

Standing at our posts

by BROCK WEIR

In our fast-paced world, we sometimes forget to carve out the time for the little things ? or, at the very least, those things that are sometimes seen as time sponges when there is precious little to go around.

It can be as easy as turning off whatever screen you've been looking at all day, even if only for an hour, to recalibrate your eyes, brain, and your connection to the world around you. But sometimes it can be more challenging, like breaking habits that might be time-wasters, working against you in the end.

Sometimes, if you don't have a set lunch hour, one can forget to allocate time in the busy workday to eat properly ? and, of course, forget to follow through once you've made that all-important allocation ? or the simple impact of having a good night's sleep.

During her exceptionally long life, for instance, Betty White boasted about only needing a few hours' sleep a night. It was a remarkable claim given the fact she seemed to have endless reserves of energy until the eve of her 100th birthday, but evidently she was doing something right. Yet, it's certainly not a formula that works for everyone. We're not all cut from the same bolt of fabric as the iconic Golden Girl!

As an inveterate night owl, I've tried my fair share of ways to trick myself into a good night's sleep. I've even tried to talk myself into being one of those perky ? and, sometimes, peskily perky ? morning people, but to no avail, despite the fact that when I go to bed each evening I'm just a little bit jazzed at the possibility that tomorrow might be THE morning of getting with the program.

When you can polish off a solid night's sleep, you certainly notice the difference. And you certainly notice when you don't.

Near the very end of my university career, for instance, when, just 30-odd hours before it was due, I realized I had misunderstood the entire point of the final assigned essay and the copious amount of research I had done to that point. The work I'd done to that point resulted in a fine finished product, but it was completely irrelevant to the actual question we were tasked to answer.

The realization led to waves of anxiety, but once they made way for resolve it was time to hit the mercifully all-night library on campus to rebuild the thing from scratch, with an entirely new thesis. There was no sleep to be had that night, so it was a matter of pushing all the way through. Balancing school with a day job, I put those tasks on the backburner and plowed through on the essay until it was complete, but that other work wasn't going to complete itself. It was time to go into the office after hours to tackle what was on the aforementioned back burner.

It was, by my estimation, about 49 hours between that wave of panic and when I had caught up on everything that needed to be done. It's not something I would ever recommend. Nor would I recommend the feeling of being a veritable husk of myself when it was all done. But there was little choice.

A weekend of doing nothing was a tonic in feeling fully functional once again, but even though I haven't yet cracked the code when it comes to the perfect work-life-sleep balance, it's definitely made me more mindful of both that and how it relates to having what's now described as ?a personal bandwidth.?

Being mindful of our personal bandwidth isn't just one of the many buzzwords and phrases flying our way these days. It is, in my opinion, becoming ever-more essential in just about every facet of our life.

Take, for instance, the last 20-odd days living next to the United States.

Since Donald Trump took office for his second non-consecutive term, we have been bombarded from all directions on all manner of

things.

We're treading water in seas of negativity, division and misinformation.

We're living under the constant threat of crippling economic tariffs ? the latest being a new significant tariff on aluminum and steel we produce here at home, a move which was confirmed just days after we ostensibly ?won? a 30-day reprieve from the previous round of tariff threats.

We're living in a world where executive orders are upending our very idea of the United States and putting many of our fellow humans south of the border in the crosshairs of hate.

We're living in a world where existential threats to our very nation and sovereignty are things we're now living with every day.

The real world stuff.

And then there's the nonsense that is just as baffling as it is pointless, such as the apparent re-naming of the Gulf of Mexico; overtures to (at best) ?purchase? Greenland or (at worst) overtake it; and bringing forward a renaissance in plastic straws.

None of which, as far as I could see, were identified as priorities by any serious voter ahead of November's Presidential Election where so many claimed to be concerned about the price of eggs ? which, by the way, have trebled since the ?peaceful? transfer of power.

The pace at which these changes, threats and taunts are coming can leave the best of us exhausted, and that's by design, but it's vitally important that we ?as individuals and as groups ? don't let the bombardment overtake us or keep us from taking a collective breath.

At the moment, we appear to be largely united in our resolve to resist the threats and keep our economies afloat with renewed efforts to Buy Canadian and Buy Local, which is fantastic, but we've been here before. We shared these sentiments, by and large, at the height of the Global Pandemic but, sadly, this fell by the wayside in many cases as people began to chafe under many of the hardships that came with it, at being ?told? what to do, and the rise of mistrust in what we were being asked to do thanks to, as mentioned above, the flood of misinformation.

Indigenous leaders have spoken with dismay of what they describe as a ?news fatigue? when it comes to the issues being faced by First Nations, Inuit and Metis communities, particularly the continued confirmation of horrors that took place in association with Residential Schools; one only has to look at how many times new discoveries grab national headlines these days to see that the ?news fatigue? claims are rooted in reality.

But, however weary we might get from threats coming our way at such a rapid pace, we must not let our guard down and become complacent out of sheer exhaustion.

Our future quite literally depends on it.

So, stay well-rested, stay alert and, together, we can stand on guard for what really matters.