

?Life? doesn?t care about your other plans

by Mark Pavilons

We busy bees are darting this way and that, trying to keep all of our ducks in a row.

It's been said that ?life is what happens when you're making other plans.?

So true.

We talk about ?multi-tasking,??a term that was originally created to describe CPUs and computer processing. When did we inherit the moniker?

It's funny that one of the most often heard responses these days is about how busy we are.

What have we done to ourselves, that busyness is now the driver, and our own health and peace of mind take a back seat?

Research suggests that an individual's perceived level of busyness is heavily connected to their feelings of self-worth, as well as to how others view their status. Individuals who are always busy by choice tend to feel needed, in demand, and important, thus elevating their feelings about themselves.

Being busy and being productive can often be confused with one another. If we are busy, we may have a lot on our plate but this doesn't necessarily mean that we are productive or using our time efficiently.

For some, staying busy is a way to feel in control of their lives. Psychologists explain that when people experience anxiety or uncertainty, they may try to control their environment and schedule to feel more secure. This is particularly common in people with high levels of perfectionism or high-functioning anxiety. Constantly staying busy provides a sense of structure and purpose, even if it's not always productive.

People stay busy for many reasons, not the least of which are to bury difficult emotions or pain.

Some want to retain control over the little things, because the big picture is out of their control.

My wife is a doer. She never stops and I?wonder how she keeps going sometimes. Moms are built differently and are like the Energizer Bunny.

While idle hands are the devil's work, idle brains can be both positive and negative. Being contemplative and introspective tend to be good for the soul. But too much ?deep diving??can backfire. The meaning of life, especially these days, is still elusive.

Those of us who've fallen victim to busyness have likely felt fatigue, stress and anxiety. There's a long list of side effects to burying oneself in work or other things to avoid life's realities.

So, back to the opening sentiment, where life's events don't really care about your best laid plans.

Many of us who've fallen victim to a life-altering ailment know full well how reality just sneaks up on you and smacks you in the face. There's no avoiding it.

Our bodies are only good for so many miles, and like most warranties, they expire long before replacement parts are needed.

I have no choice but continue my regular routine, while juggling tests, scans, hospital visits and treatments. I can't stumble and fall because my family needs me and there's always so much to be done.

Ah, there's the rub as Shakespeare pointed out.

Our current lifestyle is very much a Catch-22 - too much on our plates, too little time and too few resources. We try to schedule down time and family time.

How sad that we've somehow fallen victim to the rat race and turned things backwards. But we are not rats and life isn't a race, but a marathon.

Only recently have we westerners realized the importance of family, relationships, quiet time and peace.

We're still faced with record-high retail and grocery prices, and the cost of housing has squeezed many out of the market. I sympathize with the younger people who are just starting out, earning a decent living, and trying to find a home.

We Boomers were lucky, I suppose, in that we had a less stressful time, with more opportunities. We were grounded, thanks to our parents and their solid work ethics. They provided for us.

I'm not sure how well my wife and I have provided for our nestlings, but I hope it's sufficient.

That too, adds another level of stress to life - giving our kids the tools and resources they need to strive and thrive. It's getting tougher, to be sure and we give, at our own expense.

There's really no choice between me and my kids. The kids always come first.

Will Rogers advised us that if we find ourselves in a hole, that we stop digging.

If we do have a moment, we should ask ourselves whether it's the world that's busy or is it our minds? I think probably both.

Some believe that we're not busy, but merely distracted. I find I have to distract myself with small things like games on my smart phone or painting tiny model planes, just to maintain my sanity. To be alone with my thoughts is not something I relish.

I have heard that Nature doesn't hurry, and yet everything gets accomplished.

But I'm not a mighty redwood or majestic weeping willow.

Our endless pursuit of more leaves us dissatisfied. We work harder, rush more, all in the hopes of attaining some future happiness, but the destination keeps moving farther away. And then, when faced with a clock that's counting down, you realize that it was all in vain.

I have gone through pretty much every emotion in the human dictionary during my journey. I fear I'm headed down the final, long road with little to show for my busyness.

While we may want to, we just can't stop the world because we want to get off. I've leapt off a merry-go-round in my youth, and it was quite painful.

Life, time and everyone in it, never stop. It's just how things are.

Like it or not, our western busyness will be our downfall.

Boy, a tree house in the woods is looking mighty fine!