

Courtown Musings

I remember studying "As you like it" by William Shakespeare, the bard of Avon, in secondary school and we had to learn large chunks of it by rote so that we could quote it freely and be able to regurgitate it for our exams if that section came up.

The only bit I can faintly remember is the soliloquy by Jacques on the seven stages of man.

"And one man in his time plays many parts

First the infant mewling and puking in his nurse's arms

Then the whining schoolboy with his satchel and smiling morning face creeping like snail unwillingly to school etc till we finish up sans teeth, sans eyes, sans taste sans everything.

I have played a lot of those roles during my life. In my first day at school I was definitely the whining schoolboy kicking sister Immaculata for telling me lies. I was bawling my eyes out and wanted my mammy whereupon she told me my Mom was gone to Woolworths to buy me something nice. I told her that Woolworths was not open and that she was a liar and kicked her across the ankles. I met her at my father's funeral many years later and she still remembered the incident. I suppose you would remember being attacked by a four-year-old.

During the Corona virus lockdown, we have all played many parts in playing games with grandchildren, like hide and seek shouting numbers 1 to 10 in ascending order and then, ready or not stay in your place or you'll be caught. And then the serious stuff starts.

Is s/he behind the door, behind the curtain, under the table, until the moment of discovery and the delight in children's faces when they are found.

I remember reading, many years ago, about these action-based role reversal games and how important they were for children's development. Young children love to hide and seek. They love the sense of adventure in hiding, the momentary feeling of being lonely and then the joy of being found. The hide and seek and you run, and I'll chase you are great bonding games and there is such joy in being caught and found, of being alive in a group and being cared for and loved and wanted.

These role reversal games are very worthwhile for everyone, chasing games, hide and seek, peek a boo and everyone enjoys the role reversal and it's a great training exercise for life.

My television viewing has also changed over the Corona Virus period. Young children are visiting more often. You could be watching Sky news or Maura and Daithi. There might even be a very interesting recipe being cooked by local personality 'WAYDE MURPHY', of Gorey and Adare 1826 fame when suddenly there is a wail, and someone wants to watch Paw Patrol. I have watched more episodes of Rider and the 5 pups over the past few months than Newsnight. I can actually sit down now and be interested in it. And anyway, who would dare say to a three-year-old that they couldn't watch their favourite programme while the oldies watched boring veggies being peeled and sautéed. Peaceful living demands instant changing of TV programme.

Am I moving into stage 6 of Shakespeare's Stages of man?. I hope not.

Lest you should be bored there is always Fireman Sam, that great ~Welsh Fireman who has rescued so many from numerous tricky situations.

These are mighty intergenerational TV programmes.

As we advance in years and practise more role reversal and get more dependent on others, we all need more private space, more time to hide and read, to walk, meditate and keep ourselves on track mentally and physically.

We all need to hide and seek ourselves and seek peace and tranquillity in our lives

I hope we all found some extra personal time for ourselves during Corona lockdown time and that we are more energised, more affirmed people post cocooning.