

Connecting by ZOOM

By Linda Wilk

The virtual world of ZOOM has become commonplace for many of us who still need to hold meetings and need to find a way to make that happen.

In talking with my husband about ZOOM stocks we both regretted not investing in that forward-thinking option. Who knows how much different our financial portfolio might be right now?

Now, I realize there are many forms of virtual connecting, for myself, this is what I am most familiar with.

I also know it has become something many who ZOOM or use other virtual options a lot, want to avoid



A SLICE OF LIFE

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outside of their daily work lives.

However, for myself and my mom who lives several hundred miles away, it has been a wonderful option.

Since I do not have an iPhone, face timing with my mom is not an option. And with the corona virus still very much a concern, my plans to make my annual summer trek to Nebraska has been put on hold.

My sister who works in a local nursing home, has been my barometer as to when it might be safe to make that visit to Nebraska to see my 79-year-old mother, siblings and their families.

At this rate I am not sure we will even be going home this winter. I am now hoping for making a trip to Nebraska in March for my mom's 80th birthday.

So, knowing this is a tough year for my mom as it was June 16 my dad died

after being diagnosed with stage four lung cancer on June 2, I thought I needed to do something to better connect with her.

It was during a weekly phone call with my sister that we decided to surprise our mom and buy her a webcam and microphone for her computer.

This electronic device that only cost us \$50, has resulted in truly being a blessing.

Now it has not been without a pretty-steep learning curve that we have made our weekly zoom call connection, however, seeing how it lifts my mom's spirits has made it all worthwhile.

The first time we connected I had to have the assistance of my 19-year-old daughter – realizing I was impatient and thought my mom had entered and I did not get her connected. I found I created more than one meeting and she was waiting in the original meeting.

There was also the time that she thought the meeting was to start at 2 p.m. because I emailed her an invitation that included the time for me to connect and her to connect, not thinking that it might be confusing to in-

clude Eastern and Central time zones.

I have learned only to tell her what time she needs to connect.

Then there was the time she got connected, however, could not get the sound to work. Again, being somewhat inexperienced myself, instead of directing her to unmute herself, I presumed it was her webcam microphone. I tried unsuccessfully to assist her on the telephone with the problem, encouraging her to try and get her 10- year-old great-grandson Cayden to come over.

By the time Cayden arrived, we figured out she just needed to unmute herself on the computer.

Since Cayden lives less than a mile from my mom it was not an inconvenience for Cayden and gave him an opportunity to chat with me as well.

I was not sure if my mom really was enjoying the visits by zoom or not after sending her an email one week and her replying that yes, she would like to zoom, however, not as long as the last time.

I found that you can't always interpret emails well, however, when that next

time we connected she proudly showed me how she had dressed up for our ZOOM call, wearing a jacket she had sewn, the necklace we had made out of one of my dad's rings and a new scarf.

It has really turned in to a show and tell time for my mom as she routinely has projects lined up that she wants to show me on our weekly virtual calls.

Such as the quilt she made from my dad's old jeans. Last summer after my dad's death my sister and I helped my mom go through all my dad's clothes. My mom insisted on keeping all our dad's jeans, stating she was going to make quilts out of them.

And that she did. Along with a snowman vest that was originally supposed to be an apron, a queen-sized quilt and a baby quilt – all projects she plans to enter in their local fair the week of Aug. 5.

So, for anyone who may not be sure how your older parent or relative will adapt to ZOOM or another virtual platform, give it a try, you will find the learning curve is worth the effort, as we all continue to navigate this new normal.



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