

A little bit of hope is a powerful thing

by MARK PAVILONS

A well-known prayer asks the Good Lord to give us the strength to accept things we cannot change.

Let's not forget about hope.

It's been said that we should try to take more out of life than it takes out of us.

John F. Kennedy once said: "We should not let our fears hold us back from pursuing our hopes." And Dale Carnegie espoused: "Most of the important things in the world have been accomplished by people who kept on trying when there seemed to be no hope at all."

Human beings are perhaps unique in the entire universe. And we are a brilliant lot, capable of much good. We are also prone to physical and emotional setbacks, which can affect our ability to change the world. We suffer, inwardly and outwardly, from time to time. As tough as we think we are, we hurt, more often than we should.

While we have many amazing qualities and abilities, immortality and super strength are not among them. In the absence of perfection, we have to call upon rather unscientific methods to deal with modern life.

We really rely on our instinct; follow our hearts; muster up our faith, and always have hope. For many, hope is all they have.

When I look in the mirror at my recently minted bald head, I sometimes feel cheated.

But then I think of men, women and children in developing countries, huddled under leaky roofs. I think of children begging on the streets for food.

But for many, faith and hope is what keeps them going, gives them strength to carry on from one day to the next.

Hope can be as powerful as green tea, vitamins or antibiotics.

Hope comes from many sources. It can come from within, typically summoned during times of need or emotional turmoil. If we look for it, we usually find it, but we may have to dust it off and plump it up a bit.

Hope comes from our loved ones.

When I hear my adult children laughing, it makes me smile like nothing else. It's contagious.

When I hear them talk about the future, I beam with anticipation and hope.

In my own little way, I have tried to make the world a better place. Hopefully, my efforts will pale in comparison to the achievements of my offspring. Poised for greatness, all of them.

The world's current movers and shakers are still stuck in the mud when it comes to creating real solutions to climate change, world hunger, food supply issues and yes, peace and conflict. The past year has been heart-wrenching in terms of loss, death and hatred.

It has come to the point where the nightly TV news is dominated by mounting human losses in Gaza, Palestine and Ukraine. Our fellow brothers and sisters have lost so much, I don't know how they will recover.

And many of us in the west sit idly by watching it all unfold. The most we can muster is a few shoulder shrugs.

Our American neighbours are still dealing with the widespread destruction and loss caused by Hurricane Helene, that cut a swath some 500 miles long, from Florida to the Appalachians. When I watch videos of entire towns, roads, bridges and homes crumbling and floating away, it breaks my heart.

For them, I don't know if hope is enough.

Our species is the height of our technological prowess and yet we spend most of our efforts on making electric vehicles, cell phones and reality TV shows.

Hope, faith and prayers won't solve our problems, but those very human qualities go a long way to altering the very fabric of our lives.

Armed with such intangibles, we peculiar humans often rise to the challenges before us. We emotional creatures have proven to be loving to a fault. And we average working stiffs have shown great courage and compassion to our friends and neighbours in need.

While we don't readily recognize hope or point it out to others, it's always there, just under the skin. It's the fuel in our tanks, the immeasurable substance that boosts our immune systems and gives us that extra spring in our step.

The beauty of hope is it's easily shared with others. We can actually give it to someone else, through our thoughts, prayers and of course, actions. Once more of us begin to realize the power of this commodity, it will burn like a fuse and spread uncontrollably.

Imagine, throngs of citizens gathering in town squares, or taking a moment to stop at work, pausing, reflecting on reassuring optimism.

The Internet is filled with memes, photos and sentiments reflecting joy, peace, compassion and yes, hope. It's those things we need to pass along, not hateful or mean posts about others. We need to reach out to others with a helping hand and heart filled with hope. During my journey with cancer, I have received many well wishes, thoughts and prayers. I know they are genuine and well intentioned.

These expressions do help and make me think I don't have to be swallowed up by it all, alone in my corner. I have people who think about me.

I don't know what will become of me, or how long I have on this world. I do know I don't have time for conflict, anger or trivialities.

I do have time for hope.

Hope, it's in us to give!