

Walking the talk

by BRIAN LOCKHART

There is an old phrase that refers to someone who 'walks the talk.' It references a person whose actions mirror their words.

It's an admirable quality, but actually it's a tough thing to do on a daily basis if you really tried to follow through on every action or thought you have expressed.

I recently attended a climate action rally as a reporter.

It was a well-organized event with an enthusiastic crowd who yelled 'woooo' a lot and had lots of homemade signs.

The main organizer was a young guy, who I thought did a really good job of putting it all together. He reminded the crowd they were there for a reason, and to please remain respectful of others in the area. In other words, this was a rally with a purpose, not a demonstration that should result in any kind of damage or inappropriate behaviour. The crowd agreed.

The organizer introduced a special guest speaker who was also an activist. He was a retired man who now devotes his time to environmental issues.

He was a great speaker and really revved up the crowd as he spoke. He brought up five important points that we should all strive to meet to be a part of climate change action and environmental protection.

The first two points he mentioned I thought were particularly important.

'We have to stop using plastic drinking straws. They are a waste and pollute our environment,' he said.

The crowd responded with 'woooooo!!!!'

Secondly, he stressed the importance of eliminating plastic packaging on many products. Again the crowd responded with 'woooooo!!!!'

After the rally I spoke to several people there who I know. During a conversation with one of the co-organizers, a well-known local environmentalist, she mentioned that she and her husband had just booked a week in the Mexican Riviera.

That sounds like a great time and I'm sure they will have a blast.

But is that really walking the talk of a dedicated environmental activist?

A Boeing 737 passenger jet will burn 5,000 pounds of fuel per hour - that's around 750 gallons of jet fuel. All that burned fuel results in exhaust fumes deposited directly into the atmosphere.

A quick check with WestJet shows a flight from Toronto to Puerto Vallarta, is about 4 hours, 51 minutes.

You'll be burning around 3,750 gallons of fuel on the trip there. Of course you still have to get back.

Wouldn't it have been more environmentally sound to book a few days down the road at the Great Wolf Lodge or something?

About an hour after the rally I dropped in to the local McDonalds for lunch. When I entered the dining room I saw a group of people that had attended the rally. I gave them a wave.

I also noticed that everyone at the table had a drink cup with a plastic straw stuck through the middle opening on the lid.

The 'woooooing' excitement of the rally and the pledge to not use plastic straws had disappeared when lunch was served.

As a member of a local Facebook page that talks about local issues, there is always some interesting posts to see.

Thanks to that imported nightmare called Black Friday, many people like to shop for bargains on that day.

One of the recent posts was in a local Wally-mart with a photo showing a stack of 32-inch LED televisions on sale for \$99.

Yup, that's a pretty good price.

The post received quite a few responses from people who had already been there and bought one, or others who were excited at the thought of buying a new TV for such a price and announced they were going right over there to get one.

I did notice that at least a couple of the people excited at the prospect of a cheaply priced, Chinese produced, LED TV, were the same people who routinely complain that we, as a society do not recycle enough and who call on others not to be so wasteful.

An LED TV has a useful life of around ten years. After that, you've just got a plastic box filled with some kind of electronics.

Do you really need a third or fourth TV set in your house just because you are getting it for a good price?

Walking the talk is not an easy thing to do.

It's easy to speak of saving the planet, but actually doing it is tougher than you realize.