

## Getting to know one another and ourselves



### Mark Pavilons

We are more connected than we tend to think.

Each one of us humans has many things in common ??we're all members of the same race; we are either husbands, wives, brothers, sisters, parents, sons, daughters and friends.

We are more than the sum of our parts and we are more than the total of our experiences. We're not really strangers, you know. Most of us laugh and cry over the same situations, but of course some of us (guilty as charged)?have an admittedly odd sense of humour.

Most of have felt love ? so much that it made us cry.

I?once asked filmmaker Norman Jewison about the meaning of life as he sees it, hoping for a profound answers. All he wants people to take away from his films is an understanding of ourselves. Maybe that was profound.

It can take an entire lifetime to truly know yourself, and to feel comfortable in your skin. I have known many people at various ages, from all walks of life, who were still learning and trying to figure it all out. There is no definitive answer.

If it's a challenge to really know ourselves, how difficult is it to know our friends, family members and significant others to know us, too?

Here are some questions to ask your friends, colleagues and even family members to see if they who knows who. Do they have a nickname??What's their favourite meal or restaurant??What sports do they enjoy and what's their favourite flavour of ice cream??What type of music, TV shows and movies do they like? Have they ever run out of gas or failed their driving test?

These may seem trivial but they can reveal details about us, and how observant we are regarding those around us.

I?have met hundreds of people in the community and I?have gotten to know many fairly well. I believe some have gotten to know me as well, either in person or through my columns.

I have found it quite easy to get to know King residents. Is it the water??Is the fresh air??Why are they so happy and friendly? And for my part, getting to know others means making an effort, taking a few moments to share a laugh or really listen to what they're saying. The rewards are almost unfathomable.

I like to think of myself as a good reader of character. By and large, I can tell if people are decent, genuine, honest. I?can sense if they're truthful and committed to a cause. I know whether they've been blessed, or had to struggle most of their lives. I?can feel if they cherish their family above all.

Psychic abilities or intuition??Hey, if I owned a crystal ball, I would have won the lottery a long time ago and I'd be on the beach

somewhere, not writing these words (not that there's anything wrong with that).

So, let's accept the fact most of us don't know one another's eye colour, designer clothing preferences, hobbies or what type of car they drive. We likely don't know if they prefer a lake or ocean or whether their heart lies in the city or country.

As social creatures and neighbours who share the same piece of real estate, we tend to care about one another. Let's also accept that maybe some of these trivialities don't really matter at all. What does matter is taking the time to get to know one another and making an effort to exchange pleasantries. Simply smiling and saying "hello" as we pass on the street or at a community event is more than cordial.

In many ways, we're all in the same boat, burdened by the same pressures. We all have good days and bad days and we all make mistakes.

I have known wealthy people and I have known poor ones, too. Everyone has a story and everyone has a heart. I enjoyed packing up food for the needy just as much as rubbing elbows with the elite at expensive fundraisers. I have enjoyed limo rides and I have been unemployed. I have felt pain and I have known joy. I have lost all of my family members and I have witnessed the birth of all of my children.

They say all of these are necessary in our journey. I need my pain, my bad experiences - they have shaped me and provided me with perspective, and a certain amount of wisdom.

I have wanted more. But I have always felt it was important to be a good person.

We can regret what we've done, and regret what we failed to do. But we can't regret being human.

We're not so different after all.

Does getting to know our fellow men and women improve our lives? There's no doubt.

To come and go in obscurity, without ever touching other people's lives, is sad.

It's so easy to create ripples in society's huge pond - one tiny stone will do it! I'll never forget when my dad taught me to skip stones on the water, and when I taught my son the very same thing.

Let's all skip some stones, reach out, be less judgemental and more open to others' ideas.

There's no time like the present to get to know one another.

And ourselves.