



Chasing Rainbows

By Wayne and Tamara

Growing up I thought I had a typical, possibly even idyllic, childhood until my mother left my father for another man. Both parents pressured me to be the woman of the house for my three younger siblings. Rightly or wrongly, I made the choice to abandon it all and move out. At 17 I was on my own.

Most people who meet my mom love her, but she is a manipulative, self-involved woman hiding behind the facade of perfection. Only those of us who see past that facade understand how destructive she can be.

My mother was raised in a strict Irish patriarchal household. While her family was patriarchal, ours revolved around her, her needs and wants and her requirements. She deludes herself into thinking she was the perfect parent, though the evidence is right in front of her face. One brother and I are distant from the family, our sister is extremely angry, and our other brother, in his 40s, still lives with her and has never married.

Today is Mother's Day. Our parents spend every holiday together as neither of them remarried, and today our family went to dinner at a nearby restaurant. Sitting next to my mother at dinner I had to restrain myself from snapping at her for the simplest things.

I allowed her to use my anger to manipulate me into saying things I am now regretting. The things I said were true, but expressing them to someone as sick as my mother was a bad choice. Still, I want to make her listen to me and hear her validate me and my feelings.

In the three years since I began counseling and started to see the path of destruction my mother set me on, I have learned not to allow her drama to impact my life. Instead of trying to change her behavior I have chosen to change how I react to it. Until now.

I feel guilty. I know from counseling that guilt is not an emotional response, and I have looked at the emotion behind it and I am just plain old angry with my mother. I'm a happy positive person with a great many friends who love me and I love them. The only time I feel like the angry resentful child I was at 17 is when I am with my mother.

I need to let this one go and let God handle it, but it's just not happening this time. It goes to show that this working-on-myself thing will be a lifelong battle, or at least as long as my mother is on this earth, bless her soul.

Shannon

Shannon, there is a difference between guilt and shame. Guilt is a red flag telling us to beware, someone is trying to manipulate us. Shame is different. Shame tells us we have done something which dishonors us. Shame requires us to mend our ways.

When you are with your mother, you are in the presence of someone who has no shame, who tries to make you feel shame. She uses guilt to manipulate you.

Many of us have the idea that our emotions are irrational. They are not. Emotions are a warning system like the smoke detector in our house. If we ignore the warning and rush into the fire, we will be scorched.

It is as if you are scouring the world over for a way to make your mother a good mother. But the satisfaction you seek is unattainable, because no matter what she does now she cannot undo your experience. You really want to have had a different life, but that wish can never be fulfilled.

Every time you have contact with her, you reinforce who she thinks she is. Listen to the smoke detector. Don't spend the rest of your life trying to make her into someone she is not.

Wayne & Tamara



AI Is Coming To Medicine But Will It Help?

Common Sense Health – Diana Gifford-Jones

This week I'm writing from Berlin, where I'm leading Canadian university leaders on a week-long study of Germany's higher education and research ecosystem. Our North American penchant for policy by experimentation

was in sharp contrast with the coordinated national strategies and infrastructure evident across the German economy. By my observation, the role of artificial intelligence (AI) in health is becoming the next national mission.

Friedrich Merz, the German Chancellor, is leading the charge to unleash AI. "I will push to ease the regulatory burden in the EU on AI," he said recently, "and, where possible, to exempt industrial AI from the current regulatory straitjacket that is too tight."

Now, before readers stop and say, "This has nothing to do with me," think again. AI is not just about computers and robots. Increasingly, it will shape what happens when you visit your doctor, undergo a test, receive a diagnosis, or fill a prescription. And whether this becomes a blessing or another modern headache depends on our leaders setting the right course. Americans are charging ahead at full speed with AI. In the United States, giant technology companies see healthcare as the next great gold rush. Faster diagnostics. Faster data collection. Faster treatment decisions. Germany has a different attitude and people are asking questions. Who controls the data? Can patients trust computer-generated advice? Will medicine become colder and more mechanical? Will doctors eventually rely too heavily on algorithms? These are genuine concerns. Medicine is not a math problem. Patients are frightened, confused, emotional, vulnerable. They need accurate information, but they also need judgment, experience, communication, and compassion.

A machine cannot look a worried patient in the eye and say, "You're going to be alright." At least not convincingly. But make no mistake. AI is coming to healthcare everywhere.

Soon, if not already, AI will read mammograms, identify skin cancers, flag dangerous drug interactions, predict heart disease risk, and analyze blood tests. In many cases, it will catch abnormalities earlier than physicians can do. That's the good news. The bad news is that many people are completely unprepared for this transition. Some readers still avoid online banking. Others rarely use email or electronic records. Many older people understandably distrust technology altogether. But avoiding technology is risky in itself.

Patients now need "AI literacy in healthcare" to understand enough about how AI works in medicine to ask sensible questions and avoid being fooled. That matters because AI can be brilliant one moment and dangerously wrong the next. A computer program may confidently provide false information. Anyone who has experimented with AI systems knows this. So what should readers do? First, become more engaged in your own healthcare, not less. Too many people drift through the medical system. They take pills they don't understand and undergo tests they never discuss.

Second, become comfortable with digital tools. Learn how to access your medical records electronically. Learn how to verify information from reliable medical sources. Ask family members for help if necessary. Pride is a foolish reason to remain uninformed.

Third, know that technology should align with common sense – not replace it.

One of the smartest observations I heard in Germany came from a researcher who warned that societies risk becoming "overconfident in technological answers to human problems." AI may improve medicine. It may reduce errors, shorten wait times, and help physicians make better decisions. But no algorithm replaces healthy living. No computer can exercise for you, stop you from smoking, overeating, drinking excessively, or refusing to manage stress. And no AI system will magically repair a piecemeal healthcare system damaged by leadership indecision or policy blunders.



Dead and Gone...

The Things Nobody Thought Were Important

By Gary Payne, MBA
Founder of Funeral Cost Ontario

One of the things I have noticed over the years is that families are not always very good at predicting what will matter later. I do not mean that as a criticism. I think most of us are probably the same when it comes to these things. We protect the things that seem obvious and valuable to us. We keep important documents together. We put certain photographs in frames to look at and have others look at. We also decide which possessions are worth insuring, saving, passing along, or placing carefully in a box where they will not be damaged. That is all reasonable, and it is also incomplete in some sense of the word.

After someone dies, families often discover that importance does not always follow the path they expected. The items that were carefully preserved may still matter, of course, but they are not always the things that stop people.

Sometimes it is the object that was never meant to survive or to be thought about at all. Something left in a drawer, or something tucked into a book. Maybe it is something kept for no clear reason other than the fact that nobody threw it away. We have all seen people move quickly past things that had obvious value, then pause over something almost accidental. And generally it is not because it was beautiful or rare or financially meaningful, but because it seemed to contain evidence of ordinary life. That is a different kind of value, and it is harder to explain without making it sound more sentimental than it is. Someone's house can be full of possessions and still leave a family looking for traces. That is the part I find interesting, and by no means do I think it is fair to say that most people are always looking for the most important or valuable object.

Sometimes they are looking for proof of the person as they actually were, in the middle of regular life, before anyone knew there would eventually be a need to remember them so carefully. And that may be why the ordinary things can become kind of complicated. They were not curated, they were certainly not chosen for legacy, they escaped attention, which is probably why they can feel more authentic later. A formal portrait tells one kind of truth, while a marked-up calendar, an old notebook, or a tool left on a basement shelf tells another. There is also a practical side to this that families know all too well. Not everything can be kept, as most of us do not have the space, time, or emotional energy to preserve an entire household.

Decisions have to be made, and many of them are fairly straightforward. Keep it, donate it, sell it, or discard it. Those words are simple until they are applied to objects that belonged to someone who is no longer there to explain why they kept them. I do not think there is a perfect way through that. Some things will be saved that later seem unimportant. While other things will be let go that someone may wonder about years afterwards. That is probably unavoidable.

Families are trying to make decisions with limited space, limited time, and often very little emotional distance. What I find myself thinking about is how much of a person's life exists outside the things we formally preserve. By this I mean routines, their habits, the unfinished projects, or the way a drawer was organized, or not organized.

The things they placed on a shelf and left there. None of it was meant to become meaningful and I think that is what makes it different. Maybe that is the part worth noticing, as we all spend years deciding what matters, and then time quietly makes its own decisions for us. It does not always choose the most valuable things. And it does not always choose the things we would have expected. But sometimes it does decide to choose whatever happened to remain. When all is said and done, while standing in front of a box or a drawer or a workbench, a family realizes the object they are all looking at was never really the point. It was simply one of the few places where ordinary life was still visible.



Sneaky Little Dance

By Bruno Scanga
Financial Columnist

Have you ever stopped to think about the sneaky little dance happening in your wallet every single day? It's a constant tango between inflation and its inseparable partner, purchasing power. The truth is you really can't have one without the other! Most of us don't spend our free time pondering economic concepts,

but understanding purchasing power is crucial if you want to hit your long-term goals and achieve true financial independence. Think about what financial freedom really means to you: it's having the exact standard of living you desire, paid for in inflation-adjusted, after-tax dollars, all without ever having to get out of bed and punch a clock again to keep it going. Sounds pretty amazing, right? But here's the catch. To reach that level of freedom—and hold onto it—you have to plan for how inflation will slowly chew away at the value of your money over the next ten or twenty years. If you don't build a sturdy shield around your hard-earned lifestyle, you might end up in the incredibly tough position of heading back into the workforce long after your retirement party. Sadly, we've seen this become a harsh reality for retirees who had to find jobs again following the heavy economic shock and soaring living costs brought on by the 2020 pandemic. So, what exactly is purchasing power? It's simply a measure of how far each of your dollars goes when buying the everyday goods and services you need to live. You've probably heard friends or family joke about trying to "stretch their dollars" or feeling like "there's way more month than money." That's shrinking purchasing power in action.

When you are living on a fixed income, even a modest annual price increase of 2% (the official target set by Canada's Central Bank) means you will have to burn through your savings faster just to maintain your current lifestyle. If you ever doubt this, just ask someone who has been retired for a decade or two! Or simply think back to your own childhood. Remember when a chocolate bar cost just a dime instead of \$1.50? Ask a senior, and they'll gladly remind you that an average family car today costs about the same as what they paid for a nice house back in the 1960s. That's exactly why inflation and purchasing power are two concepts you absolutely must keep in mind when designing your wealth-building and wealth-preservation strategies. Keep in mind that inflation isn't just about the rising price of groceries or wage bumps. It also shows up as a general surge in asset prices—think real estate and equity investments—and an increase in the total amount of money floating around the economy.

So, the next time you hear a news report about a government go ahead with "monetary easing" policies, pay close attention. Often, these large-scale strategies are designed to fix massive public debt problems or solve sluggish economic growth. However, a major side effect is that these actions can stoke more inflation and deliberately reduce your future purchasing power. The great news is that you don't have to be a victim of inflation.

With the right financial strategy, you can use these economic forces to your advantage. Reach out to a financial professional to discuss how you can adapt your portfolio today to protect your financial health for tomorrow. Safe Travel happy reading until next time!