



Baking a Cake in the Time of Corona

After 39 years of marriage, it has come to my attention that I should learn to cook. Now, I have been barbequing forever, but I admit that the kitchen and its many appliances have been a bit of a mystery. Starting small I baked my first cake. I know, for those who have done this forever, it is a pretty simple task. And for someone with five years of graduate training it should have been so simple. And yet, the electric mixer was a mystery. Putting the ingredients together, pretty simple. Frosting was fun, but kind of hard to spread it evenly. And yet, when I was finished, I was actually proud of my accomplishment. Until someone at the table asked me, "Oh, that looks lovely. What kind of cake is that?" And I hadn't a clue! I spent so much time looking at the directions, and trying to get the cake just right, I never bothered to even look at the front of the box. To me it was just a "cake with vanilla icing".

If you have read thus far you either think I am not too bright or that this is a "cute" story! Hopefully the latter!

We get used to our roles. How often do we go beyond our comfort zones to try something new? Especially as we age? And while this may not be strictly a Covid related issue, the fact that we have spent 20 months in togetherness has shone a light on things that perhaps were taken for granted. For many it has also provided an abundance of time which we could either squander or use to our advantage.

Having reached the age of 64 a couple of weeks ago, I have started reading about "sacred aging". Others call it the "encore" stage. The notion, that as we age, there are new chapters and challenges. We are living a good 30 years longer than folks who lived in the early 1900's. This has been the largest increase in human longevity in all of history!

So, what are we doing to ensure that as we grow older we don't grow old?

Baking a cake is a simple thing. But most changes start that way, do they not? A little more exercise? Daily stretches. A morning walk. Each day a few more ingredients that lead to a healthier lifestyle. A new hobby. Something you've always wanted to do, to learn, to explore, but never could find the time? As we taught our children, no one starts off being "good" at something. We need to remind ourselves of that and be patient with ourselves. We have to nurture that talent, and let it grow. Each day a few more ingredients that lead to a hobby that could bring a lifetime of fulfillment. Getting the courage to join a new social club, to make new friends. It can begin with a simple "hello". It isn't easy forging new relationships, but each day add a few more ingredients. An activity here. A new friend there. With time, trust, and a little bit of courage, we could find the path to something that tastes really good.

Change. It's as easy as baking a cake for the very first time.