

LEARNING CURVES

CONTINUING EDUCATION | JOB TRAINING | LIFELONG LEARNING

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HOW TO FIND YOUR BRILLIANT CAREER

BY LISA TRUDEL

In 1980, I watched an Australian film called “My Brilliant Career” based on the 1901 novel by Miles Franklin. It is about a headstrong, free-spirited young woman who dreams of a career in writing and the performing arts. The message encouraged me to find my brilliant career when I relocated from Vancouver to Toronto in 1987. However, like many people, I found a “job” to pay my rent and could not figure out how to discover a career that would set me on my path toward using my writing and public speaking skills and my quest to help others reach their potential. Luckily, I met a Career Counsellor at George Brown College who gave me the formula to finding a brilliant career.

This formula is:

- determine your interests and what is important to you;
- understand your values;
- confirm your skills and what you are naturally good at;
- find an occupation that fits your personal circumstances and feeds all of these needs.

This formula helped me to understand how I could research an interest, direct it toward an occupation, and then take the necessary steps to achieve the education needed to succeed. Here is a summary of how you can connect an interest to an occupation.

1) Interest: To Inspire Through Art.

- Artists play a crucial role in observing and shaping society, and through their art, they inspire ideas, evoke emotions and challenge points of view. They have the opportunity to give a voice to the voiceless and make the world more visually appealing.
- Occupations to Consider: Painter, Sculptor, Graphic Designer, Art Dealer, Fashion Designer, Makeup Artist, Tattoo Artist,

Toy Designer, Home Stager, Actor and Interior Designer.

2) Interest: To Promote Healthy Living.

- Many adults have risk factors which can lead to diseases, disabilities and early mortality. There are several careers to help change these risky behaviors and to encourage better food choices, and increase exercise.
- Occupations to Consider: Dietitian, Nutritionist, Fitness Coach, Personal Trainer, Health Analyst, Fitness Model, Nutrition and Fitness Writer and Wellness Consultant.

3) Interest: To Protect Society from Crime.

- Organized crime, counterfeit products and cybercrime all pose risks to society; however, there are many careers to select that protect or work toward creating laws that will balance safety and privacy concerns.
- Occupations to Consider: Lawyer, Police Officer, Detective, Correctional Officer, Financial Fraud Investigator, Forensic Accountant, Loss Prevention Manager and Cybersecurity Analyst.

4) Interest: To Improve Mental Health.

- Productivity at work and general well-being can be impacted by mental health issues, including depression, anxiety, isolation, and loneliness. There are several careers to pursue that educate on the science of happiness and healing.
- Occupations to Consider: Psychologist, Psychiatrist, Social Worker, Mental Health Nurse, Crisis Counsellor, Grief Coach and Peer Support Worker.

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FRIENDS OF LEARN4LIFE RALLYING TO PRESERVE A VITAL ADULT LEARNING PROGRAM

BY JARED WESTREICH

Friends of Learn4Life is a newly formed group of passionate learners and instructors from across Toronto, united in their fight against the proposed elimination of the TDSB-run general interest and seniors daytime adult learning program, Learn4Life. This program, with its diverse offerings, has become a cornerstone for many in our community.

Last year, I enrolled in a 10-week bicycle repair course, taught by an expert bike mechanic. Each week, we focused on different parts of the bike, practicing repairs on our own bicycles with all the necessary tools provided. Thanks to this course, I now save hundreds of dollars annually by performing my own maintenance. I also took a beginner Spanish class, which was an incredibly enjoyable experience. Practicing with adults of all ages and socializing over beers after class enriched my learning experience and built lasting connections.

In March, TDSB administration presented trustees with budget-balancing suggestions, a challenging task given the provincial funding shortfall in recent years. Among the proposed cuts, one stood out: the complete elimination of Learn4Life, a program with over a century of history. The rationale was that Learn4Life's costs have exceeded its revenues for several years. Despite the program's small deficit, some argue that all of TDSB's limited resources should focus solely on K-12 students.

However, Learn4Life's general interest classes, covering topics from personal finance

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FRIENDS OF LEARN4LIFE RALLYING TO PRESERVE A VITAL ADULT LEARNING PROGRAM

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and computers to car maintenance, sewing, and the arts, provide an affordable way for Toronto residents to learn, socialize, and stay active. At a time when the cost of living is skyrocketing and loneliness is pervasive, these programs are more essential than ever.

The community quickly rallied in response to the proposed cuts. Over 40 people spoke at a trustee meeting, passionately defending the program. Speakers highlighted how Learn4Life classes enriched their lives: a newcomer shared how a volleyball class helped them integrate into the city; young adults appreciated the affordability of activities which would otherwise be out of reach; seniors emphasized the deep community bonds formed over years of attending the same classes; and a couple revealed that their ballroom dancing class was a cherished weekly ritual.

Recognizing the value of adult education, the trustees voted to delay the program's elimination until a community impact report is completed in the fall, effectively saving Learn4Life for the 2024-2025 school year.

Those of us who attended the meeting understood that this victory was only the first step. We exchanged contact information and began strategizing on how to ensure Learn4Life's long-term viability. One key initiative is boosting marketing efforts. Despite its impressive offerings, many Torontonians are unaware of Learn4Life. Our plan includes grassroots marketing campaigns ahead of each registration period to raise

awareness and attract new participants.

The Learn4Life staff have welcomed our support enthusiastically. This fall, volunteers will distribute brochures citywide, and we'll seek support from MPs, MPPs, and city councilors to include Learn4Life sign-up information in their newsletters.

Beyond marketing, we are advocating for adequate provincial funding for public education. A fully funded school board should have the flexibility to support programs like Learn4Life, which add immense value to the community. We also call for transparency in Learn4Life's finances, urging the TDSB to share financial details with trustees and stakeholders to identify and address challenges effectively.

Last year's 20% fee increase led to a predictable drop in enrollment. Now, TDSB administration is proposing another fee hike—30% for the general population and over 100% for seniors. This approach will not balance the budget but rather further decrease enrollment and deepen the deficit. Friends of Learn4Life are challenging this plan and working with TDSB to develop alternative solutions to ensure the program's sustainability.

We recognize that there is much work ahead, but we are committed to preserving the benefits of adult education for future generations. If you've ever wanted to learn to cook, sew, prepare your taxes, birdwatch, sculpt, paint, or dance, I highly recommend checking out Learn4Life. Together, we can ensure this invaluable program continues to thrive.

HOW TO FIND YOUR BRILLIANT CAREER

BY LISA TRUDEL

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5) Interest: To Communicate Ideas and Emotions.

• Thousands of people and companies have stories to tell. Some want to change the world, and some look for customers and followers. If you want to make that story come to life by cutting through the clutter to deliver a clear and inspirational message, you might want to research these following careers. Occupations to Consider: Writer, Editor, Social Media Strategist, Digital Marketing Strategist, Film and Video Editor, Product Marketing Manager and Brand Analyst.

6) Interest: To Foster Understanding and Respect.

• Despite many people having empathy and a goal toward peace, there are still many who suffer from distrust, bias and ignorance. There are several careers that increase understanding and respect in order to heal wounds and to move forward. Occupations to Consider: Conflict Resolution Specialist, Community Advocate, Social Services Coordinator, Union Arbitrator, Mediator and Labour Relations Negotiator.

7) Interest: To Help People Reach Their Potential.

• If you are naturally curious about

why some individuals accomplish more than others and want to equip people to become the best version of themselves, consider the next careers. Occupations to Consider: Teacher, Career Coach, Social Worker, Human Resources Professional, Corporate Trainer, Life Coach, Education Facilitator, and Learning Development Specialist.

In summary, start by blending together your natural interests and passions, your financial goals, market demand, the location of the occupation, and what education is required. Then, research the occupation by conducting an information interview with someone who is a success in the profession. This will help with your motivation, which plays a big role in career success. Ask yourself: are you motivated by money, a sense of purpose, or personal fulfillment? Understanding your motivation can help you make better career decisions. By starting with your interests, it is possible to pave your way to success, and eventually, you might find yourself retiring from your brilliant career.

This article was written by Lisa Trudel, Retired Career Professional, Writer and Changemaker. You can connect with Lisa through LinkedIn.

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LEARNINGCURVES

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THE WORKERS'
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CELEBRATING TWO DECADES OF EXCELLENCE: HONORING LISA TRUDEL'S INCREDIBLE JOURNEY WITH LEARNING CURVES

by Iryna Paltseva

Learning Curves would like to express our deepest gratitude to our regular writer, Lisa Trudel. For more than twenty years (!!!), Lisa has volunteered to provide our readers with the most relevant and incredibly useful information about finding a job, moving up the career ladder, and navigating Toronto's ever-changing professional landscape.

It is with great regret that we are letting Lisa go on her long-deserved vacation. Lisa is on a very short list of authors who are our longest and most devoted volunteers. Without her wonderful, always brilliant and well-written articles, our newspaper, alas, will no longer be the same. However, we are incredibly glad that Lisa has been part of our family for so long, and we are always happy about her successes.

We sincerely congratulate Lisa on receiving the CHANGEMAKER AWARD, and we can't emphasize enough how proud we are of her. Pride at Work Canada's CHANGEMAKERS is a multimedia digital campaign that aims to recognize 15 people championing 2SLGBTQIA+ inclusion in the corporate, public service, and non-profit sectors across Canada as part of the organization's 15th Anniversary. CHANGEMAKERS celebrates the achievements of these incredible individuals (and consequently their organizations) who have made a significant impact in fostering and leading diversity, equity and inclusion in the workplace and beyond.

This is how Lisa herself recalls

how her 21-year career as a writer in the Learning Curves newspaper began:

"Learning Curves has been part of my life for a long time. Learning Curves started in 1999 and it was not long after that I was given a copy of it. I would read it whenever I found a copy but never thought about writing for it.

Then in 2002, when I was employed at the Office Workers Career Centre, a local non-profit funded by Employment Ontario, I worked alongside a terrific Career Professional named Sonny Wong. Sonny gave me a copy of Learning Curves and said "This local newspaper is often looking for contributing writers and if you like to write, you should submit an article. I write for it and I can tell the Editor about you if you want". I told Sonny I would think about it.

Sonny is now a Registered Psychotherapist, Motivational Speaker, Career Counsellor and Professor with Toronto Metropolitan University and is still a contributing writer to Learning Curves. It was Sonny who encouraged me to write for Learning Curves and opened the first door for me.

Not long after talking with Sonny, I was at the annual Word on the Street Festival that happens every September, and I saw a table full of Learning Curves newspapers! I cannot recall who was staffing the table --- it might have been Wendy Terry. I thought to myself "Maybe I should take Sonny's advice and submit an article since I am hearing about this newspaper twice in 2 months". My first

article was submitted in 2003 and I have been writing for Learning Curves ever since.

Soon after my first article was published I was at Career and Employment Services conference and met Deborah Noel who was a Case Worker with the City of Toronto at that time. I found out that she too wrote for Learning Curves, and still does. She writes the "Dear ELCEE" column.

Then at another event in about 2006, I met Carter Hammett who was working at JVS Toronto at the time and found out that he wrote for Learning Curves too. He is now the Manager of Employment Services with Epilepsy Toronto and still writes for Learning Curves.

In the year 2022, Achev, the non-profit where I worked for the last 13 years, took out a full page to thank me for all my articles and the many job seekers I assisted because of finding out about me through Learning Curves. There was even a photo of me on this page of celebration and thanks.

Since then I have directed 3 wonderful people to Learning Curves:

- Iryna Paltseva who is a regular writer and now the Editor.

- Ginny Rana who is a regular writer and who I had the opportunity to work with when she was a placement student completing her Diploma at Seneca College. She is now a Case Worker with the City of Toronto.

- Bryan Kaye Senfuma who is a newcomer to Canada and a terrific writer. He now

writes articles for Learning Curves including the "Digital Citizen Corner" column.

Learning Curves is a truly terrific local newspaper that has been read by thousands of people in the Greater Toronto Area for the past 25 years. It does what many publications cannot: it informs, inspires and connects volunteer writers to a platform where their words become the voice for people interested in learning and moving forward with careers and education."

As you can see, thanks to Lisa, our newspaper has truly expanded its family. And I, the author of these lines, owe my position as editor of the Learning Curves to Lisa. I did not know at all what to do when, two years ago, I unexpectedly found myself in Canada due to the military conflict between Russia and Ukraine. I turned to the Achev organization for help, and the worker there, having learned that I was a writer, connected me with Lisa. Thanks to Lisa's sensitivity, kindness and incredible professional sense, I found this wonderful newspaper and made new friends.

From the bottom of our hearts, the entire Learning Curves team wishes Lisa the best retirement ever! We will miss Lisa's articles very much (as we are sure all our readers will) and will always hope for her return as a regular contributor! We are so thankful for these years, indeed decades, of working together for the benefit of adult learners in Toronto and the GTA.

LC

OPEN HOUSE JONES AVE LEARNING CENTRE, ENGLISH AS A SECOND LANGUAGE CENTRE, JUNE 5TH

BY WENDY TERRY

This was a special celebration in 1999, there had been a terrible fire at the school, so the classes had been divided up and held at other sites until February 2024 when all were brought back together in the restored Jones Ave. School.

At 10:30 we all came together in the Meeting Room, students, teachers, caretakers, program officers, to celebrate. The warmth in the room was embracing as students gave performances, singing dancing. We all clapped, cheered and felt the warmth.

We are not allowed to publish pictures without the specific consent of those in the picture so I will just detail some of the performances. I think my favourite was the last one.

Nati from the Dominican Republic and Zun Hua from China danced a Merengue Duet, El Farolito) Lighted Torch. A pair of ESL students from different cultures joining in a dance specific to one of their cultures.

I was surprised how many Bangladesh students gave performances, cheered on by the clapping and shouting the known phrases by their fellow Bangladesh students in the

audience. Being a retired ESL teacher, I know that different culture groups dominate at times in your class given the situation in their home country. I had not realized Bangladesh was a new wave coming to Canada.

Later talking to Ariella, a teacher, I learned that one of songs sung by her class, was created with the help of CHATGP, AI. Artificial Intelligence. Recently I learned that Employment Resource Centres are using AI to help their clients update their resumes. Here at the Jones Ave, students had used AI to make a song celebrating their life changes through ESL classes.

After the communal celebration, we could be taken on a guided tour to the ESL class rooms. In each class room and in the hallways and even the meeting room were posters created by the students on different themes. Shihab was our tour guide.

One in the hallway outside the ESL rooms was on Immigration waves to Canada. See picture The people in our tour group picked out which wave they came from. My great great grandparents came in 1853, in the Irish wave.

There were two posters in Lynne's class

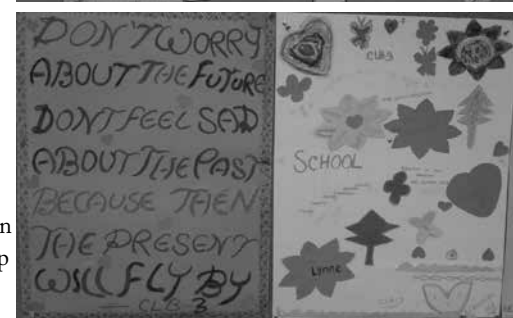
with advice from a student. "Don't worry... _ and "One small positive thought..." See pictures, One posted in the meeting room done by the Literacy class had observations of Canada, one being that "Canada is pet friendly." See Picture.

In Shihab's class Level 3 there was a picture of him and the story of his life before he came to Canada. He is a computer person. Other students had their stories posted up. However we did not have an individual's permission to publish them in Learning Curves.

One of my favourite classes was the computer one. I have been retired six years and we had screens sitting on top of the hard drive. In this Jones Ave class each student got their lap top from a cupboard with slots to store each one in.

Lap taps, AI use, how things have changed but the warmth of students from all over the world meeting up and learning in ESL has not. Jones has been an ESL Centre for over four decades.

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THE POWER OF NETWORKING

time and effort. It is here that the importance of having a supportive network comes in.

Networking – The Buzz Word

Networking is the buzzword in Canada. Whether you are starting your career, transitioning into a new role, or experimenting with a different professional path, networking will make the task a lot easier. You need references for almost everything- to see a doctor, a lawyer, lease a home, find a school for your kids, daycare, job.... the list is endless. However, as a newcomer, it is difficult to know people who can serve as your references. Many immigrants are unaware of networking dynamics as the situation may be different from that in their countries. In fact, newcomers often do not know whom to approach for a reference.

Who Can Be My Reference?

Almost anyone whom you know can be your reference. This should be a person who knows you and is willing to vouch for you. Remember to include in references only those people who will give you a positive reference. These can be the people whom you know in the community, such as your neighbour next door, your landlord, someone from the same religious community, your child's school or teacher, a doctor, someone who lent you service or to whom you lent a service. This little circle of references forms your first network.

Though the circle of immediate acquaintances is a great start to help you with the initial landing. Remember to keep building your network, expand as you meet, and add more people to make this an ever-growing network of support.

How Can I Build My Network?

Forging a new network can seem arduous initially, but once you start, it does not seem as daunting. Many immigrants join language classes and/or short courses to upskill. These classes offer a wonderful opportunity to connect with your professors and classmates.

Volunteering

Another way to build your network is through volunteering. Volunteering helps to establish connections and connect with the local community. You can volunteer at food banks, churches and other religious institutions, schools, and shelters or even participate in community events like clothes donation drives. People you meet as you volunteer in the community can offer tips and advice that may prove valuable. Who knows, you may find a mentor who can guide and support your job search. Not just landing the first job, networking can help you identify potential future opportunities as well.

Courses, Bridging Programs, Language Classes

Many newcomers partake in bridging programs, professional courses, or language courses. Another opportunity to forge new connections in the community. Many of these organizations conduct employer events, job fairs, and employer mentor sessions for their clientele. As a part of such organizations, you cannot just upgrade your skills but also develop connections with prospective employers from the industry.

Besides, there are job fairs, in-person as well as virtual, which can enhance visibility to prospective employers and connect with other job seekers. Even side gigs, survival jobs and other jobs offer an opportunity to meet people from

your industry, stay current in the job market, allowing you to make valuable connections.

Way to Connect to the Hidden Job Market

A lot of Canadian employers prefer to hire candidates who have Canadian work experience. Meeting this criterion can be difficult for newcomers to the country. Volunteering, internships, coop placements and work-based learning are some ways that can give you the coveted Canadian work experience and make your resume stand out. Moreover, they can connect you to the hidden job market and build connections. Much hiring in the Canadian job market occurs through jobs that are not publicly advertised. Many people get hired because of their connections or network. Most positions are not open to the public but to people who have been involved in the organisation through their volunteer work, participation in community events or students who were former interns or worked part time in the same organisation.

Stay in Touch

Once you make connections, do not forget them. You will need them all the time at each step. Keep in touch: connect on social media and LinkedIn. Do not expect that your newly forged connection will offer you job advice or willing to give you a referral right away.

Remember that networking is not transactional. It takes time and effort; maintain and nurture your connections. After all, they are your pathway to a better life.

Ginny Rana is a Social Services Worker and writes on issues confronting newcomers and newcomer settlement in Canada.

LC

Navigating a new landscape is never easy. And especially when the new landscape is in a new country, it can be a huge challenge. This situation holds true for many immigrants who arrive in Canada, are unaware of the rules of the land and feel at a loss when it comes to navigating everyday systems.

New Country, New Challenges

Finding yourself in a new country and surrounded by alien systems compounds challenges, making it difficult to navigate simple everyday situations, such as applying for a Social Insurance Number, admitting your child to a school, finding a job, accessing healthcare, filing taxes and so many more. Lack of information and knowledge coupled with language barriers make life tough for new immigrants. At such points, the support of someone you know, who is knowledgeable and aware of the systems and processes can save precious

A CRITICAL QUESTION FOR WORLD PEACE

BY OSMAN OZSOY (PROF.)

When people who are in a state of social conflict and tension with each other in their countries migrate to democratic countries such as Europe and North America, how they manage to live together in peace is among the most curious questions.

This issue came up recently when I was chatting with John M. Kennedy, a well-known psychology professor. He is a scientist who specializes in the study of perception. We talked a lot about the subject.

When we carefully look at the countries where people who had to migrate to European countries and North America, both legally and illegally, came from, three important issues stand out. These; It is the potential for issues based on poverty, lack of education and differences of opinion to easily turn into conflicts. Injustices in income distribution and inadequacies in human rights and freedoms also deepen social conflicts. These problems are among the issues that complicate relations between segments of society, divide the country, and are even politically exploited by politicians.

When these people immigrate to a democratic country, they face a different world. They can more easily express their thoughts, which are the subject of conflict in their countries, in the democratic environment of the countries they immigrate to. Since they can easily meet their essential needs, poverty ceases to be a matter of conflict. Making education accessible

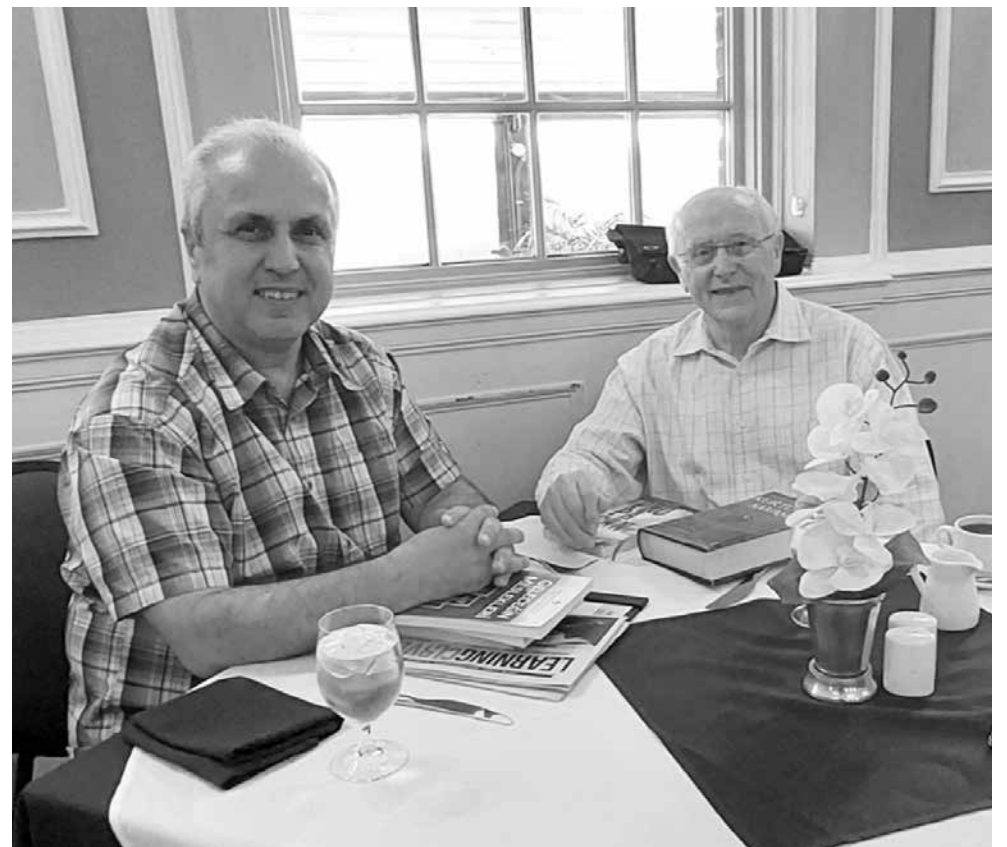
to everyone makes it easier for them to get a job. They can also come together without conflict with the non-governmental organizations they have established. Historical experiences show that freedom, justice and education are the basic conditions for living humanely.

The well-known Turkish intellectual and scholar Said Nursi made the following determination 100 years ago regarding the problems faced by the people of the Middle East; "Our real enemy is ignorance, necessity and the conflicts between us. We must fight these three problems with the understanding of art, knowledge and unity," he says. He sees improving the quality of education and disseminating it throughout the country as the most important solution for solving many social problems.

Turkey became a shining star in the world during the period when the social group known as the HIZMET Movement in Turkey prioritized education, raised the quality of education throughout the country and facilitated access to universities. When these educational institutions were closed, and the most qualified academics were fired from universities, the country immediately began to go downhill in the sector. The country's decline in democracy has caused tens of thousands of doctors to leave the country. Because if there are injustices in a country, primarily the educated population wants to leave that place.

When we look at countries governed by dictatorships, we see that they try to stay in power by exploiting poverty, ignorance and differences in society.

There is a connection between the reasons that will make a country happy and the reasons that will make all humanity happy. Our aim should be to ensure the peace of all humanity.



WORKING ON SELF-ESTEEM: A KEY TO PERSONAL AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

BY ANNA KARLOVA

Our self-esteem is not just a tool for personal development; it's a source of empowerment. It equips us to navigate difficult situations, aggression, imposed expectations, or attempts by others to suppress us. While some may seek approval and praise, healthy self-esteem empowers us to face these challenges head-on, instilling a sense of confidence and capability.

Often, a person cannot find a job despite having a well-crafted resume and job search strategy. The reason may be a need for more confidence and difficulties during interviews. Technically, you can know perfectly how to write a resume and follow algorithms, but when a career counselor asks, "What are you proud of? What can you offer?" the answers are often uncertain. It's important to know the algorithms and have the inner conviction "I can."

Self-efficacy, a product of self-esteem, is a crucial pillar for adults upon which their careers are built. It's the inner resilience that helps us tackle daily tasks and routines. Even if externally, we hold high positions and seem confident; we may still battle with the fear of being exposed and the belief that our success is temporary. But the daily struggle with this feeling of inefficacy is a testament to our strength and resilience despite the external appearance of confidence.

Self-esteem plays a key role. It allows you to evaluate your actions and decisions more objectively without sinking into

feelings of guilt and shame. Stable self-esteem helps analyze situations, recognize mistakes, and seek solutions. Developing these skills contributes to successful professional growth and personal development.

Cultivating Professional Self-Esteem

The first step is to strengthen and develop your professional self-esteem actively. This is the solid foundation upon which your success will be built. The second step involves practical actions such as improving your qualifications, mastering a new field, or initiating a conversation with your manager. By following this sequence, you can avoid the constant struggle with fear and self-doubt and, instead, move forward with confidence and determination.

Self-esteem in a profession is a process similar to a spiral that rises with new tasks and challenges. With each new level, new fears appear. It's essential not just to boost yourself once and for all—it's impossible. It's crucial to master the tools so that you know what to do when faced with new tasks and emerging doubts.

While fear is a natural part of life, it's crucial to keep progressing despite it. Your personal growth is determined by how you handle new challenges. Initially, you might be rattled by criticism, but as you work on your self-esteem, you'll build resilience to handle stress at a higher level. Remember, the goal is not to avoid difficulties but to learn

how to effectively overcome them, leading to continuous personal and professional growth.

Well-developed self-esteem allows failures not to paralyze you but to serve as information for growth. If self-esteem is strong, failures are perceived as a signal to act and improve, not as confirmation of incompetence. You stop seeing yourself as a fragile vase, fearing that someone will think badly of you. Instead, you accept your mistakes and keep moving forward.

Balancing Personal Value and External Perceptions

In psychology, there is the concept of personal over-importance. We think the whole world is watching us and discussing our every move. When we work on self-esteem, these feelings decrease, and we begin to adequately perceive ourselves among others and allow them to have their opinions while focusing on how to cope with it.

Making mistakes is a normal part of life; the key is not to let them paralyze you. Often, we get caught up in self-reflection, which hinders our ability to take action. Many fear that working on self-esteem will make them selfish or unacceptable to others. However, it's important to differentiate between self-confidence, a positive quality that comes from a realistic assessment of one's abilities, and overconfidence, which can lead to unrealistic expectations and negative outcomes.

If real achievements back overconfidence, there is nothing wrong with it. Problems arise when it becomes a bubble—many ambitions and demands without sufficient grounds. Sometimes, people position themselves as experts without enough knowledge and experience. When real achievements do not support their overconfidence, they face negative feedback. Those who can adequately perceive criticism develop their skills, while those who cannot continue to receive unpleasant lessons.

A person needs to be able to assess their experience and professionalism adequately. Often, people with tangible achievements and knowledge do not realize their success. They need to learn to recognize their accomplishments and evaluate them objectively. This can include analyzing their achievements from both market and internal perspectives.

Recognizing your achievements is not just a self-assessment tool; it's a way to value and appreciate yourself. It's about setting your values and evaluating yourself adequately, acknowledging the worth of your accomplishments and resources.

This article was written by Anna Karlova, who loves learning throughout her life and has a strong passion for Data Analytics.

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FINDING REFUGE: WHY CANADA IS AN IDEAL SANCTUARY FOR UKRAINIAN IMMIGRANT FAMILIES

BY VOLODYMYR KRAVCHUK



In recent times, the surge of Ukrainian immigrants seeking refuge in Canada has highlighted the crucial role that stable and welcoming countries play in global crises. Canada, known for its robust support systems and multicultural society, stands out as a beacon of hope for those displaced by the ongoing conflict in Ukraine. This article explores the multifaceted reasons why Canada is considered an ideal destination for Ukrainian families, emphasizing the safety and developmental benefits for children who face uncertain futures in their homeland.

Safe and Secure Environment

For any family, the safety and security of their environment are paramount. Canada offers a peaceful haven away from the immediate threats of war, including violence and instability that currently affect Ukraine. This stable environment is crucial for children who need consistency and security to thrive. Living in Canada means living in a place where children can play outdoors, attend school regularly, and engage in community activities without the looming fear of sudden danger.

Comprehensive Support Systems

Upon arrival, Ukrainian immigrants in Canada benefit from a variety of support mechanisms designed to facilitate a smooth transition to their new life. These include access to healthcare, educational programs, and social services. Particularly for children, Canadian schools provide not only education but also psychological support to help them adjust and cope with the trauma they might have experienced. Community centers and immigrant services offer additional resources, such as language classes and employment assistance for parents, which are vital for the whole family's integration and well-being.

Risk of Landmines in Ukraine

One of the most harrowing dangers for children

returning to Ukraine is the widespread presence of landmines and unexploded ordnances. These hidden dangers pose a constant threat to civilians, turning everyday environments like backyards, playgrounds, and school routes into potential hazards. The risk of physical injury from these remnants of war is a potent deterrent for families considering a return to Ukraine, making Canada's safe landscapes an attractive alternative.

Psychological Impact

The psychological impact of living in a war-torn country is profound, especially on children whose developmental phases make them particularly vulnerable to stress and trauma. The ongoing conflict in Ukraine can lead to chronic anxiety, depression, and other mental health issues in young people. Canada's peaceful setting, combined with accessible mental health services, offers a nurturing environment for affected children to receive care and potentially recover from their experiences. Moreover, being in a community that includes fellow immigrants can help families share their experiences and heal together.

Educational Opportunities

Education is often disrupted in conflict zones, with schools frequently closed and children's learning put on hold. Canada's stable education system ensures uninterrupted access to quality education, which is essential for child development and long-term life opportunities. Moreover, Canadian schools often have programs specifically designed to help immigrant children catch up and integrate academically, ensuring that the impact of displacement on their education is minimized.

Multicultural and Inclusive Society

Canada's multicultural policy not only facilitates the integration of immigrants but also actively preserves their cultural identities. Ukrainian families in Canada can find or establish communities where their language, traditions, and customs are respected and celebrated. This inclusivity helps children and adults alike maintain a sense of identity and pride in their heritage, easing the integration process.

Legal and Political Stability

Amidst the uncertainty and turmoil of war, legal and political stability is a significant pull factor for immigrants. Canada's governance structure provides a predictable and lawful environment where immigrant families can plan for the future with confidence, engage in the community, and contribute to the economy without fear of sudden political upheavals or unjust treatment.

Healthcare Accessibility

The Canadian healthcare system is renowned for its universal coverage and accessibility, ensuring that all residents—including immigrants—receive the necessary medical attention without undue financial burden. For Ukrainian families, this means access to medical professionals who can address both physical and psychological health needs, which are often critical after experiencing or fleeing a conflict.

Conclusion

Canada stands as an exemplary refuge for Ukrainian immigrant families, offering a supportive and safe environment where

children can grow and develop away from the immediate dangers and long-term impacts of war. The country's commitment to multiculturalism, combined with its comprehensive support systems, not only aids in the healing process but also empowers immigrants to build new, prosperous lives. For these reasons, Canada is more than just a destination; it is a new beginning for many Ukrainian families seeking peace and stability. Reflecting on my family's personal experiences, my two young sons, aged 7 and 10, have profoundly influenced our choice to settle in Canada. Their needs and future drove the decision to leave Ukraine and seek safety and stability. Despite the initial challenges of such a significant transition, the reasons for our choice have become increasingly clear as we watch them integrate into their new environment.

The fear of returning to a homeland filled with the scars of conflict is real for them. They vividly remember the uncertainties and dangers, and the possibility of going back to that life is something they dread. Here in Toronto, they have found a safe haven where they can be children again—playing, learning, and growing without the overshadowing fear of sudden dangers.

Their social integration has been remarkable. They have forged friendships within the diverse tapestry of Toronto's community.

These friendships not only provide them with emotional support but also enrich their cultural understanding and appreciation of diversity. They are actively involved in community groups and initiatives, where they contribute positively and learn the importance of helping others.

Academically, both are thriving as they embrace the challenge of learning English and French. Their success in mastering these languages enhances their communication skills and deepens their integration into Canadian society. This linguistic achievement is key to their current and future educational prospects and overall adaptation to their new lives in Canada.

In summary, our family's choice of Canada is validated every day as we see our children adapt, grow, and embrace their new surroundings with enthusiasm and confidence. The supportive, multicultural environment of Canada isn't just a backdrop for their lives; it is a vibrant, active setting that is shaping them into global citizens equipped for the future. This experience reinforces our belief that Canada was the right choice, providing not just refuge but opportunities for a brighter, secure future.

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BUILDING INCLUSIVE COMMUNITIES: EMBRACING EQUITY, DIVERSITY, AND INCLUSION FOR ALL

BY BRYAN KAYE SENFUMA

In today's dynamic world, equity, diversity, and inclusion are not just trendy terms; they are vital for fostering a thriving community. Embracing Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion means recognizing, respecting, and valuing differences in race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, religion, ability, and more. However, simply acknowledging diversity is not enough. It's crucial to actively create environments where everyone feels included, respected, and valued.

Here are some strategies communities can employ to help individuals feel at ease:

1. **Education and Awareness:** Education is the cornerstone of change. Communities can host engaging workshops, seminars, and training sessions to raise awareness about different cultures, identities, and perspectives. By fostering understanding and empathy, communities can break down stereotypes and misconceptions, creating a more inclusive environment for all.

2. **Representation Matters:** Representation plays a crucial role in making individuals feel seen and valued. Communities should strive to include diverse voices in leadership positions, decision-making processes, and media representation. When people see themselves reflected in positions of influence, they are more likely to feel a sense of belonging and validation.

3. **Safe Spaces:** Creating designated safe spaces where individuals can express themselves freely without fear of judgment or discrimination is essential. These spaces can be physical locations or virtual platforms where people can share their experiences, seek support, and build connections with others who share similar identities or experiences.

4. **Celebrating Diversity:** Communities can organize cultural festivals, heritage months, and other events that celebrate diversity and promote cross-cultural understanding. These events provide exciting opportunities for individuals to learn about different cultures, traditions, and histories, fostering a sense of appreciation and respect for diversity.

5. **Zero-Tolerance Policies:** To truly foster inclusivity, communities must enforce zero-tolerance policies for discrimination, harassment, and hate speech. Clear guidelines and consequences should be established to ensure that everyone feels safe and protected from any form of prejudice or bigotry.

6. **Empowerment and Allyship:** Communities should encourage individuals to become allies for marginalized groups by actively advocating for their rights and supporting their inclusion. Empowering individuals to speak up against discrimination and inequality creates a more supportive and inclusive community for everyone.

7. **Continuous Evaluation and Improvement:** Creating inclusive spaces is an ongoing process that requires regular evaluation and feedback. Communities should solicit input from members of marginalized groups to identify areas for improvement and implement changes accordingly. By continuously striving to be more inclusive, communities can create environments where everyone feels valued and respected.

In conclusion, embracing equity, diversity, and inclusion is not just a moral imperative; it is essential for building strong, resilient communities. By actively working to create welcoming spaces where everyone feels included, respected, and valued, communities can foster a sense of belonging and empowerment for individuals from all walks of life. Together, we can create a future where diversity is celebrated and everyone has the opportunity to thrive.

Advocating for Justice: Empowering Voices for Human Rights.

This article was written by Bryan Kaye Senfuma, Digital Human Rights Defender, Digital Security Subject Matter Expert, Photographer, Writer and Community Advocate. You can email Bryan at: bryantravolla@gmail.com

AB OVO

BY SAMANVITHA ORUGANTI

Running down the stairs and huffing to catch my train were not easy tasks during rush hour on a Monday morning, but today was important; I could not afford to miss my train. Pushing through the crowd and onto the train, I found a seat in an overlooked corner. I had to sit down to catch my breath, and it was a long commute to where I was going. As I settled in with the bag on my lap, I could feel my heart beat rapidly: "Am I just nervous, or I'm petrified?" I thought to myself, looking around in the train's cabin, reading the faces of busy people at 8:30 am to distract myself. Then my eyes fell on a poster right across me; it read:

Food for your thought, "Why are new beginnings romanticized?" is a tale of raging mystery often tangled in knots. 'New beginnings' is a less-spoken category of human emotions that is subtly unacknowledged as one but is craved day in and day out due to the limitless potential it could churn.

From world-building to childbirth, new beginnings are always a combination of bittersweet moments, and this stands true and firm in every possible inception narration, discovery, and invention. Although the process can be tricky and excruciating, beginnings often set off a cycle of metamorphosis that instills a sense of 'where I belong.'

It gives humans the mental strength to challenge themselves to go places, forcing themselves to disconnect from well-known reality. It could also be the murky vision of the future offering countless thrilling possibilities, moving life along.

Despite the intriguing workings of human emotions, new beginnings are often romanticized in search of fluffy fairytale 'happily ever after endings.' But suppose we pause and take a breather. The story begins with ab ovo (at the very beginning), providing insight into the characters, backgrounds, and fundamental elements that shape the narrative.

So, stop romanticizing and start living the new beginning!

"Ab ovo, a fascinating word with a funny ring but a meaning so deep that it touches the heart like the first blossom of spring," I thought with a smile, getting off at my station and going about my first day of work with a sense of belonging.

Samanvitha Oruganti is an avid storyteller who likes narrating stories about people, emotions, and places. She believes our world has innumerable tales, some hidden, some not, but all waiting to be told. She can be reached via email at samanvita.krishna@gmail.com

CAN'T FIND THE SPRING ISSUE OF LEARNING CURVES? GO ONLINE.

Learning Curves along with many of its partners in education and community services, has been affected by COVID-19. Our Spring issue drop-sites continue to be affected. Unfortunately, we cannot effectively cover our usual distribution of the paper: a print run of over 16,000 located at over 650 sites in Toronto and the GTA.

We would be happy to send you hard copies of the Spring issue or drop them off. Simply contact us at learningcurves@hotmail.com.

We thank all our readers, and our advertisers without whose support Learning Curves could not have existed for the past 20+ years. Look for us in all the usual places as the province opens up. Many of our back issues are online at www.learningcurves.org

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Our **PASS** (Pre-Arrival Supports and Services) program prepares IENs in the process of immigrating to any destination in Canada, to efficiently re-enter their profession



+ Find out more about CARE Centre's programs for Internationally Educated Nurses at care4nurses.org

THE GREAT CANADIAN SUMMER BLINK AND YOU MIGHT MISS IT BY ROB HERHOLZ

“Summer was on the way; Jem and I awaited it with impatience. Summer was our best season; it was sleeping on the back screened porch in cots or trying to sleep in the tree house; summer was everything good to eat; it was a thousand colors in a parched landscape.” *Harper Lee, To Kill a Mockingbird, published in 1960.*

Ah, the Great Canadian Summer—that mysterious and mythical season that sneaks in like a lonely wallflower at a raucous high school party of ice and snow. To fully appreciate the Canadian summer, one must first understand its defining features: mosquitoes, chaotic weather, and the urge to barbecue in any and all conditions. Let’s look at the whimsical absurdity of a Canadian summer.

The Great Thaw

In Canada, summer doesn’t just arrive quickly; it thaws slowly. Imagine our country as one giant, frozen lasagna slowly defrosting under the lazy, myopic eye of the sun. One day you’re draped in full polar regalia, and the next you’re desperately searching for cargo shorts. This rapid transition is as bewildering as it is exhilarating.

The Mosquito Mob

As soon as temperatures soar above freezing, Canada becomes the land of a rogue gang of

bloodsucking bandits. These tiny vampire-like creatures can turn a pastoral evening by the lake into a frenzied 3-Stooges-style slap-fest.

Canadians have developed a symbiotic relationship with these pests, grudgingly accepting their role in the ecosystem while simultaneously trying to annihilate them with a variety of corner-store bug sprays and repellents. And they are about as effective as they smell.

Barbecue, Eh?

A curious phenomenon occurs every summer in Canada: the Barbecue Syndrome. It’s as if the first ray of sunshine hypnotizes Canadians into believing they must prepare and cook every meal outdoors, rain or shine. Entire families can be seen huddling under umbrellas, grilling burgers, and dodging hailstones the size of golf balls. “It’s just a little drizzle,” they say, ignoring the torrential downpour that’s turning the backyard into an impromptu water park.

The Great Canadian Tanning Ritual

Tanning in Canada is less about achieving a golden glow and more about proving to your coworkers that you’ve actually experienced sunshine. The average Canadian summer tan looks something like a patchwork quilt with stripes,

spots, and curious handprints. This is often the result of sporadic applications of sunscreen and the natural camouflage provided by mosquito bites. The pinnacle of this art form is the “tan triangle,” or “trucker tan,” a result of sunburn where the V-neck of one’s shirt used to be.

The Unpredictable Weather Lottery

Canadian weather is like a game show where the grand prize is never quite what you expect. “Come on down! Today, you could win a heatwave, a snowstorm, or both in the same afternoon.” One minute, you’re lounging in a hammock, and the next, you’re frantically falling out of the hammock and bringing in the patio furniture as hail begins to pummel the lawn. This unpredictability keeps us Canadians on our toes, always prepared for the next meteorological surprise with an emergency kit that includes flip-flops, a raincoat, and a snow shovel.

The Brief Blossoming of Nature

Canadian flora and fauna have adapted to the short, intense summer with a level of enthusiasm that borders on frantic. Flowers bloom like they’re running out of time, wildlife frolics with reckless abandon, and every tree seems to be in a mad race to photosynthesize. The squirrels, in particular, treat summer like a triathlon, hoarding

nuts with the determination of an Olympian.

The Great Escape

The Canadian summer is the season of great escape, where the entire population migrates to cottages, campsites, and any available patch of wilderness. This mass exodus usually starts as early as noon on Thursdays and clogs up traffic on all major highways.

It’s as if the whole country is reenacting a national game of hide-and-seek, only to return to civilization with tales of bear encounters, fishing exploits, and the ubiquitous sunburn.

The goal is to cram a year’s worth of relaxation into a few precious weeks, resulting in a sort of hyperactive relaxation that’s as exhausting as it is invigorating.

In conclusion, a Canadian summer is a delightful chaos of nature, weather, and quirky national habits. It’s a brief, beautiful, and bizarre intermission between the reign of winter and the return of autumn. So, if you ever find yourself in Canada during this ultra-short season, slap on some sunscreen, arm yourself with bug spray and embrace the comedy that is summer in the Great White North.

HOW INTERNATIONALLY EDUCATED NURSES CAN HELP MITIGATE THE NURSE STAFFING CRISIS

Healthcare systems the world over struggled to meet the demands of the global COVID-19 pandemic, with hospitals and long-term care homes overwhelmed by patient needs against a shrinking healthcare workforce. A nursing shortage was long predicted in Canada with generational retirements, but the pandemic hastened the nursing exodus with overwhelming workloads and burnout. Waiting in the wings has been a valuable health human resource: internationally educated nurses (IENs) with a world of skills and experience to offer.

CARE Centre for Internationally Educated Nurses (CARE Centre) is a non-profit bridging program funded by the Ontario Government and Immigration, Refugees, and Citizenship Canada, founded in 2001 to support IENs back into practice. “There’s a triple win when IENs are licensed and re-establishing their careers,” says CARE Centre Executive Director Ruth Lee. “The IEN and their families can contribute to their new country, the healthcare system gains dedicated nurses ready to return to the profession they love, and CARE Centre achieves our goals to be there for the next newcomer IENs.” CARE Centre has a Pre-Arrival Supports and Services (PASS) program funded by the federal government since 2016 to assist nurses accepted for immigration to Canada. In Ontario, the Supports, Training, Access to Regulated Employment Services (STARS) program has been serving IENs for 23 years.

“I was fortunate that I found out about the PASS program before I came to Canada, so that really gave me a jump start on the registration process and helped me learn the realities of nursing here,” says Karim Wannous, a nurse from Lebanon who worked at the bedside for ten years. Wannous has met all the College of Nurses of Ontario (CNO) registration requirements and will write the Registered Nurse exam, and already has a full-time job offer at a prominent hospital. After overseas employment with Doctors Without Borders, Wannous had proficient English before arriving in Ontario, but that can be a challenge for many nurses who don’t receive nursing education in English, as some do in the Philippines, in many nursing programs in India and countries in Africa.

“CARE Centre has developed rich resources over many years to teach language and communication in the nursing context,” says Cara Malla, a Language Specialist with CARE Centre. “There are the practical aspects of learning a new language, but there are also many cultural considerations to address. For instance, in some countries making eye contact is considered disrespectful, whereas here, as a nursing professional, it’s expected.” When joining CARE Centre, IENs begin by taking the institutional Canadian English Language Benchmark Assessment for Nurses (iCELBAN), free with membership.

“English is my third language after Portuguese and Spanish,” says Cristiane Furtado, an IEN from Brazil who worked deep in the Amazon jungle providing care to isolated communities. Furtado studied English at a language school prior to arriving in Ontario and has obtained an RN position in community care. She credits CARE Centre with helping her achieve her goals. “I appreciate everything they did for me, all the tips and availability to answer my questions, it all made me feel confident and supported.”

Zeinab Zareiesfandabadi is an IEN from Iran now working as an RN in acute care who also accessed the PASS program. “Moving to Canada and starting my nursing career has been tough but very fulfilling,” said Zareiesfandabadi. “The guidance and support from CARE Centre have been crucial in helping me adjust and succeed.” Zareiesfandabadi has a nursing specialization in pediatric coronary care and studied English in Tehran prior to emigrating to Canada.

Both PASS and STARS deliver services through a case management model, where the IEN works one on one with a dedicated case manager who understands their specific needs. “CARE Centre was developed on the concept of mentorship, so the CARE Centre member IEN never walks alone on their journey,” says Rola El Moubadder, Program Manager. El Moubadder co-authored a book on IENs and mentorship, *Mentoring in Nursing through*

Narrative Stories Across the World. “The successful integration of IENs to the workforce depends on employer mentorship as well. CARE Centre’s Workplace Integration Program guides employers to offer customized supports for IENs.”

Lourdes Vicente is an RPN and case manager, who leads CARE Centre’s Mentoring Program. “Observational Job Shadowing, where the IEN is paired with an Expert Nurse in the healthcare workplace is an excellent way for our members to gain first-hand knowledge of various settings, including different hospital departments, long-term care, nursing homes and community nursing,” says Vicente. “Virtual Mentoring, developed during the COVID-19 pandemic, offers member IENs the chance to meet online in small groups with Expert Nurses who share their areas of specialization.”

The PASS program also offers a mentoring program, pairing IENs destined for any Canadian province or territory with nurses who are members of the Canadian Nurses Association. “Sometimes IENs come to Canada without knowing anyone, so the relationship with their nurse mentor can be very significant,” says PASS Program Coordinator Meghan Wankel.

IENs can make further connections pursuing CARE Centre’s custom courses and workshops. Bessie Nasiopoulos is a CARE Centre member nurse from Greece, a case manager, and Professional Development Lead. “CARE Centre was crucial to supporting my registration and employment in Oncology earlier in my journey, and now I’m honoured to be working at CARE Centre and giving back to my fellow IENs.” For more information about CARE Centre visit www.care4nurses.org.



LEARNING TO FORGIVE BUT NOT FORGET: LINDA DOYLE'S LESSON ABOUT COURAGE AND COMPASSION

A SHORT STORY BY MINA WONG

My name's Linda Doyle (née Murray); I'm seventy-four years old and married to Barry Doyle. We live near Scarborough just east of where I was born to Irish descendants from Kerry. Also Irish, Barry's parents moved from Cork, lived briefly in New York City, left their adult sons there, and came to Toronto with four-year-old Barry seventy-two years ago.

This is my story about learning to forgive family members who could've loved and cherished me, including Barry, who could've cared about my hopes and dreams when we were younger.

This story also brings back painful memories of hurtful behavior from people who're imperfect, with flaws that need forgiveness every day.

Maybe this story should begin with my parents who raised me in a two-bedroom apartment, where they were custodians for a twenty-unit building in Toronto's east end. Marrying late, they only had me. I was alone a lot while they cleaned stairs, elevators, windows, hallways, and as they fixed plumbing, stoves, walls, ceilings ... lighting, pests ... and met on the first of the month with our landlord who collected rent and inspected the premises.

With little schooling, my parents saw no point in furthering my education. In fact, they paid little attention to my daily life, asked nothing about my future, never talked about a vacation, and rarely made decisions outside their duty-bound, custodial ones.

My parents wanted me to work after Grade eight, but at fourteen, with no job experience, I could only be their janitorial assistant. At seventeen, I waited on tables at nearby diners; at twenty, I became a laundromat attendant in the Upper Beaches.

I promised myself I'd marry the first guy who wasn't a wet noodle like my dad and who'd show any curiosity about my tiny existence. I even broke up with fellas who droned on and on about themselves.

Then, I met Barry, the landlord's acquaintance, who came along to see our building on August 1, 1975. A bit jumpy, he was very good-looking. At twenty-seven, he was two years my senior.

Treating me to supper at Frans on College Street, Barry gripped my hands all evening and asked, "Are you the marrying type?"

Later, when it rained, he paid a cab driver to take me home. The next day, he sent lovely gardenias with a note: "Pretty lady, will you have dinner with me?"

I lapped up Barry's amorous attention and take-charge masculinity. We wedded in September 1976 with very little fanfare, just in the presence of four parents donning their Sunday best, and some of Barry's friends carrying a few gifts.

Swept off my feet by candlelight dinners and romantic evenings, I thought I was finally happy and fulfilled. Wanting children right away, Barry was putting a deposit on our first home and upsizing the car. But, because he discouraged me from working, I soon became dependent with no financial means or personal initiatives outside Barry's agendas.

To our deep sadness, I miscarried half a dozen times, after which we didn't try again to have children. Our home soon turned all quiet with not much warmth or joy.

By the summer of 1983, I was sick a lot with colds, headaches, and tiredness. I had

anxiety attacks whenever Barry yelled at me for not getting enough groceries or spending too much on them. After moving up to good earnings in real estate, he also turned all his attention to home renovation projects.

When our elderly parents passed away over the next few years, Barry was my only family in this whole wide world, but a hollowed-out one, silent and empty.

One morning in November 1984, I collapsed into sobs and screams after Barry had left for work. A neighbour heard me and got an ambulance that took me to the ER, where doctors stabilized me and a social worker talked with me. Barry came late afternoon but went home alone. Later that week, when I was discharged, he came again to take me home with the most beautiful roses.

For the next eight to ten years, Barry and I fell into a pattern of his rage, my panic and breakdown, several days in the hospital, and going home cradling an enormous, gorgeous bouquet. I had prescriptions for symptoms from A to Z, but mostly low iron, headaches, depression, insomnia, and anxiety.

My social worker suggested recovery through outpatient therapy groups and support groups to build new relationships. I liked her ideas, but Barry said long work hours could make it hard for him to drive me. Then, I was matched with volunteers who could either drive me or take public transit with me. But after four or five weeks, Barry got cranky because he disliked coming home so often to an empty house.

Still, I took my meds and saw social workers weekly as part of the treatment. With counselling, I've had fewer hospital stays and even got better at expressing my feelings. But that's all I've accomplished, without thinking much about education or career, new friends, or happiness.

Last year, social worker Josie talked with me about kindness. "For someone with such a kind heart, you ought to be kind to yourself. From trauma, you can permit yourself change, healing, happiness, and forgiveness for past regrets."

Josie added, "You can also try this compassion to forgive people who've caused you pain, despair, emptiness – if you think they should be forgiven. What do you think of that?"

After another round of drenched eyes, I saw Josie's point. But I said, "That doesn't mean forgive and forget. I need to remember everything even if other people forget. Otherwise, I've learned nothing from painful experiences like Barry's behavior ... he needs forgiveness because he's imperfect, like me, like just about everyone."

So, for almost a year now, Josie and I have worked on remembering, empathizing, forgiving. In accepting my own flaws and regrets, I'm also learning to respond with empathy and courage to Barry's behavior, including his rage and neglect.

Forty-nine years since meeting each other, Barry and I are now much older. We're still married, even if he's forgotten our finger tremblers at Frans in 1975. For better and for worse, in sickness and in health, at least one of us will try to forgive the other's flaws. If I could do that without forgetting anything, it'd be an important lesson in late life about courage and compassion.

LC



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The reason trustees were to eliminate Learn4Life is that the TDSB must turn in a balanced budget each year. However, the province has been shorting the TDSB on funding. The TDSB has a projected \$26.5 million deficit for 2024-2025

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1) Canada Pension and Employment Insurance. The employer should match the statutory (federal) rate each of us pays through deductions on our pay cheques. The Ontario government has not been funding the increase the TDSB has to submit. For instance the CPP has gone from 4.95% in 2019 to 5.95% in 2023. The 2024-2025 underfunding is \$35.2 million, more than the TDSB shortfall on their budget. Tell you MPP to match this increased expense for CPP and EI paid to the federal government.

2) COVID Expenditure. Ontario and Toronto Public Health provided safety directions during the COVID Emergency and bringing back school,

but the TDSB was not reimbursed for any of these costs, some \$70.1million. Tell your MPP to cover those required safety costs.

3) Salary Gapping. In 2014 the province began central bargaining with teacher unions, and came up with a central grid to fund salaries. However the TDSB grid was higher than this Central grid. The difference between what the TDSB teachers make and what the Ontario Ministry funds continues to increase annually. In 2023-2024 the shortfall was \$22.3 million, just slightly more than the TDSB current deficit.

Tell your MPP to adjust the grid to recognize the pre-established Toronto differences in costs.

Also email Doug Ford, the Premier and Stephen Lecce the Minister of Education.

Adult learners by calling/ emailing your trustee you got Learn4Life back. Now in Step Two by calling/emailing your MPP to stop shorting the TDSB funding, the TDSB will not have to think of cutting programs or as of now proposing to eliminate senior discounts in Learn4Life courses.

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