

A time of Thanksgiving

by SHERALYN ROMAN

I've been pretty darn pessimistic lately, and I'm sure you've all picked up on it. Perhaps with thanksgiving fast approaching, it's time for a change of tune ? however temporary that might be! I've a great deal for which to be thankful and in these still very turbulent times, this season should be a reminder to us all, to focus on what's good in our lives rather than on what's bad. If you're in a position to do so, with a roof still over your head and not suffering from COVID, either the disease or it's many side effects like unemployment, financial instability or food insecurity, then you are farther ahead than about three quarters of the world's population. Count your blessings.

Summer: Luckily, it was glorious, hot and sunny. I hope you made the most of it and of the opportunity to be outdoors. Hopefully you also spent some time with family and friends because I think we're staring down, in the words of a Beatles song: ?a long, cold, lonely winter.?

Healthy: If you don't have COVID-19 you are better off than over one million people worldwide who have died from it. Be grateful for that. If you don't have any other chronic, long term or debilitating illness, also be grateful. Sure we all have aches and pains now and again (I'm currently on crutches, I get the frustration) but never has the expression ?It could be worse? been truer than now.

Food: If you're currently planning a thanksgiving dinner, even if you can't have all your friends over, you're better off than a great many others. So perhaps, part of your planning could include a food donation to The Exchange so others who may be a little less fortunate can plan a thanksgiving dinner too.

Working: Sure we all complain about work once in awhile, we are human after all and working from home has its challenges (especially with kids in the picture!) However, if you're working, that's a bonus. If you're working from home and not relying on public transit or a minimum wage job where you might be exposed to COVID at any given time ? be grateful. PERIOD.

Gifted or robbed of time in 2020? Whether you feel we have collectively been ?robbed? of what will likely prove to be a full year, or ?gifted? with this time to rest, recuperate and re-evaluate our lives, is all in your point of view. Finances aside, you can choose to focus on the fact that kids missed out on graduations, birthdays, even first-year university experiences, that you haven't had your hair done or felt comfortable dining out even now that you can. Or, you can choose to focus instead on the fact that those university aged kids are hanging around for an extra year ? time you may never get with them again. This is bonus time. Spend it wisely and that doesn't mean you have to spend money either. Other than the enormous cost of feeding them that is! Even your little ones who missed out on a summer of soccer or who can't take part in organized lessons or activities ? think of this as a prime opportunity to allow them the freedom to explore, to fuel their imagination in new and innovative ways, to go for long drives and discover new places together as a family. This thanksgiving, go to one of our many local Caledon farms and pick out a pumpkin together, go apple picking and give children the gift of picking an apple straight from the tree rather than from the grocery store shelf.

I invite you to think about all those ?times? you wished for more time. All the ?if only's? we've uttered in previous years ? sadly, often said after we have lost a loved one. ?If only I had more time with them,? or ?If only we had taken that trip / not cancelled those dinner plans / spent the holidays with them.? Think of 2020 as your chance to do all of the above. At least with the people in your bubble and let's face it ? the people that SHOULD be in your bubble, are probably the very people you should be spending more time with. Stop thinking of 2020 as a missed opportunity and start thinking of it as a golden opportunity ? to be present with family and to be thankful. With their permission, I'd like to end with these comments from the family of Caledon's own #3, Reese Meyer, a beautiful and courageous spirit who united us as a community but sadly left us, peacefully, on October 3rd. Reese's grandmother, his ?Hollygram,? posted the following message on Facebook, repeated here in part: ?Love passionately and hold your family close?.value life, be compassionate, live joyfully and maintain a positive outlook.?

Happy Thanksgiving.