

We have to unite and focus on our common goal

by Mark Pavilons

The learning never ends.

We've dined, drank and hopefully ?did good? over the holiday break.

But now it's back to business as usual.

Or, as ?usual? as can be in these weird times.

Say what you will about the current point in history, but things are far from boring.

I believe we all have to maintain a certain focus, in order to see those goals that, right now, seem just out of reach. But in a couple of months, as the snow melts, the dawn of a new spring will hopefully be brilliant. Difficult roads, it's been said, often lead to amazing destinations.

And it's something that we all have to work towards. That includes each and every citizen and our elected officials. James Garfield once said that all free governments are managed by the combined wisdom and folly of the people. So true.

It's okay to stumble a little bit now and then, as the past year or so has demonstrated.

We've already been through Plans A, B and C, but there are plenty of other letters in the alphabet!

I?think most of us have also learned a lot in the past couple of years. We've learned about our fragile economy, some unique viewpoints of our fellow citizens and we really learned how to be patient. We've become resilient, flexible and adaptable.

I?hope our communal level of compassion has risen as well. We've seen how people come together in a crisis, whether it's at a local vaccination clinic, staging virtual community events, or supporting local businesses.

While many of our fellow residents have had to pivot, and make 180-degree turns in their lives, we must all keep our eye on the prize, so to speak.

That prize is momentum, pride, fortitude and reclaiming joy. It's finding the light and passing it along to others.

When everything has fallen out of place, we have to fight to put the puzzle back together again.

I'm reminded of Winston Churchill's famous sentiment:??If you are going through hell, keep going.?

Martin Luther King Jr. said the ultimate measure of a person is where they stand during times of challenge and controversy.

We've seen the division in the past few months, and we've seen the inequity around the globe. But we've also seen an unusual sense of togetherness and commitment to society. The majority have stepped up and done what's right.

The lesson here is not in taking one for the rest of the team, but in our willingness to fight together. We may not be able to beat this bug completely, but we're trying.

I can't remember a time in recent history when the entire country ? or the entire planet ? has worked together for a common goal.

Yes, a lot of it was born out of fear and ignorance, but nevertheless we pulled together.

My faith in humanity has been bolstered by the hard work and dedication of my fellow human beings. From front-line health care workers, politicians and policy-makers, to the media, average citizens and small business owners, we found common ground. That's really remarkable these days.

Quotable quotes and platitudes aside, we must all decide for ourselves what we want to see in the coming months, and year ahead.

Do we want more of the same, or do we want to rise above, achieve more and cherish that proverbial ounce of prevention? We can't emerge triumphant if we all scurry off in different directions. We have to walk, or run, together, in perfect harmony and unison.

The skills and qualities we've gained out of necessity can serve us well. Our new-found knowledge can apply to our personal and family lives. Every piece of valuable knowledge can be put to good use. Undoubtedly, we counted our blessings over the holidays. Our good fortune shouldn't be recognized just once a year, but on a daily basis. I think if we all did more of that, it would put a spring in our steps.

We should shy away from conflict and needless confrontations, in society and in our own homes. Let's vow to be the fire extinguishers of those annoying spot fires that erupt. Let's think twice, maybe even three times, before we blather on.

I think many of us have learned a little more about perspective. While we still may be not fully comfortable walking in other people's shoes, we can at least recognize the challenges people have faced. We shouldn't be quick to judge, and we should maybe give others the benefit of the doubt.

Or at least be patient.

We don't know just how much our fellow men and woman have been through. We can't fathom their losses or suffering.

We've been inundated with information, misinformation and stressed out by it all.

Now, more than ever, it's important to stop missing those moments. There are hundreds of moments each day, and many are special. Don't wait for them when one comes along, snatch it up!

And go out of your way to be tolerant and just a little more courteous.

Put aside our petty differences and vow to learn more about others. I've joined my daughter in reading about world religions for her high school course. I find it not only fascinating, all religions are more similar than we think.

We are all human beings, children of God.

Let's try to act like it in 2022!