

'Wish lists' change with each generation

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What a difference a generation makes!



I know those among us who are in their 70s and 80s know full well the meaning of that observation.

Our world has experienced the greatest strides, conflicts, inventions and technological prowess in the past 50 years, than in all the previous eons.

The whirlwind changes were continuous, not really limited to any particular generation or decade. But boy did the world experience a wild ride, from the peace and love era of the 1960s, a time when millions of post-war baby boomers became young adults. They wanted change and protests abounded.

Minimum wage was \$1 per hour and a teacher's salary averaged \$5,000 per year. Woodstock, Elvis, the Beach Boys and the Beatles. In the 1970s, the Beatles broke up; we saw the first computer floppy disks; the U.S. pulled out of Vietnam; Sony introduced the Walkman; Elvis dies and Star Wars arrived.

The 1980s were highlighted by John Lennon's murder; Pac-Man; Rubik's Cube; E.T., Michael Jackson's Thriller; the invasion of the Falklands; Space Shuttle Challenger explodes and the Berlin Wall falls.

The 1990s were characterized by Nelson Mandela; the Hubble Space Telescope; the fall of the Soviet Union; Waco, Texas; the trial of O.J. Simpson; Operation Desert Storm; mad cow; the visit by Comet Hale-Bopp; the Euro and Viagra.

With each decade came different expectations.

For me, now a young mature adult, life in the 1980s and 1990s was rather simple. We worked, could afford gas, car insurance, going to the movies and having a couple of drinks at local watering holes.

We seldom worried about the future, natural disasters or how strange the world had become.

I suppose when you're immersed in it, living it, things seem different.

Sure, there were changes all the time and most were met with optimism, even excitement.

Dating, marriage and starting a new chapter of your life wasn't that complicated, or expensive.

It took me a while to truly enjoy life, however.

After I met Kim and we dated for several months, my mom urged us to take a trip to the sunny Caribbean. Prior to that, it never really interested me. I'd been to Florida, parts of the U.S., Europe and Vegas, but never the islands.

I recall our first trip vividly, for a number of reasons. It was March Break for Kim, so we decided to go to Jamaica. But, as fate would have it, the airline we booked went bankrupt a week before our departure, so we scrambled for an alternative.

We chose Freeport, Bahamas and simply loved it. It was fun, crazy and hot. From there, Kim and I enjoyed Vegas, the Dominican Republic, Atlantic City, St. Maarten and Nassau.

My last trip was more than a decade ago. Kim convinced me to accompany my aging mom down south for what would be her last trip abroad. We chose Cancun, Mexico, even though it was commercial and a haven for young antics. But the hotel and all-inclusive package couldn't be beat.

My mom thoroughly enjoyed herself and even praised me for my karaoke rendition of Foreigner's Cold as Ice one night at the hotel. She watched me climb the Mayan ruins at Chichen Itza and we got stuck in a tropical downpour. We enjoyed good food, a great view and a nice time together.

She mentioned years later it was the best trip she'd ever had.

And that made me glad.

They say we live vicariously through others, mostly our children.

I am just beginning to experience that with my eldest, Lexie, who's only 15.

She just returned from San Juan, Puerto Rico, enjoying a vacation. And now she's off with the Girl Guides on a tour of several European countries.

My daughter, the world traveller! She's known for her use of the term YOLO - "You Only Live Once." A good philosophy to have, especially at such a young age.

She already has her wish list of countries she'd love to explore - Egypt, Australia and the Orient.

She has a heart of gold; is grounded; has solid morals, and a genuine desire to help others.

And we'll continue to feed her appetite for exploration, even if it means going without for the rest of our lives! At least I know she's somewhat conservative - her dream car is a lime green Ford Fiesta!

And this generation gap is reflected in my own personal wish list.

At the top of that list is the hope that my 2002 mini-van keeps running without needing expensive repairs.

Next would be landing that job of a lifetime, or at least securing a second job to pay for household necessities.

And I would follow that with hopes of getting away with my wife for a weekend, and trying to put money away for a special trip to mark our 20th anniversary in 2015.

Next would be putting more aside for our children's post-secondary education. We already have modest RESPs, but as the costs of a good education continue to skyrocket, so too does the need to invest even more.

I've never expected a great deal out of life, or for anything to fall into my lap. And as I grow even more wise (that's a nice way to say I'm aging), my entire raison d'etre centres around my children and my wife.

As a believer in something beyond, hopefully I'll be rewarded up above, or be returned to the earth in another life befitting my stature! If not, I hope one of my kids becomes a cutting-edge scientist and puts me on ice!

A guy can hope.

YOLO!