

Taking time to pause and ?stop the world?

by MARK PAVILONS

The 1982 classic by Modern English broke the silence from my alarm clock the other day.

?I'll stop the world and melt with you ... You've seen the difference ...?And it's getting better all the time ... There's nothing you and I won't do ...?

Instead of hitting snooze, I?let it play because it made me smile. I wanted to run downstairs and dance with my wife in the kitchen. I recited the lyrics to her, which she continued. And then I shed a tear.

Maybe it's the medication. Maybe it's the pent-up regret and lost time.

Boy, how I wish I?spent more time ?melting? with my wife and taking on the world, hand-in-hand.

Alas, hindsight is always perfect.

I?managed to ?stop??the world a bit recently by freeze-framing a few special weekend moments. My wife and I?splurged on over-priced steaks for the family and the BBQ meal was amazing. I?savoured (literally)?every moment surrounded by my family. The way to a man's heart ...A state of euphoria followed and I simply cleared my head and enjoyed the feeling. That was followed by my father-in-law's 83rd birthday BBQ and a small gathering. Sharing a meal, telling stories, rekindling cherished moments ??t's all amazing. For a brief moment, I?realized I won't make it to 83 to see grown grandchildren. But each has his own fate.

Again, freeze-framing such picture-perfect moments is a great pastime. It's a must.

We humans have a great, almost limitless capacity for love, togetherness, bonding and yes, even hope.

Wouldn't it be great if we could snap our fingers, with almost superhuman powers, and freeze time, in effect ?stopping the world?? I supposed a well-trained mind can recapture such images, but for most of us they are fleeting.

But if we're lucky, they can rattle around our heads for a while, causing us to smile. Sometimes we can pluck them out of the air and laugh.

For literally generations, we've been encouraged to stop and smell the roses, to pause, reflect, embrace and enjoy. ?Have we learned anything?

In the ?race??to keep our heads above water and deal with economic realities, we lose sight of the important things. We can't. We mustn't.

It's funny, you know, that we live our lives as if we will never grow old, get sick and die. And yet that's a fate that awaits all of us.

There are so many quotable quotes, sayings and memes that suggest we adopt a carefree attitude toward living. There's something in that idea.

But the realities in our western culture have kind of beaten the joy out of our everyday existence. We work 40 or so years, to enjoy maybe a dozen. Every day we hear of friends and acquaintances who never make it to retirement. And many seniors in our midst are finding the ?golden years??a bit tarnished.

More reasons to hit ?pause.?

Recently, I have no tolerance for time-wasting quibbling or tension-filled, life-draining events.

We all have them ??they are a daily occurrence. My suggestion is to nip these in the bud as fast as you can.

When minor arguments arise in our household, I?cryptically note that my time is precious, far too valuable to waste on trivialities.

I'm not alone.?None of us should throw away valuable minutes of any day in conflict, misery, heated arguments or tension of any kind. Okay, maybe that sounds too easy, but it's way healthier than the alternative.

For those of us in our later stages (more years behind than ahead), we can likely single out a decade or two that we loved. Heck, I would love to be 50 again, and start a journey of self-discovery and personal healing.

But we can't turn back time. Life is a chain of memories and while we can't alter time, we can relive some of our finest moments, remembering the wonder.

I'm not suggesting a Scrooge-like tour of our lives. But if we could freeze-frame a few of those wonderful times, I think it would fill our souls with warmth. I bet there are people who would love a visit from their old selves.

?You can't go back in time and start over again, but you can still aim for a new ending starting from now.?

The Dalai Lama said time passes unhindered. ?All we can do is use the present well.?

Since we can't actually stop the world or ?melt??maybe we can follow the age-old adage ???out with the old, in with the new.?

By that I?mean let's do some internal cleaning by tossing the junk that's weighing us down. Get rid of dusty, old emotions, moldy thoughts and distasteful ideas and replace them with new ones. I'm not saying this is easy, but with practice, it just may become second nature. Give it a try. I bet you'll like it.

Most of my Boomer high school friends have all led relatively low-key lives. Marriage, children, decent jobs, maybe a dog or two. None scaled mountains or dove to the depths of oceans, but we all have had comfortable, ?safe? lives.

I?hope they all enjoyed the love that surrounded them and didn't take any of it for granted.

I'd love to stage a back yard concert for all my brothers and sisters, featuring songs of the 1980s, old yearbooks and any ?relics? we can dig up (other than ourselves).

I?know we can't relive the past, but bringing it back to life for a short time can't hurt.

Maybe we can all try to ?stop the world??from time to time and just ponder life's miracles.