

Examining our losses and gains

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As the end of 2020 draws near, many of us are possibly examining our lives in a different way. There's nothing like a pandemic to smack us in the face and wake us up a bit. Just what have we lost this year? And what have we gained? Jesus put it in perspective when he said: "For what shall it profit a man, if he gain the whole world, and suffer the loss of his soul?" In other words, until now, we've been flying full speed ahead, cashing in, spending freely and making money. The Canadian economy, pre-COVID, was hot, right along with low interest rates and a strong housing market. Some of our fellow men and women may very well have profited a great deal, in exchange for their souls. But when we all hit the COVID wall, full force, everything changed. Losses mounted and gains were few and far between. Some say you can't have one without the other, in a sort of symbiotic way. Others concentrate on viewing things differently. Look at opportunities and learn from both. In our materialistic world, we tend to view loss and gain in a financial sense. It's bottom-line economics. Enjoying a profit, or coming out ahead, is always good. These days, though, I think breaking even is okay, too. Maybe it's part of the cosmic plan, like Yin and Yang, to balance everything out. There has to be equal amounts of both, so the universe remains stable, and doesn't wobble off into oblivion. Or maybe it's just us. We have night and day, cold and warm, up and down. Are these necessities of universal laws of nature, or mere coincidences? I suppose we have to get to know one so we can embrace the other. If we never experience loss, we may never know the joy that gain brings. But if you ask me, I'd rather be free from the pain of loss and the dull ache left in my heart. I'm sure this year has been filled with many losses, for almost all of us. Some have lost their jobs and source of income. This, given the current realities, may be very hard to replace. Most have lost a certain amount of freedom. The restrictions placed by the pandemic have definitely curbed our ability to travel and even gather in social circles. The dust has not settled yet, and when we begin the upward climb to our routines again, we may be shocked at what we see. Many familiar businesses will no longer welcome customers. A lot of moms and pops will be will have aged, perhaps not so gracefully. We may continue to approach people at arm's length and with full face protection. Early retirement? Well those plans just got pushed back a few years. It may not even be humanly possible to fully calculate the loss, in terms of dollars and cents. All we have to do is look at provincial and federal deficits to get an inkling of the billions of dollars shelled out to keep citizens and businesses afloat. A tell tale sign will be how we celebrate and spend this holiday season, which remains to be seen. I've heard the malls are packed, but I don't know if people are going hog wild or just window shopping. I really want to enjoy a big family dinner this Christmas and hope the powers that be hold off on lockdowns. And what have we gained? Well, I'd like to think we've all had to become more tolerant and patient. We've had to compromise, adjust and adapt. These are good things, aren't they? There's no question the news from day to day, week to week, has often been bleak. But we've also witnessed some incredible acts of kindness and altruistic gestures. Just last week, the community of Schomberg rallied to help a single mom and showered her with necessities. This happened within a day of word spreading on social media. This type of "gain" really can't be measured, and it's a win-win for all involved - the recipients and the community itself. King Township, the Chamber of Commerce, and this newspaper all promote shopping locally and helping our own. I'm a firm believer in supporting local businesses and my spending habits have likely increased a bit, simply because I know they need it. As an average working stiff, I know how hard it is to make ends meet and put food on the table. I can't really imagine what it takes to keep a business, retail store or restaurant going. I've gained an appreciation of politicians. Yes, you heard it right. Throughout all of this, politicians, including our mayor, premier and prime minister, have doggedly attacked this unprecedented disaster. They work tirelessly to not only curb the trends, but keep people safe, healthy and financially secure. They've stepped up and they did what was necessary. There are so many countries around the world that just don't have the means like we do here in Canada. For that, we should all be grateful for the society we've helped to build. While I'm currently sporting my pandemic hairdo, I have seen a dentist and a specialist. I managed to get snow tires on our vehicles. I managed to get paper towels. I also helped my main charity stay on track with its fundraising goals. All gains, to be sure. Maybe our upcoming gains don't have to be huge wins or major victories. Maybe a dozen tiny, little things will do just fine. It's been said that every day above ground is a good day. It's true if we keep our heads, maintain perspective and embrace what it means to be part of the human race.

