

Modern day heroes: a little bit of help goes a long way

By Laird Darren Gallagher

Warning: For those of you who have not tried to read one of my articles before, I urge you to refer to previous editions and work up to this one. For those that have, hang on, because this one is out there - even for me.

I was flicking through a magazine in a waiting room recently. Just your run-of-the-mill uncomfortable chairs, coffee table and pile of magazines, when suddenly a few observations dawned on me. The first amazing thing was that the magazine was still in date -- never had that happen before have you? It's a crazy world, I tell ya. After quickly reading the horoscopes that told me something about a full moon* and how my lucky number was seven, I spied this advertisement for a TV program named 'Heroes'. While I haven't gone out of my way to watch it, which is just a water cooler way of saying 'I have gone out of my way to watch it', it has given me something to think about.

Is it possible? Do people change? Do we evolve? I remember the training that my wife put me through in terms of sorting the recycling and fumbling through a fridge once trying to work out the difference between cos lettuce, baby spinach, cabbage, and a whole range of other similar vegetables. Although, I did learn it, and I have changed. I wonder then, can this happen on a larger scale?

Recently I discovered that the skin colour on my hands was changing. I was starting to get splotches on my fingers. 'Mmm...could this be a superpower?' I thought, having just turned 'Heroes' off. It turns out that it is something called Vitiligo, or something like that. When the doctor is telling me this, I'm picturing myself in some kind of cape with a big 'V' on the chest, with some little kid yelling out, 'Look mum, It's VITILIGO MANI!'. However, it turns out that it is nothing more than a skin pigment discolouration. It doesn't hurt, it doesn't itch or anything, it's just a different colour now. Maybe I can become Splotchy Man, and I can hide against splotchy, skin coloured surfaces like a chameleon. Hey now, be nice. A lame super hero is still a hero, and so we get to the point of this (admittedly) odd article.

Everyone needs a hero, and you can put any word on that you like. Hero, guide, mentor or friend, they are all the same thing. Someone in our lives who is able to

give us the inspiration we need to achieve things. Did you happen to notice just how many people went out walking after The Biggest Loser was on TV? Heroes can come in many shapes and many sizes.

In my childhood, all the heroes wore hats – policemen, firemen, soldiers, workmen, and cowboys! If they had a hat, they were the business. Curious that I now find myself in a job that requires me to sport a hat around the place, huh? However, headwear aside, many of our heroes are simply those people who are better than us at an activity that we would like to be good at – a good dancer, bowler, builder or parent. When anyone we admire takes a little interest in us, and urges us to do better, we generally find that it charges us up a little, gives us the energy to have another crack of the whip.

*Everyone needs a hero...
Hero, guide, mentor or friend,
they are all the same thing.
Someone in our lives who is
able to give us the inspiration
we need to achieve things.*

Now, I know many of you are waiting for the Defence tie in, so here it is. In acknowledging the benefit of having someone to look up to, there are different mentoring schemes now available in the three Services. These, like every other Defence initiative, are all designed to help us get better. Why is this good? Because the more we strive to become proficient, the better we get. The better we get, the easier the job becomes and the more energy we have to expend on our loved ones. So check out these mentoring services that are on offer! You will be pleasantly surprised as to just how many heroes there are out there.

Ciao for now from Splotchy Man.

*Note to self: watch Grease 🍷