

THANK YOUS! (Acknowledgements)

Let us start by thanking the universe, the positive and the negative. Then I want to thank whatever life force put me together for a journey par none, one of falling down and picking myself up, over and over and over and so on. That said, I am also thankful for being given a skill set par none to allow me keep my head on straight, most of the time, and attached all of the time. I needed all my marbles, so to speak, to survive and navigate not only the world wide web of the Internet but also the one(s) that humanity keeps creating.

Next, let me thank facebook, a social media tool. More accurately let me thank the people on facebook who I have been interacting with since 2009. Without their feedback, I doubt I would have attempted this venture of writing a book. This social media journey too has been an interesting, one of twists and unexpected turns with me crying all too often, apologizing when I was out of line, invoking a lot of anger management each time I was disappointed. I have discovered that facebook is the perfect ground for people with mental health issues, con artistry and some who need genuine help and others in need of a kind word. I would say facebook as it interfaces with other social media apps has become our world's unofficial form of group therapy without a specific team leader. And then there are the games of selling and presenting by all sorts of groups and institutions, almost akin to "face to face" life but not quite. Sometimes the facebook experience works better in terms of connecting with other people and sometimes not. For me personally, my 9 years on facebook have been a real learning experience and I do like learning, with a passion.

And then, in the early part of the 21st century, there is a young person I met when I was a leader of young girls who I managed to impress as I was searching out my own conscience over the selling of a fundraising product. In 2008, she asked me to write down my story and a seed was born. Since 2008, my health care professionals provided me with yet more feedback and that I did have something worthwhile to say. That shocked me but in a good way. For those encouraging words, I too am thankful.

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Then there is the first chief editor of this book, my first attempt to tell my story, before the reaper that is not so grimm comes calling. I did have a few false starts and offers to edit, got feedback and realized I had not found the right format nor person in terms of a fit, until this man came along. Like all trial and error journeys in life, I was often disappointed but also began to realize what I needed to throw out, redo, rethink and start over, time and time again. I am avoiding using names as the man who did become my chief editor and new friend, promising to do his best when he did offer to go through what I had written is a bit shy. In this way, we can allow our imagination go wild and simply be grateful for one another and the role(s) we do play in each others lives be it close up or far way, as we move from one day to the next.

That I still live and am as healthy as I am, overall, is a modern day miracle of small steps, consistently listening to a deeper voice in my gut (instinct), with guidance from the beyond and the kindness of people not close to me in lineage but took a little time out, when none of was expected nor asked for, to help get me from one day to the next: a geometry teacher that gave me a pep talk during my Grade 13 departmental exams, a calculus professor who in is quite unassuming ways let me know I mattered, a man who took a chance and gave me a job that lasted my entire career in computing, someone who had worked on the Hubble telescope who took a fresh look at me when others stopped doing so, one policeman who took out an extra hour of his off duty time to ensure I was alright. And many more. I was also fortunate in finding the right medical professionals, more and more, in what we call the alternative fields, to advise me when conventional Western medicine began to fail and with enough financial resources to pay for what insurance does not cover or has stopped covering.

Let us not forget my failing kidneys courtesy life and of people doing, I hope, their best but unable to hear me. Kidney disease, like blood pressure, is silent but not the side effects. When it became clear I had chronic kidney disease early on, between 2002 to 2008, that knowledge was a good wake up call that I needed to pay more attention to my health. Had I not started to take remedial action, immediately, following my instinct more than medical knowledge available,

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I would already be on dialysis or dead. Wake up calls are good no matter what package they are wrapped in.

To say it's been "fun" would be a bold face lie, though there have been funny moments. These days, I am spending a lot of time reflecting back over my 76 plus years and I would say my life has been a meaningful journey despite the solitude I have had to learn to embrace, So let the gratitude journals, for each and everyone of us, take shape so that the day comes that we will have peace on earth. On that day, the really hard work of maintaining peace begins as it is oh so easy to take the little things for granted and get bogged down in our own negativity. Think of us as salmon in the wild, swimming and jumping up stream to go back to where we were born, our spawning grounds to reproduce, grow and keep on going on: BACK HOME!