

We need to consider future prospects



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I'm starting to get a little worried.

My male child just earned his G1 licence and he's currently taking [Driving Lessons Newcastle](#). He's constantly asking questions, and of course, correcting my mistakes behind the wheel.

The whole situation has made me reflect on my own journey learning to drive. It took me such a long time to master everything! Learning to drive has completely changed nowadays though. My son told me that one of his friends is even completing an [online traffic school](#) course to boost his driving skills. I was amazed.

To be honest, it would not surprise me at all if his friend passes his driving test very soon. He lives in Manchester and he has been learning to drive for a few months now and seems to have taken to the roads really quickly. From the sounds of things, if you want to learn to drive quickly and need [driving lessons Manchester](#) is the place to be!

Anyway, my son has been talking about his first car for months, pointing to several very nice models he's interested in. He's well aware of the price tags these modern machines carry and while he's working part-time at No Frills, he has a long way to go.

The other night after work we started talking about careers and income. Right now, he's looking at a degree and profession in astronomy, which may take him to space as an astronaut. He's done a bit of research and found that astronomers with good jobs can earn \$150,000 a year. I pointed out that may not be a starting salary, and at that level, taxes will put a big dent in the take-home pay. He has trouble understanding why we pay income tax at all, let alone what the government does with it.

All I hear are a bunch of expletives about the government stealing his hard-earned money. All together, now! Wait until I explain property taxes to him!

We did some quick math in the kitchen. I mentioned that from his take-home earnings, he will have to make car payments, cover insurance, gas, and maybe groceries and rent. If he's unattached and lives frugally, he may be able to save a few thousand dollars each month.

After our math exercise, he stopped, pondered a bit and blurted out something to the effect that he'll just stay with us and use one of our cars to get to work!

It is to laugh. Got to admire his practicality, however.

But this practical boy child of mine has hit the nail on the head. He's beginning to realize that living in this fine country of ours is not cheap. Fiscal realities hit hard.

Being the straight-shooting father that I am, I point out that the bulk of my take-home pay not only covers our mortgage and bills, but makes sure our kids are clothed and fed. Liam seems to like this current system and finds the alternative ? being on his own and being responsible ?? a bit off-putting and expensive.

I smile when I dish out some nuggets of reality that make my kids frown and squirm. Truth hurts!

Liam also asked me if he'd receive two massive pay cheques if he had two degrees ? one in astronomy and one in medicine. Well, I told him it would be difficult at best to obtain two degrees simultaneously. While these professions may share some common elements, the careers are quite different.

Liam's orthodontist told him to pursue a degree and subject that he truly enjoys. It will make university much more enjoyable and successful. Most of us know that if you enjoy going to work every day and really love what you do, you're pretty much set. During Liam's checkup, Dr. Andrews pointed out that the entire practice of modern medicine is changing dramatically. Before long, most procedures and surgeries will be handled by robotic arms and computers, relegating physicians to mere machine operators. Can you imagine? Scientists have already begun "growing" new teeth, so advances in dentistry are on the horizon.

Further, advances in stem cell research and applications will revolutionize medicine, which is a positive thing. Scientists [look for specific equipment](#) that they can use like centrifuges, to conduct their experiments in the best way to help further their research. Researchers are growing heart cells, with the idea of replacing defective heart tissue with new material. By the way, stem cell research actually began in Toronto in 1961. Dr. James Till and Dr. Ernest McCulloch stunned the scientific world when they discovered transplantable stem cells at the Ontario Cancer Institute in Toronto. Stem cell science in Canada, and around the world, was born. So, will stem cell therapy one day put pharmaceutical companies out of business? Will this happen in my lifetime?? Maybe, but it will likely materialize when my kids are young adults. I really can't wait. Imagine the possibilities.

These changes may have a profound effect on our society. Science and medicine will evolve to a higher plateau, and change health care forever. That will impact a lot of careers and employment prospects.

If all of these things change home care, medical support services, and of course, pharmaceuticals, it may wreak havoc among students and graduates.

Government funding for space sciences is hit and miss.

A sad example locally is the closure of the David Dunlap Observatory in Richmond Hill. It opened in 1935 and was considered the premier Canadian teaching and research facility for astronomy. Its 74-inch mirror (1.88 meters) made it the second largest telescope in the world. Still today, it's still the largest optical telescope in Canada.

The York Region Astronomy Association has submitted a detailed proposal to the Town of Richmond Hill to take over maintenance, operation and program delivery at the facility. But progress is slow.

I think private industry has to come to our rescue. Just as the private sector is looking into reusable space vehicles and trips into space, we'll have to rely on them to elevate the space industry.

To squash such exploration is to kill human curiosity, a quality that has driven our species since time began.

Just as we are looking at ways of preserving nature and heritage, we should be looking at preserving our way of life and our economic prospects for future generations.

We can't simply continue with a "same-old" mentality. We all have to work together to shape our "brave new world."