

7th May 2020

Consequences

**“In nature there are neither rewards or punishments –
there are consequences.”**

Robert G Ingersoll, Some Reasons Why

I don't suppose I'm allowed to tell you this – but I haven't signed *The Official Secrets Act*, so it's probably OK. But ... when I worked as a hospice chaplain, two of the patients got themselves drunk. Familiar with “a wee dram” in the lounge of an evening – for “medicinal purposes”, you understand – two of the older men had a visitor smuggle in a bottle of Single Malt, and what the nurses *thought* were the small whiskies they were sipping slowly as they watched *Match of the Day*, had been filled and emptied several times – till the whole bottle of Scotch was finished.

There were consequences, of course. The up-side? The two old guys had the best night's sleep they'd had in weeks – no additional sedation required. The down-side? The two of them were still asleep when the morning Ward Round commenced, and they had *terrible* hangovers for the rest of the day. The empty bottle was discovered behind one of the cushions in the lounge. So, the other consequence was – all the staff, chaplain included, had a great story to tell.

Every action has its consequences, some good and some bad, some expected and some unforeseen. So, perhaps it's a good idea to think about the consequences *before* we set out on a course of action.

What the consequences will be for us after this crisis is over will depend on what careful consideration we give to things before we blunder into ill-thought-through courses of action. Good things might come. So let's make sure they're planned for and don't happen by accident. But bad things might result too – and wouldn't be a shame if we were left with a massive hangover that took us ages to recover from.

After all, like the staff and the chaplain in the hospice, we all want to have a *good* story to tell ...

A prayer for today

*Caring God, help me to look before I leap, and if I do happen to leap before looking,
help me to deal with the consequences – and to learn from them too. Amen.*

An original reflection by © Tom Gordon

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