

Grant us the patience to endure the pain of waiting

by MARK PAVILONS

?Infuse your life with action. Don't wait for it to happen. Make it happen. Make your own future. Make your own hope. Make your own love.?? Bradley Whitford

Take it from me (and Bradley), waiting often sucks, big time.

Some optimists say there's always a bit of magic waiting somewhere behind the morning, the start of a new day.

Perhaps the magic, and the mystery of the universe, is waiting for us to become smarter, sharper.

It's been said numerous times over the centuries that good things are worth waiting for.

I'm an expert at waiting, anticipating, counting the days and being ?on hold.?

This past year has been filled with waiting ??aiting for test results, scan results, surgery, post-op and follow up tests and visits. I?anticipate the worst, and with every new PSA?test and scan, I?anxiously await the results, hoping for good news.

I?suppose in this case, constant monitoring can only be in my favour by possibly catching anything early.

I find that lately I've lost patience for stupid things and, honestly, stupid people. I?feel I don't want to waste my precious time on such idiots. My time is worth more, and made more valuable since my cancer treatments.

But I am well versed in life's ?necessary evils,? and waiting is one of them.

Just think about how much time average consumers spend waiting in line, also known as a ?timeless form of torture.?

According to the consumer study, ?The State of Waiting in Line (2022),? wait times have gotten worse during and after the pandemic. With shorter attention spans, we frail humans are stuck waiting. The most common places we're kept waiting are retail stores, restaurants, pharmacies and grocery stores.

We're all familiar with the jokes and barbs about waiting behind slow folks at the checkout, or waiting for a staff member to come and fix the self-checkout machine from flashing.

Pharmacies??Don't get me started. When they can actually find the medication, which has been ready for days, it still takes several minutes to locate it in the sea of bags.

My wife and I almost always use the self-checkout lanes for their efficiency. It does help.

But often, we have no choice but to be ?time tortured.?It's estimated we spend 20 minutes each day waiting in line. That's about 13 hours a year and a total of six months in our lifetime. Six months!It gets worse. We spend roughly 3.7 years waiting for transportation; 2.8 years waiting for our food orders; 14 days waiting for appointments and another 3.7 months waiting for our friends and family members to arrive. There's no mention about being stuck in traffic, but commuters know full well how much time is wasted travelling to and from work.

While the data was somewhat skewed during the pandemic years, commuting is officially on the rise in Ontario, reaching record highs. By car, average one-way commute times hover around 25 minutes and more than 40 minutes by transit. So, one can assume

that the majority of us spend an hour or so dashing to and fro.

Who among us wouldn't do anything to get those hours, days, months and years back, especially when the end is near?

Our tug-of-war with time wasters continues on the phone or online.

I constantly hear a litany of introductory messages when I call a number ? dozens of items in a menu, all to serve you better. Better maybe, but faster? Not. I think my wife holds the household record of being on hold for almost two hours. I've stuck it out for 30 or so minutes and if you're fortunate, there's an option where you can ask them to call you back.

I'm sure we've all been send down time-consuming rabbit holes on the internet. We've all encountered time-sucking virtual wait times and checkout woes.

Some say the greatest art is to sit, wait and let it come. Others pray for patience. We are reminded that if we spend too much time waiting for the storm, we won't enjoy the sunshine. Alexandre Dumas once said that ?all human wisdom is summed up in two words; wait and hope.?

I've spent way too much time in dreary, emotion-filled anticipation.

I want to be in a position where waiting is as pleasant as a summer's day filled with BBQ aromas. I want to be free.

So I say, why wait?

My oldest daughter reminded me that each day can be a blessing and we should be thankful for every moment we have to enjoy. Even during our down time on the sofa we can simply soak up the sight and sounds of our most precious commodity ? time with our families. Sure, it can be hectic and crazy at times, but that's what makes it perfect. You can't really appreciate the calm unless you've been through turmoil. So, my friends, why wait any longer? It's time for us to revolt, and stand up together against waiting in all forms. My daughter told me to seize the day and turn things in my favour. Instead of shuffling through the same, mundane daily rituals, why not switch it up a bit? Ask a co-worker out for coffee. Come home early and surprise your spouse. Go get KFC if you want and damn the calories. Close your eyes, let the sun shine on your face and feel the breeze. My wise daughter also asked me what it was that I needed or wanted. Peace of mind, calm and comfort were my answers. Do they come to those who wait, or will they only arrive when we are ready, with an open and grateful heart? Even worry warts like myself can take the time to count our blessings. I do have many things to be thankful for and I must make sure I embrace them. I should give more compliments and hugs; it only takes a minute.

I redirect the energy lost worrying to more productive tasks.

I aim to let serenity reign. Spreading joy is also on my list.

Let's not forget, even waiting will end, if you can just wait long enough!