

Every life is worth living and worth the effort

MARK PAVILONS

Everything is irrelevant but this: to embrace life. To feel it. To savor it. To love it.?? Marty Rubin

For Julie Andrews, her favourite things included raindrops on roses and schnitzel with noodles. I happen to like those things, too. We've all been dealt the worst possible hand over the past year. At times, it seemed impossible to win a round, let alone come out ahead of the game. At the edge of the abyss, sometimes all we can do is enjoy the view! Now, more than ever, I think we should do what Julie sang about all those years ago, and list some of our favourite things. My wife often tells me that enjoying life doesn't have to cost a lot, or anything at all. You just have to be creative. Kudos to her. She's right, and I should listen to her more often. Yes, I'll admit the silver lining is really hard to find sometimes. It's much easier to be enveloped in the gray storm clouds, strong winds and hard-hitting sleet. The situation, both here and abroad, is improving with each passing day. By mid-summer, most Ontarians should be vaccinated, and perhaps then life can continue on an upward curve. Until then, we must remain vigilant, but we can also remain optimistic, and find those "noodles" in our lives. For those who get depressed, we need some lifelines, some ropes to pull us out of our doldrums. We need things that bring us joy, and help us smile. Life is not only worth living, it's worth loving.



I love life. There's so much to learn and see all the time, and nothing nicer for me than to wake up, and the sky is blue.???Pattie Boyd

I love sunshine on my face. It gives me strength and fills me with warmth, both literally and figuratively. As the days continue to warm up, I can't wait for spring to slide into summer, when the back yard becomes my new special place. Hopefully this summer, the beach will be an option. Maybe we can hit the open road once again and take in many special sights and sounds of this amazing province of ours. At the top of all of our personal lists should be love. Feeling it, being consumed by it, and sharing it with families is really what our existence is all about. It's why we're here, at least fundamentally. That love can involve many things, from enjoying Saturday reruns of Cash Cab to making hot dogs for lunch. It can involve movie nights and board games. It must include impromptu food fights! I'm sure we all agree that a lot of things in life are intangible. We know what they are, feel them, but can't always explain them. That's the beauty of our existence - the mystery of it all. I found out, quite early in life, that work and buying material things does not translate to happiness. Yes, we work so we can pay our bills, put a roof over our heads and hot meals on the table. This is a never-ending chore, often a struggle. We have to recognize what Kim tells me. It's not the gifts, the shiny new BBQ or luxury car. It's not the t-bones or Dom or designer runners. It's the family gatherings, the special occasions, the discussions, debates and laughter. Some of my favourite "things" are actually quite inexpensive. Chicken wings, beer, pizza and chips. Taking long walks and having long talks with the kids. Telling my youngest daughter "ich liebe dich" from time to time. That fact that my children are healthy and relatively happy are things money can't buy. I also actually enjoy crying at a sad movie. Our empathy allows us to

connect to our fellow human beings. We've always been 'dog people' and yes, I still get a kick out of my dogs' antics. From chasing them around trying to snatch a toy away, to teasing them with the flashlight trick, it's all good. Being intelligent humans, there are many deeper meanings to our lives. Most of these take time, wisdom and experience to fully appreciate. Having reached the age of 'wisdom' I am now at liberty to share. I (all of us) am someone who can make a real difference in the world. It's not always at the forefront of my mind, but there are times when I believe this to be true. It's also a lot of fun to affect people without realizing it. Readers often comment on how my columns have touched them. Thank you for sharing! It's funny, though, this thing called life. Despite our aches and pains, slower movements and frustrations, each breath reminds us we're still here. Here is better than down there! There are times we may give up on ourselves, but it's so comforting to know there are those who never give up on us. For my wife Kim, I am forever thankful. The love and support of our life partners is not only rare, it's priceless. And, as faulty as I sometimes am, every day brings more chances to 'get it right.' When we fear we can't do something or are afraid to face new challenges, just think about the things you have done. You likely have a long list of really neat accomplishments. As a Virgo, I rely on order in my life. But the real beauty of our existence is now knowing what's around the corner, or what will happen next. There are times when I'm perched in my special spot on the couch and I just relax all my muscles. I enjoy the moment and feel content. I love that feeling and wish I could bottle it. So, my friends, we don't have to be inventors, designers or researchers. We don't have to be writers or poets or artists. An average life is well worth the effort.