

RANDOM REFLECTIONS: A Time To Ponder ...

By Kathryn Wishlow

My grandmother used to get rather quiet and serious sometimes and I would ask, "Grandma, what are you thinking about?" She would say, "Honey ... I am just pondering." I would nod wisely and drop the subject, not wanting her to think I did not understand. But I did not! It seemed weird to me as a small child, why in the world a pond would have anything to do with worrying my Grandma? Later, I would have to look up the word "ponder" in the dictionary.

One of the definitions included, "to consider deeply, thoroughly, or meditate upon". Certainly now as an adult, I find myself "pondering" many things. The end of a year can do that to you. I am sure that many people are giving strong consideration to the events of this last year as we move into 2025. Wow! When I was a kid, a year that was *that* far into the future sounded like something on a Star Trek episode or in a science fiction movie. Now here we are!

Things have definitely changed, over the last 30 years ... some for better, some for worse. When talking to some people after being in Newfoundland last fall, and then seeing the musical "Come From Away" before Christmas, I realized that many things changed as a result of that September 11th event. For example, longer lineups at airports while bodies, shoes and luggage were being scanned

became a new normal. Liquids in bottles were downsized, nail scissors and metal files were considered possible lethal weapons, and suspiciously abandoned parcels or a duffle bag were now treated like potential bombs.

Generally life seemed to be improving before COVID-19 ravaged the world. Some things have never recovered from that pandemic which seemed to create many shortages followed by inflation. Then we experienced the Russia-Ukraine war and more recently the ongoing Palestine-Israel situation. All of these contributed to food prices soaring, reasonable accommodation disappearing, used cars became more valuable than new ones, the price of gold skyrocketing, and everyone experiencing increased stress. A lot of radical change in a short amount of time for many people and something else I have been pondering lately.

I learned over Christmas from a couple of healthcare workers that hospitals and homes for the elderly are again experiencing outbreaks of pneumonia, respiratory illnesses and newer mutations of COVID. I have now added some masks to the pockets of my winter coats to accompany the hand sanitizers I already keep handy. Although I have always preferred prevention over cures, I found myself

pondering how others might view my precautions. Generally I am a fairly positive thinking person, not prone to concern without strong evidence it is warranted. However, because I am in contact with so many elderly people and small children, I do feel a strong sense of responsibility to be cautious about spreading any diseases. Therefore it does not really matter to me how my carefulness appears to others.

Certainly we should always focus on more positive outcomes for the future. People need to have hope to get them through discouraging times. I am noticing that looking for "silver linings" or a more positive spin on what is going on in the world around us these days is getting to be quite a challenge. The words from a song my Dad used to sing come to mind ... "Remember whenever you're down and out, the only way is up!" My hope heading into this new year is that the slowdown in inflation anticipated from the higher interest rates, plus the new proposed cross border tariffs will not lead us into a major recession. Something to ponder?

(Kathryn Wishlow belongs to White Pine Writers Inc., a local group of like-minded authors whose first book "The Art of ... Re-Purposing Yourself!" is available locally & at Indigo/Chapters, with more items being published soon. Follow them on FaceBook or www.whitepinewriters.ca)