

How to make things happen

By Constance Scrafield

The notable hour the sun sets every day, shortening the days is the first testament of the passage of time for me. Then the calendar reminds us that it's Thursday already and another week is almost over. Could be our perception of the days passing so quickly was a little warped during the blanket sameness of the Covid period in our recent lives, waking up every morning and counting what day it was, when all the days were the same day.

Depending on how we spent the open spaces that down time offered certainly provided opportunities for learning, branching off in new and often very creative directions, making bread, making things happen that we might never have otherwise. Financially devastating in many ways, the Covid lockdowns also brought surprising pluses.

People connected to their artistic sides, learning to paint, build things ? to write the one story at least that each of us carries and it took an enforced isolation to make all that learning happen. After the fatigue in goofing off, playing video games, reading books other people wrote, inevitably, the urge to be productive or to learn something new was overpowering.

It could be compared to people who have a near-death experience, coming out of it with an embrace-life attitude, re-assessing what priorities have ruled their lives so far and finding fault with them. Suddenly, there is a list of actions or goals that were never there before, a promise-to-self to enjoy more and stress less because the value of living has been conclusively proven and can never again be denied.

What was hoped for from the lessons of Covid was for a wiser and more compassionate world and a greener world but it looks as though those ambitions are not quite the priority they should be.

I guess in many ways, it is like smoking: it's an addiction. People know for sure how harmful smoking is. There is all the evidence to prove that 4,000 toxins are in every cigarette; there are gross photos on the packages and cigarettes are buried behind closed doors so as not to be seen, by government decree.

Even so, I recently had reason to stop a small group of teenagers, each probably over the age of 17 to give me a hand. They were gracious in their assistance but they were mostly smoking. It dazzled and depressed me that up-to-date young people with all the news in the world online to inform them of the dangers would still put their health at risk by smoking ? the poison popularized in the 1920's still a thing in the 21st Century. That is a hundred years of endangering ourselves in spite of the known litany of illnesses and death smoking causes.

So it is with all of the errors of our ways on and on, until our lungs collapse and there is no admitted cure.

Individual experiences from the rigours of the pandemic (not that Covid is a thing of the past; it is still very much among us) have impacted everyone, even those whose lives carried on in a reasonably normal way because attitudes have changed and there is a shift in definitions, in the way people want to work.

Work has largely been re-defined and employers are faced with a new reality that people are no longer willing to work for wages so low they have to scramble to keep their lives together; people do not want the drudgery of commuting after months of getting used to working from home in their track pants and t-shirts, creating the new concept of a Hybrid Workforce, which can be economical and highly productive.

The value of labour is on the slab waiting for a re-definition that makes sense. How much an hour is a person's time worth if there was any respect for that person in the first place? Let's face it, historically employees have not been respected as individual human beings but we were left to our own devices for two years and discovered that respect for ourselves within ourselves. Now we are

prepared to demand respect and wait until employers are ready to give it.

Stories online told about people who had taken courses and found themselves better employment options than the ones that were available prior to Covid's locked down.

Value for labour; respect for the person. Blending the convenience and savings of working from home; giving better production for the savings. Some matters better understood; but corporate philosophies are yet to be fully called to account.

Where do we stand? At an edge.

There has been time to consider, time to see how corporations used Covid to amass record-breaking fortunes and to re-align the world by inventing a crisis of inflation while they play patty-fingers with the prices of everything, starting with energy. There has been time for money to flood the real estate market that has tilted economies around the world.

How the pandemic was handled globally changed more than we realize ? some for the better and much very much for the worst.