

No such things as coincidences

MARK PAVILONS

Life as we know it, every single moment, is coincidence. Or is it? From the venerable Forrest Gump, miracles happen every day: I don't know if we have a destiny, or if we're all just floatin' around accidental-like on a breeze, but I, I think maybe it's both. Maybe both is happenin' at the same time. Well said, Forrest. The term 'coincidence' is defined as a 'remarkable' concurrence of events or circumstances with no apparent causal connection. In other words, the odds are extremely low when such 'coincidences' take place. It's like a bunch of cosmic forces coming together and pow! Much like the Big Bang, I suppose, but on a smaller scale. Many believe there are no such things as 'accidents,' which are unforeseen, unplanned and likely unintentional. To fully determine whether we mere mortals are unpaid talent in a huge cosmic sit-com requires some investigation and fact-based reasoning. According to psychiatrist and get this, 'coincidence researcher' Bernard Beitman, there are definitely synchronicities. Everything and everyone, he says, is are connected in some intangible network. Both Einstein and Jung came up with similar theories to describe seemingly bizarre happenings. Others tend to think it's just our way of searching for some sort of structure. We want to believe there's a higher order, a template, that all of us follow. If not, we're just like those 'wishes' blowing around the wind, looking for a place to land. Not very reassuring. When discussing coincidence, maybe it's chance we're trying to figure out. But chance holds a real possibility, a mathematical likelihood that something may or will happen. For instance, there's a chance that for every two dozen or so people reading this column some will share a birthday. But if those same people bump into each other at the grocery store, reaching for the same bag of chips, well that's just weird. Not very significant, I'll admit. Other deep thinkers say the greatest coincidence is if there were no coincidences. What? In other words, in an otherwise orderly universe, there has to be some random occurrences. Maybe coincidences aren't that unusual at all. Mathematicians say that considering there are 7 billion souls on this planet 'people dashing to and fro, living, dreaming, shopping, getting gas, watching TV' the odds are in favour of chance encounters. Maybe it's wishful thinking, since humans have a knack for deciphering unusual phenomena. I like to use the example of the lottery. A lot of people say playing the lottery is a tax on people who can't do math. Sure, the odds of winning a Lotto 6/49 jackpot are roughly 1 in 14 million. High, yes, but not impossible. The proof is that typically someone (or more than one) wins the pot every week or so. Luck, coincidence, chance? Yes, all of those things. My reasoning is, if someone is bound to win, why can't it be me? When there are no logical explanations of inexplicable events, humans often turn to religion, spirituality, the cosmos and even paranormal. But there's that famous line regarding soothsayers 'why don't we ever see a newspaper headline that reads 'Psychic wins lottery'? If the universe, and all those souls and blobs of energy, have the power to come together in extraordinary fashion, why don't they hand me those winning lottery numbers? Deepak Chopra had a neat way of looking at things when he said: 'When you live your life with an appreciation of coincidences and their meanings, you connect with the underlying field of infinite possibilities.' Coincidence is God's way of using a pen name in the great story that unfolds every minute of every day. I truly believe that the All Mighty does have a sense of humour and maybe he tosses out these weird events as a bit of a joke just to see if we're paying attention. Maybe, like a perfect storm, a coincidence is a coming together of ideal conditions. Let me take you on a fantastic journey, one that spans dimensions. What if our whole concept of life, time, space and reality are way off the mark? What if we're like the Whos that Horton found living on a speck of dust? What if we're technologically advanced pixels, in some giant alien's hand-held video game? Okay, that's a bit extreme. But is it any less possible? Try this celestial pondering 'our planet and each human being and animal are made up of compounds, chemicals, elements and substances. These same substances are abundant in the universe and some are actually produced by suns. How can that possibly be a coincidence? If we tiny human critters share source material with everything and everyone in the universe, that's crazy cool. We're all related on some atomic level. Now, back down on earth. If all of this is somehow inexplicably tied together in some magical way, then coincidences are not so far fetched are they? There is order and balance in the universe. There is a template, a set of instructions. There is a logical set of physical laws in motion that not only explain our origins, but dictate our future. Or maybe not. Maybe God lost a round of ecumenical blackjack or got in too deep in at the infinite roulette table. Maybe humans were like Jack's magic beans, tossed indiscriminately around the blue-green ball we call home. Once planted, what grew, grew. Coincidence? I think not!

