

No answer to the question of existence

BY MARK PAVILONS

What are you doing here?

My wife asked me that question the other day as we did the avoiding dance in the kitchen. "Who knows?" I answered.

How right I am.

Humans have been trying to answer the whys and hows of existence since we made those indelible handprints on cave walls. Many, many have tried. All have failed.

We can't even answer some of the basic biological questions about our presence here on this blue ball in space.

While I understand the mechanics of conception, it's still very miraculous no matter how you look at it. The little critter carrying much of what is me? my

DNA, my specific characteristics? made the seemingly impossible journey, like a salmon returning home. And that's just for starters.

Waiting for "me" was the other part of the equation, my feminine side if you will. The whole process of fusion, cortical reaction, meiotic division, replication and mitosis sounds like the setting of a science fiction story. It's a chain reaction of extraordinary events that results in creation.

We only figured all this out in the 19th century, and while modern medicine has advanced by leaps and bounds, the whole thing is still quite amazing.

A million little things have to align to all for this to take place. A million little things can go wrong.

In my case, my appearance in 1963 was uneventful. I was forcefully introduced to the world via cesarean section, a few weeks premature. My parents, like their parents before them, had few resources, books or reality TV shows to help them with this thing called parenting. They simply did their best with the resources that were available. Cloth diapers, glass bottles and the like were the sign of the times.

Memories of those early years are a bit fuzzy. Actually, I have no memories of much of my early existence, other than some traumatic kindergarten incidents involving plastic fruit and nap time.

When I look back at some of my early school class pictures, I'm glad our species evolved to developed a sense of fashion.

So, one miraculous moment set the stage for a cascading series of events. I liken our lives to watching one of those domino masters set up a huge display in an auditorium. With a light touch, the artist sets in motion a massive, entertaining display of falling plastic pieces, resulting in beautiful images.

Our lives progress much slower, but they are nonetheless a marvellous collection of moments, images, experiences, sights, sounds, tastes and feelings.

Little did our zygotes realize what they were getting themselves into.

Even textbooks and visual aids can't really explain the wonder of it all. How do you teach students that creation is like God snapping his fingers?

So, our biological beginnings are quite mysterious, even lucky, with a dash of divine intervention for good measure.

This only scratches the surface of how we got here.

The whole truth is much, much deeper.

For any one of us to be here today, our lineage would have to be unbroken and steady throughout millennia. Our great-great-greats beat the odds and lived long enough to procreate. They lived through wars, disease, pestilence, plagues and a multitude of nasties that typically took adults in their 30s. Our family trees had to be the strongest in the forest for us to actually be here.

Luck of the draw? I think not.

As scientists poke their heads into our tiny cells, they discover things like cell memory, even ancestral DNA things in our makeup that date back hundreds of thousands of years. I know, it sounds incredible, but there is a train of thought that we still carry with us the inherent knowledge of hunting a woolly mammoth or making a vest out of a saber-toothed cat. In other words, we're closer to Fred Flintstone than we think.

How incredible is the idea that our cells still contain the very essence of primordial man? Did I mention something about God snapping his fingers?

So, dear brothers and sisters, that primeval coding has carried us through the eons, to this very place and time. Anyone up for a nice woolly burger?

Now that we've covered the how, let's look at why.

As I lay comfortably on the Reiki table, I was told several spirits were chatting noisily about what to do with me. They all had thoughts on how to guide me, teach me and figure out what my purpose was.

Cool, that unseen forces care enough to squabble over my fate. Very cool.

I believe we all have a purpose. That may be as simple as falling in love, raising a family and growing old. It may be as complex as being a mentor or achieving greatness in science, business or the arts. It may be that we give up our life, and our organs, so others may live. It may simply be to bring joy to others while we're here, and learn a few things on our journey.

That's something only the dearly departed can know. My opinion is that once we leave terra firm for the great beyond, we are given all the knowledge in the universe, which answers these very questions. I know, it sucks that we have to die just to figure it all out, but it's how it was designed, I believe.

We may never know why we're here. But we are. For that very reason we should strive to be decent human beings and lead by example.

As we celebrate existence over the holiday season, let's celebrate one another!