

Contemplating the 'little things' in 2023

by Mark Pavilons

For some of us, the holidays and bit of a break were a time of reflection.

I think it's valuable to take time, every so often, to pause, think, look back, look ahead, look inside.

We should continually ask, discuss, debate and chat. We spend so much time in our own heads, it's important to 'get out' once in a while, interact, and learn from others.

And then, sometimes it's better to just remain silent and smile.

I do that, often.

But I believe pensive is how we should live our lives 'constantly thinking, wondering, pondering, questioning.

There's so much we don't know, despite our education and years of experience on this planet.

I love reading about geography, history and outer space, but the more I read, I realize just how little I know. I'm sure I'm not alone. Scientists and astrophysicists are likely overjoyed as images pour in from the James Webb space telescope.

It has reaffirmed some things, but presented many more mysteries, some of which shatter all held beliefs.

That's the beauty of science ? it is until it's not.

My son and I often discuss ancient civilizations and wonder what happened to many advanced groups of our species. Some created great cities and cultures, only to vanish. Others built fascinating monuments, observatories and obelisks. There are long lost civilizations that defy explanation.

Archaeologists are constantly finding new creatures, new dinosaurs and even new 'humans.'

I hope the best of the best continue to investigate, discover, uncover and reveal. It's only through such tenacious, albeit laborious work, that we uncover all of the mysteries of our past.

In the process, we may just stumble upon some things that will help our species evolve into the future.

These are big-picture things.

But what about the 'little picture'?

We undoubtedly got a chance to witness these first-hand during the holidays. Family gatherings, dinners, outings. People giving, sharing, loving.

Regardless of humankind's greatness, it's the humility, the very basic things, that really matter.

Robin Williams once said that what matters most are others and that there are a lot of amazing people out there to be grateful for.

'It goes way beyond yourself. And a loving God. Other than that, 'good luck.' That's what life is about.'

Good luck, indeed.

And good vibes. Positive feelings.

If we learned anything over the break, perhaps it was to use those tears we shed in 2022 to water new 'plants' in 2023. I did a little crying myself last year, so I'm really hoping this year will be much better.

Maybe we need to cast aside negativity and ill will, in favour of some peace and compassion.

Sure, we say these things and toss them around like candy. But do they stick, or sink in?

Is our resolution to spread positive energy like our promise for a new fitness regime, only to be abandoned a few weeks in?

As 'deep healing frequencies' play in the background on my computer at work, my mind wanders, trying to focus.

It lands on something, then the phone rings, emails rush in and texts appear on my phone.

Mostly 'little picture' things. Some annoyances, and some legitimate concerns. And all the while, those pesky thoughts of trepidation and health matters floating around my brain.

All the whipped shortbread cookies in the world won't solve these problems. But they do help! Thanks, Kim!

I think 2023 will be a year of growth, both personally and as a whole. Predictions are the economy is bouncing back in many sectors and life will surpass the pre-COVID levels.

That's good. It's a shadow, a sticky second skin that we all need to shed.

But the wounds, well, they linger.

We've run into some mental health issues during the pandemic, and we're trying everything to help those around us. Some are old wounds, some are new ones.

I urge everyone to extend a hand of kindness. If you know of someone who may be going through more than they can handle, please reach out.

When you see something beautiful in someone, tell them!

I'm not a genius, philosopher or soothsayer. I'm just a scribe, a storyteller of sorts.

I try to share what I've learned over the decades, in the hopes it may shed some light on things.

With light, there is always hope.

And that's what I try to keep in mind. Let the world rush madly about outside our windows.

Accept the hectic pace, but react to it with a sense of calm.

Help others. Help yourself.

My friends, let's all vow to make 2023 a year unlike any other. Let's work to build more bridges, do better work and be slightly better versions of ourselves. If our lights shine brighter, we can help others see in the dark!

And remember, we're not alone.

Cloistered in my office, there are days when I have limited human interaction. I look forward to virtual Council meetings, messages from contacts and photos submitted by residents of fun-filled events.

If you really think about it, there are many things in the course of a day that can make you smile. Cherish those, and toss the rest!

I have to eat better, exercise and drink more water. I have no choice.

Yes, there may be some challenges ahead for me this year, but if I keep thinking about those "little things," my journey will be more tolerable.

If you need a bit of my flame, take it - I'm happy to share! Maybe you will return the favour one day.

All the best in 2023!