

LIFE IS WHAT YOU MAKE IT

Disappearances in life do not only happen to materialistic things or people in crime novels and films. Over the last five years, I have noticed some physical and mental disappearances that have meant a great deal of adjustment. Some people call these matters ailments, some express them as disablements. They are neither. They are merely life changers or “game changers” as a friend once said. Sounds better than referring to them as ailments and disablements one feels.

My hearing has not really been acute for several years. Indeed, I noticed my hearing deteriorating as I turned forty. The tinnitus that I had suffered as a sideshow for most of my life, suddenly drew closer and louder. The constant whistling was joined in the symphony by a hissing, not the hissing of summer lawns, more like a whishing of a breeze. As an evening moves toward bedtime, so the hissing becomes similar to white horses breaking on the shore. A tempest in the making rushing in from the north-west; not quite Storm Eunice, more like stormy seas.

Paracetamol to hand, two tablets normally do the trick, taken just before I head off the bed is enough to settle me into a dreamy world of abstract expressionism Dada artists would be proud of. I always seem to dream of travelling – from house to house, town to town, even country to country. I can't see myself of course, only others, but the tinnitus is at bay and although people talk to me in normal voice, I somehow still can't hear very well.

So, onto my next “game changer.” When I turned fifty, I noticed I was starting to forget everyday things, but could remember vast amounts of learning, of books, of music, of lectures. Remembering which junction on the M25 to turn off for Watford, or what clothes I need the following day, or what I had for lunch yesterday – all these matters were missing. What was happening to me? Is this an hereditary condition? Having no real contact with family, I was left to..., err, remember whether this condition had existed in my ancestors. After much thought, I suddenly recalled my grandmother suffering from slight memory loss when she turned sixty; and full-blown dementia by the age of eighty.

So, here's where I am today. My hearing continues to deteriorate year-on-year; much to my frustration and that of my dear lady wife. I should wear my hearing aids at all times, but honestly, they itch me. The various settings work, but in the last two years with the obligatory wearing of masks and the fact that I also wear glasses, the accompaniment of hearing aids has become tiresome. But, I am committed to making a change in my attitude toward them!

To compensate for poor memory, I write everything down. It works; though, I did turn off the M25 at Maple Cross by mistake recently!

Life is what you make it. 9 out of 10 – always room for improvement!