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Trinity Musings #54

Rev Brian Goodings [trinityminister@bmts.com](mailto:trinityminister@bmts.com)

Serving Trinity United Church: Collingwood

“Wanna go?” “Are we gonna do this...?”

Those are phrases from the world of Don Cherry’s “Hockey Code” issued, quite cordially, by hockey pugilists to other gladiators. Interestingly, according to The Code, the Challenged can simply decline the invitation of the Challenger, without explanation.

These fights are quite staged and not really in the heat of the moment.

I’ve been practicing saying these phrases in my mirror to make sure I have the tough-guy-look. It needs work but its coming.

I’m suffering from a year of far too much neighbourly-consideration and I’m sick of being nice and caring. Although I haven’t had a real fight since I was twelve years old, lately I’ve been wondering if a good scrap might help improve my mood.

Unfortunately for me, all the retirement homes are closed so I can’t find a “dance-partner” there.

Sometimes a hockey game needs something like a scrap to change it up and I need something to happen to change up this day to day grind. A skirmish might be just the thing.

I’ve been watching old tapes of Wendel Clark, Tie Domi and Tiger Williams “tilts” to pick up some pointers. Hopefully, I don’t find a Bobby Probert or Zdeno Chara.

On Monday morning I came out of my house looking like Joe Btfsplk (Li'l Abner cartoon character). Dark cloud over my head and good scrapper scowl on my mug.

I saw my chance for confrontation when a construction worker, who is working next door, partially blocked my driveway. But, before I could

say anything, he jumped out of his car and said, in a very cheery voice “Good morning. What a beautiful spring day!”

My angry mood and fight-plan evaporated with his pleasant smile...or it could have been that he was around 25 years old and over six feet tall. I prefer to think about it as a moment of mature-clarity not just chickening out.

Later that day, I was still looking for trouble when I came upon three members of a motorcycle gang. They were real1%ers wearing patches sporting a skull and crossbones. I encountered them while I was walking my dog at Clenenan’s Conservation area. They were watching the fish jumping at the fish ladder on the Beaver River. Who knew bikers like fish?

All three of them might have come right out of central casting as huge scary-looking motorcycle dudes. I’m sure they would have obliged me if I asked them if they wanted “to go”, but I decided that discretion really is the better part of valour.

So I’ve changed my mind from actually having a fight to looking for other outlets for my feeling. (Note- men tend to only have one feeling at a time. We can’t multitask anything.)

One of those is primal screaming therapy, invented by Arthur Janov in the 1970’s. I’m not sure how many people were actually helped by this therapy but Janov became a very rich man from the sale of his books and therapy sessions.

It’s a bit like the pet-rock phenomena. Selling the obvious works really well sometimes. I don’t need an expert to tell me that screaming sometimes helps one feel better, at least in the moment. I tried it while out walking with my dog, Lexi, but a kind soul who heard me thought I was calling for help and asked if I needed anything. It’s hard to stay wallowing in anger with so many nice people in the world.

My problem is that I don’t want to scream at the world or off into the void...I want to scream AT somebody. I want to make my frustration somebody’s fault but, at five foot five and sixty five years old, I don’t want to get a punch in the nose.

Surely I can't be alone in my feeling (singular of course). Remember when we used to stand at the end of our driveways and bang on pots and pans to show our support for front line workers?

How about we declare a twenty minute amnesty period for anger that runs every evening from six until six twenty? During this time everyone who needs to do so, can go to the end of their driveway, or stand out on their balcony, and yell anything they want at their neighbours. Nothing said or yelled during this twenty minute amnesty time would be taken personally.

There would have to be limits of course. No racist or sexist stuff would be permissible; nothing that would hurt someone's feelings; nothing that is really nasty; nothing that might be construed as damaging to the environment; nothing that would send any negativity into orbit; nothing that would damage future relationships.

It doesn't really leave us many options.

Which leads us right back to the beginning of this Musing. We could all just stand rooted at the end of our driveways and taunt each other by yelling "Wanna go buddy?" or "Are we gonna do this?"

And at the end of the twenty minutes we could just say to each other "No thanks" and, in keeping with the Code, go home without incident.

Sound like a plan? Nobody gets hurt and we might all feel better for at least a couple of minutes.