

Trimming my material possessions just seems right

by Mark Pavilons

I ventured out on a limb, and reached a crossroads of sorts.

It may not be the biggest revelation I've had, but it's a grand existential enigma.

I've decided to sell some of my prized possessions and trim things down a bit. As I mentioned this at home, my son said that all I would get in return is money and once it's gone, that's it.

Well, yes, that's the nature of commerce, I suppose.

It's more out of necessity than desire, but he's right. These unique objects will be (hopefully) exchanged for currency. This money will go to pay bills, go towards our new fridge, and be set aside for Christmas gifts.

And, yes, once the money is spent, there's no tangible evidence left behind. The items, and the cash, will be gone in a flash ??oof!

I once enjoyed these items very much, but the excitement was more in the search and purchase, than in the actual ownership and use. Ok, I've shown off some of my collectibles, but few people seemed interested or intrigued.

I've rambled on about history and how nomadic tribes of the past carried such items and were buried with them.

Since my family won't likely bury these with me, there's little sense keeping them around.

I've owned many pieces of jewellery in my life, being quite fond of gold and diamonds in my middle years.

Now, I seldom wear such fancy statement pieces. Sure, I still admire the craftsmanship, design and durability of earth's natural resources ??precious metals and gems.

My mom often called collectibles and cherished pieces that sat on shelves ?dust catchers.?

The only thing she ever amassed were collector plates from all of her travels. They lined the walls of her kitchen for many years and served as a reminder of some of the fond memories she made.

And where are they now??I'm really not sure. We may have kept a few in a box somewhere in the basement.

I had the horrible task of clearing out rooms and possessions of loved ones after they passed.

Cleaning up my uncle's apartment was particularly distressing. I couldn't help but think that all that's left after a decent life is a bunch of junk, boxes, old clothes and the aforementioned ?dust catchers.??Sad, but true.

Okay, there may be some people who leave behind huge properties, mansions, libraries and historical items that find their way to museums, but that's rare.

Some wealthy types leave sizeable donations to charity or hospitals. Bravo.

For us average Joes and Jills, we leave this world as we entered it ? cold, naked and afraid.

The few trinkets that remain may remind our families of our hobbies and interests, but they won't capture our true essence, or spirit. They are objects that once passed through, on their journeys.

Anything of value that I leave behind will be shared among my immediate family members. What they do with them, or how they value them, is totally up to them. It won't matter to me. Sentimental value isn't transferable.

The greatest legacy one can pass on to one's children and grandchildren is not money or other material things accumulated in one's life, but rather a legacy of character and faith, Billy Graham once said.

We all know this to be true in our hearts.

Sure, a cottage on Lake Rosseau would be a great piece of family legacy, but only in so far as it's enjoyed by future generations.

Once it's sold off, it becomes just a memory; images captured on our smart phones.

Most holy types warned us of the evils of money and its power to corrupt. All of the saints and martyrs through history lived simple, humble lives.

Today, many espouse the virtues of living off the grid, or making life simpler, less cluttered, less burdensome. If that means letting go of material possessions, so be it.

I have often thought about living in a tree house in the jungle on some tropical island. I'd live off bananas and fish and sleep in a hammock under the stars. That's when everything would come into focus.

Of course, that's not practical, since my commitments are here, to my family, loved ones, and my work in the community.

Unless we all moved, en masse, my decision would change little.

Most of us have a love-hate relationship with money, in whatever form we choose. Cash is becoming less popular, since we can pay for our purchases with little plastic cards, or even with our phones. There's little need for cash, coins or even cheques.

Transactions zip across unseen electrical currents, creating decimals, zeroes and digits. They move throughout the internet, until they find an invisible destination.

My friends, money doesn't really exist anymore, at least not in any concrete form. I can't remember the last time I had a crisp, \$100 bill in my wallet.

And, with our new-found method of transferring wealth, has gain become a little less tangible?

Joseph Joubert observed that without the spiritual world, the material world is a disheartening enigma.

And other deep thinkers have espoused that the essence of money is in its absolute worthlessness.

Talk about turning modern society on its head! And yet, I can't help but feel that this sentiment makes sense.

Money seemingly comes from nowhere and goes nowhere.

Our goods are used, displayed, and eventually put out at the curb on garbage day.

Our things - items that once brought us joy - are relegated to boxes, display cases or table tops, where they continue to catch dust.

?Get rid of it all away,? said he who knows time is short. ?Stop consuming, do more giving,??I say.

?You give but little when you give of your possessions. It is when you give of yourself that you truly give.?? Khalil Gibran