

Making do, or making progress?

by MARK PAVILONS

?Problems are not stop signs, they are guidelines.? ? Robert H. Schuller

Ok, Robert, but what if the sign says ?Bridge Out??

There are more than seven billion human beings sharing our planet.

Of course there are bound to be problems ? conflicts, disease, suffering of all shapes and sizes.

It's just math, really, and the odds.

While many of these ?problems? are due to external, uncontrollable circumstances, many are of our own making.

Here in comfortable North America, arguably the best place in the world, we still have our fair share of issues.

The Dalai Lama said everyone has a responsibility to develop a happier world: ?We need, ultimately, to have a greater concern for others' well-being. In other words, kindness or compassion, which is lacking now. We must pay more attention to our inner values. We must look inside.?

I?would add that we should all make peace with ourselves and our past.

Forgive yourself first and then you can move on, move forward. The world is waiting.

We may be insignificant specks in the infinite universe, but we are very much significant to our loved ones, friends, and acquaintances.

There are many people out there ??ront line emergency personnel, health care workers, surgeons, pastors and just good samaritans ? who have literally saved lives.

You and I, leading rather ?normal??lives, may not have directly saved anyone, but we have helped make countless cloudy days a bit brighter for some. We may have lifted spirits when they were at their lowest.

That, my friends, is far from insignificant.

As strong and potentially magnificent as we are, we tend to dwell, ponder, sulk and even sink.

There are times when I find my life a little boring, perhaps even lacklustre. Maybe that's my fault for not finding beauty and joy in every little thing.

I?think at one point in our lives, likely after ?middle age,??we settle in to our roles and situations.

It's like sinking into our comfy couch, preferring to chill and take a load off, rather than springing to our feet, peppy and ready for action.

Yes, we ?first worlders??have created a society, a system that slots us into various positions. We go to school, get a job, get married, have children and then what?

Average Canadians, with bills and mortgages to pay, often don't have the luxury of travel, eating out and spoiling themselves.

So, we make do.

But does "making do" mean giving in and becoming lazy? I know that life and circumstances can take their toll, suck the energy from our very minds and bodies. We're susceptible to many things that slow our progress, and curb our giant leaps into simple baby steps.

But we can always spice things up, experience new wonders, take a drive, hike, play, and enjoy the simple things "movie night or a home-cooked meal.

As we age, our bodies no longer respond the way we want them to.

Jumping off the garage roof and crashing my bike used to hurt my back when I was much younger. Now, putting on my shoes and sneezing have the same effect!

I avoid looking in the mirror so I can't tell just how much I've aged. I still feel relatively okay inside, but I know I have limitations. And I hate that.

We were meant to forever play road hockey, build unstable tree forts and eat way too many Pop Rocks. In my youth, in rural Caledon, I used to think those long summer days, filled with gentle breezes, would never end.

But they have.

I recently found out that my former family homestead on Duffy's Lane is up for sale, for a little over \$2 million! While you can't put a price tag on memories, I would have to win the lottery to get this place back in the family. Looking at the realtor photos, my heart glowed, then sank. I quietly wept from the emotions the images created in my mind.

I can still picture the many amazing moments spent there in my life. I still like the quiet times Canadian summers provide.

But this coming summer will likely present some obstacles for me. And yet I must make time to stop and smell the flowers.

Like almost everyone out there, I am hoping that 2023 is a remarkable, memorable, amazing year. Whether by chance, luck or tremendous effort, we have to make it so.

Sometimes, when your boots are stuck in the mud so long, they become cemented, rooted.

Our mental health has taken it on the chin in recent years.

But recently, I've tried to catch those great feelings, reeling them in like the catch of the day.

Sure, sometimes I feel like Daniel-san trying to snatch a fly out of the air with chopsticks, but alas, my aim is getting better.

Robert Schuller said the "hardest struggle of all is to be something different from what the average man is."

Some cycles, like stationary bikes, we need to ride. Others, like the cycle of depression and anxiety, we need to recognize and break.

We've been dealing with our issues alone for so long, we are like that boot left behind in the quagmire.

But the lifesaver is there, all around us. Grab it and pull yourself out and up.

Tell or text your family members each and every day and tell them you love them. Recognize the beauty in their souls.

Tell them they are beautiful.

We were given finely crafted hearts, souls, emotions and memories. They are so unique, so extraordinarily powerful, that we can overcome almost any problem.

Are you in?