

Do we really know what time it is in our lives?

by Mark Pavilons

The Chinese remind us to enjoy ourselves, because 'it's later than we think.'

Yes, the future does have a nasty habit of arriving all too quickly, hiding just out of sight and then running right into our path.

We don't pay much attention because we have so much to concentrate on during our action-packed and stressed-out days.

Our lives have transformed us, nudged us into self-centred indifference. But time doesn't care.

Chicago's 1969 hit came to mind as I was driving home one day. The lyrics were clear:

'(I don't) does anybody really know what time it is?

'(Care about time) does anybody really care?

'If so, I can't imagine why

'(Oh no, no) we've all got time enough to cry.' The singer mentions being 'pushed and shoved by people trying to beat the clock ...'

Some say life is short, but if you think about it, we average North Americans can enjoy some decent lifespans. Most recent estimates put males at 76-80 and females at 81-84.

That's 8,760 hours per year, or a little over 100,000 hours during your life. Okay, many of us may not make it to 80, but still, that gives up plenty of minutes, days and months to enjoy, learn, explore, create, cherish, achieve and experience.

And yet, if you ask someone on the street, would they know exactly what time it is?

By that I mean, do they realize at what stage they're at; what they have accomplished and what they still have on their to-do list? How full are their plates? When was the last time we sat back, relaxed and took stock?

We know the future is waiting around the next corner, so perhaps we all need to be better prepared. We don't know if the next intersection we cross while buried in our smart phones will be the last.

Most of us aren't preppers, or doomsday planners. We live for the moment, even if we fritter away a few here and there every hour.

Are we merely rushing around, willy-nilly, in hopes of beating the clock before time is up?

Those of us who've been genetically unlucky enough to get a dose or two of a life-threatening disease know a bit about time. Just a bit.

I have some first-hand knowledge and let me tell you, it's a tough thing to shake. It's a hell of a burden to carry, even though my shoulders are strong.

Alas, this is my fork in the road. I will follow it until the end.

In between the tests and scans, waiting for 'next steps,' there's a bit of a calm. I feel safe, like that warm cuddly feeling curled up on

the sofa with my favourite blanket or fluffy pillow. At home, at rest, surrounded by familiarity, I'm okay.

And then reality sets in. This is a struggle, not a fight because the opponents are not equal. It's more like a David & Goliath scenario and while the little guy was triumphant in tale, more often than not the evil giant wins.

When the campaign is long and drawn out over the span of years, you get tired mustering the troops. You become weary with the repetition and successive reports, projections and options.

You don't want ?options,? you want action. You want, just for once, success. You want to win and be rid of it all.

But despite medical advancements, ?cures? remain elusive. Sure, battles are being won on several fronts and yet numbers of cancer victims and patients keep growing.

The stats ? representing people's lives ? are reduced to numbers. These become part of the data pool and make up the odds. But few of these are sure bets. The odds are still long.

For some cancers, like mine, it has been a journey of treatments, protocols, monitoring, trials and more. Traditional treatments like chemo and radiation are go-to tools. All in the name of extending, prolonging lives, but not necessarily saving them. I suppose salvation and miracles are not within a doctor's abilities.

It takes a large team of specialists ? technicians, nurses, researchers, blood experts, cutting edge treatments and young oncologists ready to leap into the unknown. It's a great concoction and all the ingredients are there for certain amount of success, or at least headway.

I've seen many ads promoting products and services, promising miracles.

Workshops, ?thriving and surviving,? a host of supplements, frequency therapy, even ?pyramid power.? A crazy amount of Facebook ads on new cures, strategies and amazing from-the-brink tales flash before me.

And then reality. Chemo round two. Maybe some new trial drugs down the road. It's a wait and see game.

I ?really hope I ?live long enough to see a major breakthrough, not just for me, but all who follow.

I was reminded about the best memories of a person's life, like the birth of a child.

Time is fluid and we look ahead almost as much as we look back.

While I ?recall faint details, a lot of it is a blur. Of course, my wife remembers each one, down to the last intricate detail, like it was yesterday. Mom. God did go overboard in giving them some amazing qualities.

I ?used to be a crazy time-checker, always glancing at my watch or phone frequently to see what time it is.

I've lessened that habit a bit, mostly because I ?want the minutes and hours to move more slowly now, and have a bit more meaning.

There are nuggets to be found wrapped up in the seconds and hours and days. When the sun shines, I ?smile, close my eyes and tilt my head up, trying to catch some Vitamin D from the sun.

When I have a good day, I ?just embrace it, and not question why. The bad days are always waiting.

There was a time when all was well. Our family was growing, maturing, laughing, and playing. I feel I've put a bit of a damper on

things, and for that I?am truly sorry.

Just as the minutes and hours are fleeting, a hug, smile and shared family time can add precious moments to my hourglass.