

Wasting time, waiting for our own expiry date?

There's never enough time to do all the nothing you want.? ? Bill Watterson

Bill was on to something.

We all know, even at a young age, that we will die one day, after our life here has come to an end.

Kids don't really get it, although they may witness the passing of loved ones from time to time.

Some people contend that simply doing nothing, is quite enjoyable. And yet, I can't help but wonder if we shouldn't be doing something every minute of every day.

So many self-help gurus and motivational types have much to say on the topic. They will tell us to get fit, get motivated, get involved, be happy, don't worry ...

Easier said than done, trust me.

It's fine when you're young or middle aged, when time is on your side. You have all the time and resources at your disposal to pursue health and wellness, do Tai Chi, meditate, get off-grid and go to the beach on any given weekend.

Fast-forward to the current state of Boomers like myself and the hourglass is running dry. Time is our enemy, our nemesis.

We've paid our dues and spent our lives working, providing, living up to our responsibilities and ensuring our families are taken care of. Maybe we had time to travel and enjoy frivolous times and frosty, tasty beverages.

For me, there's a shortage of well, everything time, money, opportunity and resources.

My bucket list is shrinking. Even though I just dug out my passport from its hiding place, it's unlikely I'll be trekking to places unknown. I don't think a trip of a lifetime is in the cards.

My loving oldest daughter offered to take me on a trip anywhere my heart desires. But I had to decline, out of modesty, frugality and practicality.

Sure, a visit to a tropical island would definitely soothe this tired soul. But I worry that unforeseen delays, hotel disasters, missed buses, cartels and just general annoyances may turn the dream into a nightmare.

I don't want my adventure to disappear beneath the waves.

I suggested day trips across Ontario this summer, and perhaps a jaunt across one of the bridges connecting Canada to our U.S. neighbours. I have a list of restaurants to visit and some minor wishes.

I've been rather self-absorbed for the past year or two, dwelling on my cancer journey. Ok, no one knows for sure when my train will leave the station, but it is inevitable. I don't think my family members have come to grips with my mortality. Despite facing this monster day in and day out, maybe I haven't quite grasped it, either.

I don't want to.

Some say our lives, and deaths, are somewhat predestined. When we were created, everything lined up and came into being. Our

purpose was cemented into our DNA and our beings were let loose on the world, to witness, create, join, love, help, contribute and yes, enjoy doing something or nothing.

We were given free choice by the Almighty, free to dance beneath the stars, skip stones on every pond we encounter, and sit around the fire, talking about what was, and what could be with our friends and loved ones. That may not sound very profound, but these were some of my fondest moments. Now, I cling to them like white on rice.

I've also taken to reflection, taking stock and judging my life. Flipping over those moss-covered rocks is not a pleasant task. But it helps create an interesting picture book.

More and more, I'm led to believe we are in fact, 'God's handiwork,' created to do good work, which has been prepared for us in advance.

Many of us talk about finishing the race. We are urged to put away our fear, as we are worth 'more than many sparrows.'

But here's the painful truth. As we count our days on our own personal calendar, we still sit around, wasting precious time.

They say once you get devastating health-related news, you shift your perspective and soak up every bit of sunshine. Perhaps. But we can't just run out into the streets dancing, looking for rainbows and climbing trees like teenagers. We have burdens 'payment for the lifestyle we've chosen.'

I go to work every day and try to find things to occupy my mind. I 'look for distractions. I can still laugh.

When I get home, there are chores waiting for me in the kitchen sink. We eat, clean up, make sure the kids are well fed and happy. We gather our documents for our income tax, make sure our appointments are scheduled, pay our bills, get our oil changes and then watch TV.

Not a great existence. And definitely not things on anyone's bucket list.

Yet we can't shirk our responsibilities just to indulge in frivolity, can we?

We are encouraged to rejoice, pray and give thanks in all circumstances.

Can we do this easily, in the face of rising grocery prices, a hike in mortgage rates, and awaiting test results?

Some us choose to ignore the goings-on in this troubled world. Conflict, war, death, disease, hunger, political chaos, and uncertainty. Surely, the worst of times are upon us.

Whether our fate lies in the Second Coming, or a large asteroid on a collision course, we need to be reminded of the urgency of our existence.

But in our rather twisted, materialistic society, how do we set aside sufficient time and resources to ponder the profound? How do we manage our bucket lists while, at the same time, live life to the fullest, without burden, stress or tension?

I 'can't dwell on the end, nor can I 'wear a happy face every minute of every day. I can't commune with my deity every spare second.

And yet, simply enduring 'wasted days and wasted nights' is not an option.

Any suggestions?