket he got at a farm auction. His workshop looked like a work in progress. Things hung from the wall that didn't even have a name.

While unique, many of his personal creations did the job.

When it came to simple car repairs, I?helped him work on our 1983 Olds. You could actually get your body part-way into the engine bay to affect repairs. We changed an alternator and pulled out a radiator. We did oil changes and rotated our tires.

Today, a couple of these are still do-able in our driveways, but I doubt many of us (yours truly included) are so inclined. It's not that I'm wasteful. Au contraire, I'm quite frugal when it comes to spending money.

But I know my limits and I know when it's time to call in a professional.

That's not to say this old dog can't learn a few new tricks, but doing cartwheels with a wrench in my mouth isn't one of them.

Thanks to the greatest invention of all time -- the internet -- I can simply search for instructions on changing car wiper blades, or cooking the best sirloin pot roast. I can look up possible sources of my aches and pains, but online medicine is always to be taken with a grain of salt. I can read about setting the Christmas light timer, since the original instructions were lost years ago. I can try to find the original replacement cutlery/utensil basket for our dishwasher.

I can do it. Or choose not to do it.

In my opinion, there is some wiggle room in Yoda's original statement.

I think trying is still part of the equation and even if we don't fully succeed, giving it our best shot has got to have merit. At least that's what a lot of husbands tell our wives.

I spent hours trying to get that widget in place, honey, but no luck. It must be broken. If something terrible happened, like we lost our internet connection, would some of us be completely lost?

Quite likely.

Could I build a lean-to or small shelter out of logs if I were stranded in the bush? I doubt it. My dad did. He actually built quite a nice gazebo on our rural Caledon property, without drawings and without a real plan.

Okay, it may not have been perfectly level but it stood for more than two decades.

I also recall helping him form, pour concrete and lay patio slabs, all of his own creation. He would never have considered spending hundreds of dollars on patio stones.

I will admit that I've lost that good, old-fashioned ingenuity that served our ancestors so well. I could never make a radio out of coconuts like the Professor did on Gilligan's Island! And my offspring are even further removed from rolling up their sleeves and giving it the old college try. They are, however, resourceful. They are quick to turn to dear old dad, or mom, and ask us to handle the problem!

I fear that too much hand-holding will make our species weak in generations to come.

Of course, technology will continue to improve and come to our rescue.

Electric cars will mean fewer repairs. A cabin-in-a-box may already be a reality. Our smart devices and smart homes will get even more intelligent.

But the push of a button or verbal command kind of takes the "do" out of it, don't you think?

Maybe we will become more of a "let someone else do" or "do not" society.