

SILENCE IS GOLDEN

“What would Marco do in this situation?” I hear a dark haired woman saying to her companions, in the Eurostar departure lounge at St Pancras.

“We asked for decaffs but they served us real coffee and we buzzed all night.”

Who is Marco? Is he an inspiration, an alter ego we can use to help us deal with a crisis?

My wife is in Geneva managing an exhibition stand at a Banking Conference. I’ve decided to get a French Rail Pass and take a week to travel down to see her, stopping off in Paris on the way.

I board Eurostar expecting a place for restful contemplation but I find myself sitting outside Harry Edward’s mobile office. I know it’s him because he tells everyone he calls.

He has four seats to himself and the central table is laid out like a desk. A large report is spread in front of him, probably key material for his trip to Paris.

I’m on my own personal mission but for the next three hours it seems that Harry will be sharing his life with me. He tries to read the report but his mobile phone addiction is too strong.

He calls Ben to tell him he’s making a pitch to Printemps and expects to get a contract. He boasts that he always closes a sale in one visit.

He calls Mike to say the dinner last night was fun and wasn’t Cathy looking sexy. He tells Mike to make a play for her.

He calls John and tells him that he’s not happy with Anne’s performance. He’s noted at least ten incidents of her lying and plans to make her an agenda item at the next staff meeting with Dave.

Now, Harry’s having trouble with his mobile - he’s got no messages. He rings technical support and learns how to load Whatsapp. There are still no messages but he’s convinced this is because of poor reception on the train.

We enter the Channel Tunnel and the mobile phone users are silenced. Harry looks distraught. At last, I can think in peace. I sip the champagne served by the stewardess with “Love Cynthia” on her badge. “Thanks Love,” I say and she tops up my glass.

When we arrive in France, Harry asks for my help to find a French network. I show him how and note his mobile number. He starts rabbiting again as soon as he’s connected

What would Marco do in this situation? Would he put up with someone making endless loud trivial calls?

I decide Marco would send Harry some hoax messages, apparently from Dave.

Sorry Harry, Printemps just called to cancel your visit. They have signed with IBM. Dave

By the way don’t attack Anne at the next meeting. We are an item

Harry looks ashen. He obviously hasn’t checked where the messages have come from. At last, with Marco’s help, I have silenced him,