

## Time to take a break from all the noise

by SHERALYN ROMAN

There been so much noise of late that to me, it's all become a little overwhelming. By ?noise? I mean the seemingly never-ending cacophony of voices clamouring for attention on Twitter, on Facebook, on Instagram, in our newspapers, on TV and even on our streets.

For some families, no doubt a lot of noise was even made during Thanksgiving as they debated the merits of vaccination and passports or simply celebrated finally getting together for those long-awaited hugs.

I'm finding numerous sound bites have been drawing my attention across multiple platforms, some telling me that Facebook is corrupting us all, others that psychiatrists are ?woke? and have lost touch with reality and that all around us people, particularly those in long-term care, are still dying of a virus FOR WHICH WE HAVE A VACCINE!

In Caledon, yet another expose along the lines of one released by the Toronto Star several months ago linking the pure happenstance that developers with money who donate to the PC party own much of the land surrounding the proposed Highway #413 corridor. My head is spinning. Hiding under a rock is looking increasingly appealing.

Perhaps you are a better person and are able to tune either in or out as events unfold around us.

Perhaps you've turned off the alerts on your phone and if so, I applaud you! As for me, I darn near had a panic attack over the Thanksgiving weekend wondering how much more I could take, and/or how I could possibly make a meaningful difference in the world. This then led to the quintessential, existential question of what the heck is my role in the universe anyway?

Do we try to ?lean in? as Sheryl Sandberg once wrote, becoming engaged and having a ?seat at the table? in our efforts to try and make change; or do we choose to lean way the heck out and do nothing - acknowledging that there's virtually nothing us ?average? folks can do anyway and not let it bother you? Anyone else feel similarly? I'm not joking, I only wish I were.

Distributing free menstrual products, for example is, in my opinion, an excellent thing. They should never have been taxed in the first place and I'm convinced if men needed them they'd be handing them out FOR FREE on street corners.

Meanwhile, women are taught menstruation is such a delicate subject we shouldn't even be talking about it. I was so happy to hear the Ford government (with whom I rarely agree) was making inroads on period poverty becoming a thing of the past, enabling ALL girls to go to school, EVERY day, that I was not equipped to deal with the fallout.

On and on the questions went to the point where I asked myself, am I the only one happy that at least someone, finally, is doing something to address period poverty? Sure, it might not be enough and sure there might be some questions worth asking, but girls need access to menstrual products - period. (No pun intended.) Isn't this a good thing?

Next up came Frances Haugen, the Facebook whistleblower who told Congress exactly what Facebook has been up to lately ? and had copious documents copied and prepared in advance as evidence.

It seems the social media giant is playing with us. Like mice in an experimental maze, Facebook leads us this way and that ? sharing ?news? and inciting discord ? sending us down whichever length of the maze it deems appropriate, or where its advertisers want us to go.

I've taken somewhat of a break from Facebook recently although I am still drawn into its nefarious web now and then. After listening to Frances' testimony ? I'm tempted to finally close my account and yet?and yet all my friends are there! How will I

remember everyone's birthdays without Facebook prompting me?

Facebook doesn't just play with the minds of young and impressionable teens, tweens and young adults but it appears Facebook and Instagram (which it owns) are both playing with ALL of us and we appear powerless to resist its lure. All you anti-vaxxers worried about a microchip, I've got news for you. We've been gullible fools, already tracked for years by social media, easily and simply by agreeing to carry a cellular device.

Just prior to Thanksgiving, I also caught wind of a controversy swirling around 'woke,' Chelsea boot wearing psychiatrists, who have lost sight of the fact that genetics might just play a role in poor mental health.

The focus of the article seemed to suggest that while we're all trying so hard to fix social determinants of health such as poverty, addiction, homelessness and poor access to health care, we've forgotten some diseases are genetically driven. Poorly timed, what with the article coming on the heels of World Mental Health Day, my take from all the brouhaha is that, according to the writer, some folks who are trying to link mental illness to episodic events like homelessness are 'forgetting' that genetics might play a significant role in their disease.

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