

What if the mundane just isn't enough?

By Mark Pavilons

A current radio commercial notes that one of the toughest decisions adults face is what to cook for dinner each night.

If you have children, you know all too well the trials and tribulations of this nightly chore.

But wow, just how mundane and unimpressive our lives can be at times.

Sure, we learn, grow, mature, hone our talents, all so we can pop something into the microwave?

I'm not sure this is what God had in mind when he kicked us out of the Garden of Eden. Serves us right!

For many of us, a snapshot of our daily lives would be unremarkable, boring and even trivial.

Sad, but true.

Human beings are capable of some monumental things. We're strong, resilient, dexterous, agile and quite intelligent. We can learn and become wise, unlike millions of other creatures that share our planet. The only things we can't do is fly or hold our breaths longer than a minute or so.

Does making kids' lunches qualify as a task worthy of such beings? Can doing laundry possibly be part of a road to enlightenment? Will select-a-size paper towels lead us to greatness?

There are times when I shake my head, wondering if I was made for something better, something with a little more umph. Okay, in my current physical condition, it's unlikely I'd pass the physical for the space program, nor am I qualified to lead a scientific mission into the Amazon. But maybe I could become a civil servant, politician, reality TV actor or some sort of ?specialist.?

I've heard it said that ?life is what happens when you're busy making other plans.? True enough.

When I was a teen, preparing for a career, I never thought of disposable diapers, RESPs, life insurance or how to handle a mother-in-law. It never crossed my mind that I'd have to unclog a drain, separate recyclables or deal with pink eye.

I espouse the virtues of a good vacuum cleaner. I price match every week. I accept freebies. I brown bag it. I am constantly on the lookout for a good toilet bowl cleaner. I know how to use a rental carpet cleaner.

OMG, I've turned into a combination Robin Williams and June Cleaver!

Maybe it's a phase I'm going through, as I extend beyond middle age and there are fewer pages of my life story ahead than behind.

Mind you, I've got plenty of time to achieve greatness and notoriety. After all, Grandma Moses began her painting career in her 70s and Colonel Sanders began his franchise in his 60s.

Robert F. Kennedy said the purpose of life is ?to contribute in some way to making things better.?

Is our quest to find the meaning of life pointless and selfish? Are we here to experience everything we can out of this blue green ball floating in space? Few circumstances or predicaments allow us to simply explore the world, eat, drink and be merry from adulthood until death.

I envy my oldest daughter who tends to grab the bull by horns. When the urge takes hold, she dashes off to Wasaga Beach to watch the sunset. She recently returned from an outdoor adventure in Alberta, seeing first-hand some of the most beautiful landscapes this country has to offer.

She's travelled and done humanitarian work literally around the globe. She has already done much more than yours truly.

There are some simple and undeniable truths about life.

There are those who struggle each day to stay alive and get enough to eat. They can't think much beyond the end of the week, because their plight is such a challenge. Some are plagued by illness, disease and poverty and while they hope for the best, they simply cling to the idea their children will survive into adulthood.

Thousands of our fellow men, women and children die each day in tragic natural disasters, wars, plagues and from malnutrition.

Millions of our ancestors perished in two world wars and various other conflicts. Many never got a chance to experience life much beyond age 30.

If I were young again, could I make a difference? If I knew then what I know now, would I make different life choices?

Maybe it's all about perspective.

Maybe school uniforms, nutritious snacks, light bulbs, bargain-hunting, multi-vitamins, proper footwear, skin moisturizer, UV rays, cotton balls, zip lock sandwich bags, electric garage door openers, robot vacuums and kitchen sinks are all part of the puzzle known as modern living.

The answer may not be blowing in the wind, as suggested by Bob Dylan, but it could be right in front of us, in those seemingly ordinary things.

Nurturing our children, respecting the environment, taking care of our bodies and treading carefully are part of the bigger picture. They're all part of an evolving humanity.

Our purpose may not involve some grandiose accomplishment or achieving guru status. It may simply involve being good parents to the next generation. It may be a means to an end ? paying dues as it were.

When your dog licks your face or has that guilty look on her face, it's hard not to feel happy about life with these four-legged family members.

When your children want to save the world and have a bright spark in their creative eyes, how can it be anything less than meaningful?

When you take your spouse's hand and walk into the sunset, how can it be less than wondrous?

Legendary? No. Monumental? Depends. Memorable? Definitely.

Perhaps our lives are like dominoes ? every little wiggle impacts the whole. And every piece is vitally important.