

Someone should do something about this!

by Mark Pavilons

Someone should really do something about this!

I've heard this phrase so often throughout my life that it's almost synonymous with the human condition.

Yes, they should.

But just who is this 'someone'? Is it our provincial government, federal government, NATO, the United Nations? Is it the big banks, big oil or big conglomerates?

Or is it us? You and I?

'It is easy to sit up and take notice, What is difficult is getting up and taking action,' said Honore de Balzac.

Thomas Jefferson once said action delineates and defines us all. It's only when we are engaged that we understand who we are.

Greta Thunberg said we should look for action, not hope. 'Then, and only then, hope will come.'

In our daily lives, we likely come across dozens of instances where my opening phrase comes into play.

Whether it's the price of gas at the pumps; shortage of doctors and nurses; rising cost of groceries; and instances of violent crime, someone should do something.

Yes, but who?

We rely on our elected officials and various levels of government (municipal, regional, provincial and federal) to look after our needs. We place our faith in them that they will fix what needs fixing. We hope they use our tax dollars wisely, to address all of society's needs.

There's a cute analogy that many of us have heard. It's the story about four people named Everybody, Somebody, Anybody, and Nobody.

There was an important job to be done and Everybody was sure that Somebody would do it.

Anybody could have done it, but Nobody did it.

Somebody got angry about that because it was Everybody's job.

Everybody thought that Anybody could do it, but Nobody realized that Everybody wouldn't do it.

It ended up that Everybody blamed Somebody when Nobody did what Anybody could have done.

Sometimes called the 'bystander effect,' this simple story is kind of typical buck-passing that occurs at the office, in government and throughout society.

It also reminds me of too-often-used phrase 'it's not my job.' Being a bit old school, I don't think I've uttered that phrase, and have

always tried to pitch in and help out where I could. It only seems natural to me to try to help solve a problem if I can.

Of course, if something is out of my field of expertise and I have no skills in that area, then I can't help, but maybe I can find someone, anyone, who can.

We can also whine about our situation in life and complain about life's frustrating moments. There are countless trivial things that raise our eyebrows on a daily basis. Many are annoying and some can be quite humorous.

Yes, resealable bags don't seal themselves. With all the kitchen technology available today, why can't I properly prepare pulled pork? Who do I talk to about perfecting sliced cheese wrappers?

And why are some things recyclable, and others not?

Someone should really look into this, eh?

I think in our desperation, we often look for someone to blame or point the finger at. It's easy to say they are responsible. Corporate greed has led to high food prices. The government should lower taxes to help average citizens. In an oil-producing country like Canada, why aren't our gas prices cheaper?

Why do banks continue to make record profits while our chequing accounts dwindle and we're burdened with service charges?

My curious son is constantly asking me why things are the way they are. I offer one explanation after another, but they don't seem to satisfy him. Why have we let the banks get so powerful and who watches over them?

Why have builders set the market value for new homes and why can't anyone force them to provide affordable housing?

Why are there so many rules and regulations for small, home-based businesses?

Why can't I operate a still in my basement?

These questions and many more come flying at me, usually at the end of a long day at work.

While I can help my son navigate through the world of 'Big Brother,' I can't make him feel any better that our lives are well, ultimately controlled by others.

I can see where Everybody blamed Somebody and Nobody did anything!

But knowledge and an understanding of how things work is the first step in taking action or trying to change things for the better.

Michael J. Fox encourages people to realize any action is good action if it's proactive and there is positive intent behind it.

Concern, according to Pythagoras, should drive us into action and not into despair.

He's right of course.

We may get bogged down in our inability to change the big picture, but that shouldn't stop us from trying. Chances are there are many like-minded individuals and groups out there who share our concerns, desires and wants.

'We are not sent into this world mainly to enjoy the loveliness therein, nor to sit us down in passive ease; no, we were sent here for action,' said Dorothea Dix.

Unfortunately, countless souls are so overburdened by the limitations of their worlds, they can't see the forest for the trees.

We've created our own little boxes, or spheres and that's where we live out our lives. Sometimes, through great strength and opportunity, we can escape, and step out beyond our own borders. But that takes means, and a desire to take action.

Anybody can't help.

It's all up to us. With a little help from?Somebody.