

Possibilities begin to dwindle as time goes on

by Mark Pavilons

I really miss my old life and how it took so little effort to live it!

Edith and Archie sang the praises about those were the days, and we humans often reminisce about days gone by.

As a Boomer, I will tell you that while things may be relative, our youth and even young adulthood in the 1970s and 1980s were easier. They were fun, simple, relatively stress-free.

We had freedom and seldom worried about getting into trouble, running into ruffians or running a tab.

If we disappointed our parents, we apologized and worked hard to make up for it.

They always forgave us.

Before we got our driver's licence, we rode bikes on gravel sideroads. Sliding into the ditch and getting stones stuck in our knees was common, but we never whined about it.

A warm, home-cooked meal always waited for us.

Back then, our choices were a bit limited, or perhaps more narrow, compared to today.

Sure, there were dozens of post-secondary school courses to choose from, but nowhere near the hundreds offered today. My daughter's school offers an elective in Harry Potter's impact on popular culture!

We met with our guidance counsellors in Grade 13 (yes, there was a time when that existed) to help us find a suitable course and apply to college or university.

In terms of careers, these, too, were limited. We could find a trade, or go to college and university where, upon graduation, we were pretty much guaranteed meaningful work.

I excelled at English, History and languages in high school. I chose journalism, because I didn't want anything repetitive, boring or mundane. In hindsight, perhaps a teaching career would have been much more lucrative but here we are.

My dad didn't quite get the journalism business, and felt computers were the way to go. Sure, but IT 40 years ago was still in its infancy, and computer programming was just icky. Does anyone remember punch cards?

I enjoyed college and I landed a job after a brief internship at a local newspaper and well, the rest is history.

Back in the day, we made friendships that lasted to this day.

We were glad to borrow dad's car, even if it was a brown on brown Oldsmobile.

We never really stressed about the future. Okay, opportunities were plentiful but that didn't guarantee success. We didn't dwell on owning a home, starting a family or socking money away. Investments were foreign to us.

We lived for the day, and planned our future step by step.

We briefly lost touch with high school buds, then rekindled when they returned from their on-campus homes or work abroad.

It's funny how we free-wheeling humans skip through life thinking the possibilities are endless. We're taught to dream and reach for the stars, being told there's nothing we can't achieve if we try. Infinite possibilities.

Of course, our individual circumstances did have limits and boundaries, but we always had encouragement from family and friends. Decades ago, when times were less complicated, doors were always open and paths were well lit so we could find our way.

Yes, a lot has changed. But human nature hasn't.

I see my oldest child climb the ladder personally and professionally. She worked hard at university and took it upon herself to get her master's degree. She has a decent job with the provincial government and recently bought her first house, together with her boyfriend.

For her, the possibilities are endless and she's worked hard to clear a path forward. I don't know where she got such gusto and focus from, but good for her. I am so happy that she has all the qualities to succeed ? which is quite a feat these days.

I read a recent statistic where 50% of Canadian parents with adult children are still financially supporting them.

My wife and I have tried so hard to help steer our kids and light a spark. Our youngest is finishing a college course in the veterinary field and we are confident she will find her place and her true calling.

Our brilliant son is beginning to clear some jungle-like vines and find a way, an opening. He's exploring options and narrowing down a couple of fields of interest.

He has so many good qualities, I really hope he will find his niche.

Even in these tumultuous times there is hope and optimism. There are opportunities.

I am extremely happy and confident they will excel and succeed. I will do everything in my power for as long as I can to help them.

In my case, my roads and choices are finite and limited. My personal sphere is closing in on me, given my struggle with cancer, leaving few options on the horizon.

I am now looking at the trees and not the forest beyond.

My current treatment schedule prevents me from planning ahead. I can plan day trips and enjoy dinners out. But long-term plans, bucket list trips and even road trips are problematic.

And that weighs heavy on my broad shoulders. My limits become restrictions on my family's happiness and that's something I never considered when I ventured down this cancer rabbit hole.

Feeling hollow, a bit empty, filled with straw. (My apologies to T.S. Eliot.)

I can't totally believe my own encouraging words and continue to ooze positivity.

When I'm trying desperately to console myself, how do I convince myself to embrace hope? How do I emit joy and pleasantries when I don't believe it?

I'd love to know how to walk on hallowed ground, connecting with Mother Earth, Turtle Island and all the energies of this amazing planet.

Stephen Hawking said the future is ?indefinite and exists only as a spectrum of possibilities.?

I'm with H. Jackson Brown Jr.:??Hope is the magic carpet that transports us from the present moment into the realm of infinite possibilities.?