

## Goalposts ? as they now stand in 2023

by BROCK WEIR

By the time this arrives on your doorsteps, or is visible on your screens, it will most likely be Thursday, January 12.

We're nearly two weeks into 2023, and what do we have to show for it so far?

Well, we're still here. That's a great start.

Hopefully we're beginning the year with things ? not just material ?things? ? that give us joy, and hopefully we have enough joy to spare and are doing our best to spread the wealth.

If you're not a person who thrives in the winter, maybe you're simply content that the days have been getting longer, a little bit each day, since December 21 was in the rear-view window. And, hey, for any of us, a minute or two of extra daylight here and there is nothing to sneeze at, so let's chalk that up in the ?win? column.

How about those New Year's resolutions? How are they faring?

If they too are now in the rear-view mirror, that's fine. New Year's at this time of year is a relatively new concept, so if you've fallen short of your goal, there's no harm in picking it back up and setting your own terms. They're no less valuable if you start on February 1 rather than January 1.

If you're still sticking with them, good for you. I hope they are fulfilling, attainable, and do not add any unnecessary stress.

Over the weekend, I was at a shopping centre and although I can't remember just what they were selling on the other side of the entrance, the sandwich board just outside their door caught my eye in its simplicity.

?2023 will be better.?

There was no need to spell out the comparators.

We all know what we hope 2023 will be better than. We now have three orbits of the sun under our belts now since the world went awry ? again, for reasons that don't need to be spelled out.

I couldn't decide whether ?2023 will be better,? followed by a full stop, was encouraging and something we're all hoping for (and should be hoping for, in my opinion) or something more melancholic and symbolic of how far we've been forced to move the proverbial goal posts of what constitutes a ?better? year ? or not.

Yet, I think we can all agree on the sentiments rather than the details.

Better, as we've come to learn over these last three years of struggle, can mean wildly different things to disparate groups of people. One person's ?Freedom? Convoy is another person's hostage situation. A plea to resume wearing masks to some might be a return to common sense or a shift to ?tyranny? to another.

However we define it, the power to make it happen is nevertheless within all of us.

We all have different traditions in which we like to ring in the year.

Denmark, for instance, has a tradition of breaking old dishes on the doorsteps of friends which, according to a recent online rundown from Glamour, is rooted in the belief that the more shards you find on your doorstep in the morning, the better luck you will have throughout the year.

In some cultures, particularly those with deep roots in Spanish tradition, it's a custom to eat 12 grapes in the last few seconds of the outgoing year in the belief that it will bring luck and prosperity to the consumer in the year ahead.

If it's fertility you're looking for in the year ahead, one might borrow from a Greek tradition of hanging an onion, apparently chosen for its ability to self-propagate to be a symbol of growth, just outside your door.

Veggies play an important role in some Colombian traditions as well. There's a custom of placing three potatoes in various states of ?peel? (un-, fully, and partially) under the beds of others and, depending on which spud you pull out the next morning, you could be in for good fortune, bad fortune, or something in-between.

I like to keep things reasonably simple.

So far, aside from a culinary journey here and there, my own traditions don't yet involve potatoes, onions, or grapes, nor do they involve any deliberately broken crockery, but in the hopes that the year-that-will-be begins on the right foot, I always like to do something new and out-of-the-ordinary as the clocks tick down.

Mind you, out-of-the-ordinary need not be anything extraordinary. For me, it's been as grandiose as seeing the ball drop in a city I have never been before, or as simple as trying out a new recipe.

It wasn't too much of a struggle this past December 31 to find something new to do.

Thanks to Mother Nature's pre-Christmas wrath, most of the day was spent doing a do-over on Christmas Morning brunch and gift-giving that had to be put on the backburner.

Ahead of the holidays, it certainly wasn't how I anticipated spending December 31, 2022, but it was lovely and helped me cross the threshold of 2023 with more of a festive spring in my step than I would otherwise.

It was certainly a good way to start the year as you mean it to continue: upbeat and looking towards brighter times ahead.

Better, at least from my perspective, is up to all of us.

As we move into 2023 ? some of us more cautiously than others ? I can't help but wonder what to you would constitute a ?better? year than the one that just passed.

Pre-COVID, I'd wager goal posts for some might have been being able to afford the home or car of your dreams, pulling off that perfect dream vacation, finding that elusive work-life balance, getting that cottage, that promotion, that raise, that renovation, that, that, that?

But what is it now? Have you moved the goalposts closer to you or further away?

Would you now define ?better? as simply having a roof over your head or being able to afford a car that is just reliable? Finding or maintaining steady work? Just looking forward to spending more time with family and celebrating milestones once again with a greater degree of certainty?

Or, given everything we've had to do without since the first quarter of 2020, maybe ?better? is simply making up for lost time?

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