



The Illusionist

By Wayne and Tamara

I am a faithful reader of your column and would like to hear your answer. I used to date a guy who claimed he liked me. He is a nice person, and I feel I can trust him. During one of our conversations defining what we had between us, he told me he couldn't forget the previous girl he liked. He is a reasonably successful man who has liked this woman for the past four years. He assured me he liked me more, but as this was not something I wanted, I decided we would remain just friends. I still care for him, but I have no romantic feelings left. What I want to know is this. I can understand his reaction if they had been together once, but they hadn't. It was a completely one-sided love from the beginning. In fact, this woman indicated she only wanted to be friends with him, and she has been in a happy relationship with another man for two years. He says he is happy that she is happy. Why do you think he tortures himself so? It almost makes me think he enjoys being the martyr. To be fair, he told me he would like to move on and has been trying the past four years, but is not able to. Is there anything I can do to help?

Johanna
Johanna, many people nurture a fantasy because it confers a mental gain for them. It may not be a productive way to live, but they reap a psychic benefit from doing it. In Jane Austen's "Pride and Prejudice" there is a noblewoman named Lady Catherine de Bourgh. Lady Catherine is a laggard whose only accomplishment in life was being born to a wealthy family. In one scene in the novel, during a discussion about playing the piano, Lady Catherine remarks, "If I had ever learnt, I should have been a great proficient." Lady Catherine's fantasy allows her to overlook her own laziness and to pretend she owes her lofty position to intrinsic merit rather than an accident of birth. In a similar way, we once knew a woman who adopted a little boy named Kenny. When Kenny was five, he wandered into traffic and was struck by a car. A few years after Kenny's death this woman and her husband adopted another little boy, Steve. As Steve grew up, his adoptive parents constantly told him how remarkable Kenny had been. In their memory Kenny was a child with a natural ability to charm animals. He learned to read before other children and possessed unusual athletic abilities. No matter what Steve accomplished, he could never measure up to Kenny. When Steve married, his adoptive mother remarked, "Kenny would never have dated a woman like that." It is almost too cruel to add that, though Steve cared for his parents in their old age, they secretly left all their assets to another relative. Their fantasy of Kenny was the tool they used to justify their abuse of Steve. Your friend's devotion to this woman also must confer a psychic benefit. Perhaps he is afraid of intimacy and afraid of women. If he acknowledges this as a problem, he can go to therapy. Or he can nurture this fantasy all of his life. That's for him to decide. But if his devotion is a ploy, it is simply his method of dating. He has no real intention of getting married, so he tells women: jump through this hoop and try to win me. When you are tired of trying and want to move on, remember that I warned you I loved someone else. If that is the case, he definitely won't seek help because there is nothing to cure. Frankly, we suspect if he genuinely wanted this woman, he wouldn't be so happy for her. He would be hoping she'd give him a chance.

Wayne & Tamara



Criticizing Consumption

How Overconsumption is Affecting our Daily Lives

By Camryn Bland
Youth Columnist

In 2025, it can be easy to get caught up with material objects, fast-fashion purchases, and trendy items. Whether it be clothing, technology, or interior design, North American citizens constantly find themselves spending more and more money on things they simply don't need. Overconsumption, or hyperconsumerism, is the purchase of goods and services far beyond what is necessary for a happy and healthy life. It's purchasing the same shirt in five colors, it's buying coffee in a plastic cup every morning. It is often hidden within fast-changing trends, influencing people to buy in an attempt to keep up with never-ending consumerism. What starts as harmless quickly forms consequences on individual bank accounts, socioeconomic inequality, and global climate. Everyday, countless Canadians spend dollar after dollar on purchases which seem mundane. They buy a plastic water bottle, and say it's only a dollar, it's okay. They pay for a new sweater, claiming they need more clothes, so it's a necessity. Or, they choose an update to the newest tech gadget, arguing they need the newest addition to keep up with a modern lifestyle. Tight budgets are disregarded in the name of one impulse purchase, with many Canadians living paycheque to paycheque when they don't have to. Within a week, a month, a year, all the money seems to have disappeared from chequing accounts, stolen by the silent thief of consumerism. Personal bank accounts aren't the only issue present due to consumerism. Most purchases are first mass produced in large factories, which are a major form of pollution due to resource extraction and greenhouse gas emissions. Soon, these items are viewed as outdated, overused, or broken, and so they get thrown away without a second thought. Every item you've ever bought stays in the environment, often in toxic landfills and unimaginable waste dumps. They form mountains of trash which outlive us by centuries. It is easy to forget what it takes to create everyday items, and what happens after they've been neglected. The irony is, many people understand these difficult consequences, and continue to purchase without thinking. One reason is the strong, impulsive urges to buy something new. It's exciting to use something new and shiny, but that special feeling quickly fades. This just leads to more purchases in an attempt to sustain the unreasonable joy of a new thing. This issue is only increased by the media. Practically all content includes advertisement, whether it be for a physical product, a lifestyle, or an idea. This intensifies the need to purchase, as they need to keep up with the unrealistic standard being portrayed online. Consumers buy and buy, but most often don't understand what it is they want in the first place. Stanley cups are one example among many of an unnecessary product becoming desirable due to hyper-consumerism. These simple water bottles were trending for months on end, for no specific reason. The issue isn't with the bottle itself, it's with the individuals who bought ten in different colors, or the celebrities who collaborated with the brand to make their own, limited-edition bottle. Individuals will choose anything to grasp onto, regardless of budgeting or practical use. A water bottle example seems silly at first, but when it's really analyzed, it shows just how conditioned we are to consume. As sad as it is to admit, Christmas celebrations are also an overused excuse for hyperconsumerism. There is nothing wrong with buying presents for loved ones, but when you take into consideration the wrapping paper, decorations, and single-use gifts, it is clear the holidays can morph into a season of excess. An issue as detrimental as modern hyperconsumerism is conveniently one with a relatively simple solution, however it requires commitment and consciousness. The solution itself is to think. Consider what you're spending your money on before you impulse purchase it. How will it affect your own bank account, and the global community as a whole? Before you buy the trendy water bottle, remind yourself of the many you have sitting unused in your kitchen. Enjoy the Christmas festivities, but keep an eye out for unnecessary waste. A lack of purchasing isn't the only way we can reduce hyperconsumption. Repurposing items, such as old clothes and decorations, is an efficient way to get the new-purchase excitement. Additionally, thrift stores act as an opportunity to purchase without guilt. They act as a great guide to new favorites for an affordable choice. Since the items are second hand, it acts as an opportunity to purchase without worrying about a pricey receipt or the landfill which the thrift store saved it from. Overconsumption is a silent thief, affecting both individuals and global pollution without being noticed. It comes in the form of trendy water bottles, an expensive holiday, and many daily purchases we would never think to consider. In the end, this issue, which may seem so mundane, is a major issue for all Canadians. We need to limit our impulsivity, and instead purchase with intention and awareness. Only through this will we be able to fight the beast of hyperconsumerism.

Cracking Down on Dangerous Driving to Protect People on Ontario Roadways

TORONTO — As part of a package of legislative changes to be introduced, the Ontario government introduce tough new measures to crack down on dangerous drivers in Ontario. Many of the measures being introduced are in response to the "Andrew's Law" petition, in memory of Andrew Cristillo, a father of three who was killed after being struck by a driver charged with dangerous and stunt driving. These changes include measures that would impose a lifetime driving ban for anyone convicted of dangerous driving causing death and introduce new roadside licence suspensions for dangerous driving behaviour. "No family should ever face the heartbreak of losing a loved one or the trauma of a life-changing injury because of a dangerous and careless driver," said Prabmeet Sarkaria, Minister of Transportation. "These proposed changes will deter reckless behaviour, hold offenders accountable and make our roads and highways safer."

Following Mr. Cristillo's death, his family launched the "Andrew's Law" petition calling for tougher penalties for dangerous driving and increased driver education. In response, the government is proposing measures that will:

- Impose a lifetime licence suspension for anyone convicted of dangerous driving causing death.
- Allow police to immediately suspend a driver's licence for 90 days and impound a vehicle if they have reason to believe a person is driving dangerously.
- Increase fines and vehicle impoundment periods for driving with a suspended licence:
 - First offence: 14-day vehicle impoundment and \$2,000–\$10,000 fine
 - Second offence: 30-day vehicle impoundment and \$5,000–\$15,000 fine
 - Third and subsequent offence: 45-day vehicle impoundment and \$10,000–\$20,000 fine
- Introduce a new seven-day roadside licence suspension for careless driving and a 30-day suspension for careless driving causing bodily harm or death. Fines would also increase to \$1,000–\$5,000 (up from \$400–\$2,000) upon conviction for careless driving. Enhance road safety education for young and novice drivers. Increase fines to double the current amount and impose longer licence suspensions upon conviction for distracted driving while operating a commercial vehicle:
 - First offence: seven-day suspension and \$1,000–\$2,000 fine
 - Second offence: 14-day suspension and \$1,000–\$4,000 fine
 - Third and subsequent offence: 60-day suspension and \$1,000–\$6,000 fine
- Increase minimum fines for speed limiter offences on commercial vehicles from \$250 to \$1,000, including operating a commercial vehicle without a functioning speed limiter. The government is also exploring measures to crack down on dangerous driving and support family members of those killed by impaired driving. This includes consulting on measures that would make impaired drivers who cause the death of a parent or guardian responsible for financial support of the victims' children.

Ontario's roads have ranked among the safest in North America for 25 years, with one of the lowest fatality rates per 10,000 licensed drivers. Last year, the province announced stricter measures against impaired driving, including a lifetime driver's licence suspension for anyone convicted of impaired driving causing death, and the mandatory installation of ignition interlock for anyone convicted of impaired driving.

A driver convicted of dangerous driving within the past five years is about three and a half times more likely to cause a serious collision than a driver with a clean record. Large trucks are involved in one in five Ontario roadway fatalities each year. Distracted driving is one of the leading causes of collisions in Ontario, resulting in one in seven fatalities annually. The Fighting Delays, Building Faster Act aims to improve road safety by cracking down on fraud in Ontario's licensing system by strengthening eligibility requirements to get an Ontario driver's licence.

"Impaired driving is the leading cause of death on Ontario roads. When a child loses a parent due to impaired driving, it's completely devastating. That is why our government is taking action to develop practical solutions that can ease their burden and provide financial stability in the wake of such tragedies. It's the latest step in our plan to hold impaired drivers accountable, protect victims of crime and keep communities safe." - Doug Downey Attorney General

"MADD Canada understands the impact of a loved one being killed or being catastrophically injured because of the choice of someone else. Motor vehicle crashes remain a significant public safety issue, and more people die on Ontario roads than are killed by all forms of homicide. Road safety must continue to be a priority for governments and law enforcement."- Steve Sullivan CEO, MADD Canada



The Hidden Role Of Luck In Building Wealth

By Bruno M. Scanga

When it comes to money and investing, a lot of people fall into the same trap: chasing what's "hot" right now. If a certain stock, sector, or trend is making headlines, many will jump in—hoping they've found a "sure thing."

The funny thing is that's the exact opposite of how real planning works. Whether it's a financial strategy, goal setting, or life in general, lasting results come from acting before the proof is obvious.

Think about New Year's resolutions. When you commit to exercising three times a week or finding a new job, you're betting on something you want, not something you already see. At first, there's no evidence it will work—but over time, if your actions match your intentions, results show up. Eventually, you may even enjoy the process.

The problem is, most people want proof first. In reality, it works the other way around: action comes first, then proof follows. History is full of examples—Gandhi imagined a free India long before there was any evidence it could happen.

A financial strategy works the same way. When you buy a car, you get the keys immediately. But when you sit down with an advisor to map out retirement, you're taking steps today for something you might not see for 20 or 30 years. The only "evidence" we have is the past—and while it can guide us, it can't guarantee the future.

That's where both wise behavior and a little luck come into play. Advisors can point to past success stories, but your journey will be unique. You might even do better than expected—but there are no promises.

The smartest path? Follow proven strategies to build wealth as efficiently as possible, while tailoring them to your comfort level, lifestyle, and financial situation. Your plan should factor in your health, earning potential, savings ability, and resilience against life's bumps—like recessions, job loss, or unexpected expenses.

Once the key pieces are in place—saving tax-efficiently with RRSPs or TFSAs, managing risk, and living within your means—the next step is to give your plan the one thing it truly needs: time.

But don't confuse that with "set it and forget it." The economy changes. Government policies shift. Markets evolve. These things will impact your plan, which is why regular check-ins and adjustments are crucial.

And then there's luck—the wildcard you can't control but can certainly be ready for. Who could have predicted that real estate values in some Canadian cities would skyrocket, giving many Baby Boomers an unexpected boost to their retirement? Sometimes, simply owning the right asset at the right time makes all the difference.

In the end, good planning is about creating the conditions where luck can work in your favor. Preparation doesn't guarantee success—but it sure stacks the odds.