

Our lives are definitely not made from scratch

MARK PAVILONS

Renowned astrophysicist Carl Sagan is often quoted as saying in order to make an apple pie from scratch, you first have to invent the universe. In other words, in order for us to make anything, the universe had to be created first. To expand on this, think of all the things that came before our kitchen: The Big Bang, neutrons, ions, atoms, moon, sun, ocean tides, dinosaurs, homo erectus, fire, water, soil, seeds, cows, milk, apple trees. Our story ??yours and mine ? began a very long time ago. I love being an old dog and grasping the new tricks that come my way. And they can come from many sources. I recently learned some valuable lessons, thanks to my offspring. The one ?bonus??of having children reach a certain age is they begin to teach the teacher. I learned that my kids aren't what they're cracked up to be, and there's much more than meets the eye. They have a tremendous amount to offer the world. My wife and I took our son Liam to a music studio, to record his first two songs, as admission submissions for a college course on songwriting and performing. At this point in time, this is his passion and drive should never be discounted or ignored. I have interviewed dozens of musicians, accomplished singers, songwriters and chart busters. While I had an idea of the intricacies involved in the engineering, mixing of music, seeing it first hand gave me a new appreciation of the skills and talents of those behind the scenes. They are the magicians, the miracle workers, the gem polishers. Okay, we all have to be realistic in this tough industry. My son's original lyrics and his passion for performing is not only obvious, but really cool. The words and messages he's created go beyond his mere 18 years. Being a poet myself, I am impressed. He said he felt like a natural in front of the microphone. As I watched him, I felt all warm and fuzzy inside, like when you add another log on the camp fire. I mentioned that it's likely the best money he's spent and the results are a couple of concrete examples of his creativity. Music has always been subjective and there are so many genres to choose from, there's something for everyone. Liam likes Eminem-esque old school rap. Not my cup of tea per se, but hey, there's a lot to be said for ?going for it.? In my youth, there were no public recording studios, digital mixes or laptop programs. There were no laptops! Back to the universe. In order for Liam to be standing in front of a studio microphone the universe had to create sound, those pleasant combinations of notes and rifts and rhymes and verses. During a BBQ session in the back yard, my youngest decided to grab some ?we? time and bombard me with questions. We talked about TV shows, religion and the origin of the universe. Not your typical BBQ conversation, but I was more than happy to partake. A deep thinker this one, our third born. A fan of the Netflix show Lucifer, my daughter questioned stereotypes of Satan. Could he be less evil and more judgemental? Wasn't he an angel once? Just what is the Prince of Darkness's job anyway? Good questions all. Incidentally, the TV show comes up first in a Google search for Lucifer, not the world's biggest villain. Surprisingly, Lucifer is associated with the planet Venus. Its unique movements and irregular appearances in the sky led to a mythology surrounding celestial gods falling from the heavens to the earth and its underworld. In classical mythology, Lucifer is the bringer of light. One of the earliest biblical references comes from Isaiah 14:12:??How you have fallen from heaven, morning star, son of the dawn! You have been cast down to the earth.??It refers to an unnamed Babylonian king, not the devil. Our more modern concepts tend to come from Dante, Milton and Hollywood, who created some fabulous stories about an angel's fall from grace. In their versions, Satan was cast out of a Heaven for starting a revolt against God, and his punishment was to guard the gates of hell. Demon, or keeper of demons? My daughter pondered and blurted out her own definition of Hades. She espoused that one's own mental torments, guilt and horrible memories would be far more painful than a world of fire and brimstone. Out of the mouths of babes! Had our discussion of the universe come full circle? Not in a long shot. My daughter then pointed out that everything we perceive as real and proven comes from human beings, and our own minds. In other words, most of what we know is an educated guess, based on the knowledge we have handy. Should we encounter proof that Einstein's theory of relativity was off, things will change dramatically. If we discover that Pythagoras was merely nuts, some of our mathematical concepts may be in question. He did, after all, believe in the ?transmigration of souls? a form of reincarnation. Venus also figured prominently in his field of study. That pesky Venus seems to have great influence on us humans! Venus is another creation of the universe and perhaps in order to make woolly mammoth stew, we first had to create Venus! Putting the whole chicken and egg scenario aside, what's my point??Well, in order for people and families to come together, revel in one another's talents and accomplishments, the entire universe had to be in sync, perfect if you will. Questioning our existence is all part of the recipe.