

Being engaged, involved and taking up a cause



Mark Pavilons

?How wonderful it is that nobody need wait a single moment before starting to improve the world.?

Anne Frank

We often feel powerless and just part of a giant machine, that proverbial minor cog in a vast series of gears.

True, there is a great deal that's simply beyond or out of our control. I am reminded of the Serenity Prayer, penned by American theologian Reinhold Niebuhr: ??God, grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change, The courage to change the things I can, And the wisdom to know the difference.?

I find my mind turns to these very sentiments on an almost daily basis.

I am also reminded that if we are not part of the solution, then we are part of the problem.

Canadians, by and large, are a passive, reserved bunch. Sure, we can gather and rally to any cause and have a great sense of national pride. But when it comes to complaining, or righting a wrong, we tend to err on the side of caution, preferring not to rock the boat. In my line of work, I deal with politicians at all levels, discussing the issues of the day. There are many who are politically active, but unfortunately, they are in the minority.

Even during elections, it's a bit of a roller coaster of enthusiasm and apathy. Sometimes we have a poor voter turnout, and other times, we'll have a little over 50% show up at the polls in municipal elections.

Many don't take an active interest in local municipal politics. But this is the level where your councillors and mayor work on your behalf, accept your property tax dollars, and provide services you use on a daily basis. Your property taxes represent a good chunk of your hard-earned money, so you should be concerned where they're going.

You should feel, as you drive home into King each evening, you're returning to your own paradise.

You may not feel the need to attend council meetings or call the mayor, but let me tell you, they are employed by you, the taxpayer, and they welcome any questions and input you may have. Don't feel your questions are irrelevant and please exercise your democratic privileges!

Feeling frustrated is one thing. ?Being apathetic is quite another. While I seldom use the word ?hate? I do reserve it for blatant apathy.

Fortunately, there's little of that here in King Township, as evidenced recently by the annual Community Showcase and Volunteer Appreciation Night. It was a time to honour the army of local ?activists,? who provide countless hours of their time to pretty much every corner of the Township, and every public event that is held each week. They do it to fill a need and because they want to contribute. Put simply, they care. And they're all very humble about it, too.

Many of us have our pet causes to support, for various reasons. It really doesn't matter what group, organization or societal issue we tackle, as long as we do something.

?You may never know what results come of your actions, but if you do nothing, there will be no results.?

Mahatma Gandhi

My 15-year-old daughter and group of classmates travelled to Ottawa last week, for the large-scale 16th national March for Life. From experience, I know not to debate this issue in print, and I respect all views on the subject. For Lexie, it was something she believes in and how can I, as a supportive father, discourage any sort of ?action??

Ever since she returned from a mission trip to help migrant workers in the Dominican Republic, Lexie has some new-found enthusiasm to save the world, or at least make a difference and take a stand.

Isn't that the type of young people we want to develop as a community, or a nation? Don't we want a society of doers and thinkers?

?It had long since come to my attention that people of accomplishment rarely sat back and let things happen to them. They went out and happened to things.?

Leonardo da Vinci

I give Lexie full marks for having such a giving heart and compassionate soul. These are things no parent, no school, can teach, only encourage.

We are still knee-deep in a selfish, me-me-me society, where materialism reigns supreme. I read that in Taiwan and Luxembourg, cell phones outnumber people! Will it come to the point where gizmos, entertainment devices and luxury items are more important than our neighbours?

Speaking of which, I have always made it a point to get to know my neighbours. It's cordial and it provides a sense of community. Neighbours look out for one another.

The media often singles out, even makes fun of so-called ?tree-huggers,??Greenpeace activists and those who get hauled away by the cops during sit-ins and protests.

It's easy to be critical of ?activism,? but perhaps we all should consider taking up a cause that piques our interest. I'm not suggesting we all go out and chain ourselves to the nearest tree, but something is better than nothing, don't you think?

?There may be times when we are powerless to prevent injustice, but there must never be a time when we fail to protest.?

Elie Wiesel

Instead of lining for gas at midnight to save a few pennies, why not force the government's hand?

Instead of paying more for less, why not look at what politicians are doing and where our tax dollars are being spent?

Instead of turning away, why not look homelessness in the face and help?

?If everyone demanded peace instead of another television set, then there'd be peace.?

? John Lennon

Right on, John!