

Meeting a famous person. 5.10.2020.

This is a non-political piece!

I suppose the most famous person I have ever met is Bill Clinton. I met him because he was linked to GEMS, the education organisation that I worked for most of the time I was out in Dubai. We did not say much to each other, beyond shaking hands. I was introduced to him as a GEMS Principal. GEMS was the education organisation I worked for while out in Dubai. Bill had already spoken at the conference. He spoke well and came over as a likeable person, very good with the camera, as we know.

Meeting him made me reflect on the qualities a politician should have to be successful, and I make these comments irrespective of political orientation. What Bill Clinton was able to do, when he addressed us, was to speak to us as if he were connecting with each individual. Ronald Reagan, on the other side of the political fence, had a similar quality.

I am sure that we can think of others that are able to do this, as well as those who do not have these qualities.

This makes me reflect on what some individuals are able to do, and others are not. Some have an apparent sincerity, certainly not lacking conviction, but conveying their message in a way that maximises the chance of them winning you over. When they speak to you, they understand your problems and issues. They are 'just like you' in fact. Or that is what they would have you believe.

Others come across as cold, or argumentative, blustering, inappropriately aggressive or indecisive. Bill came over as none of those things. He was calm and understanding.

There is a skill that any very successful politician must have, and that is to be believable, to speak to you and to appeal to what he or she thinks you want to hear, whether it is a message about the importance of private enterprise or a message about social justice and equality. I have heard many political debates, where politicians from different sides of the argument have taken questions from members of the public and have started their response with, 'I agree with a lot of what you are saying,' whatever has been said to them.

In my meeting with Bill he was batting on an easy wicket, or perhaps I should say, he was able to relax in the non-threatening surroundings of a comfortable baseball field. He was able to talk about Education and how he supported the notion of Education for All. There were no difficult questions to answer. The fact that the speech was made in Dubai, with the sun shining on all of us, made his job that much easier as we were all pre-disposed to be in a good mood.

Everyone seemed to like Bill, although, as the Chairman of the Company was there in person, and he had paid for Bill's flight, stay and, I am sure a fee for Bill's support of the organisation, it would not have been politically astute on our parts if we had indicated a negative response in any way.

Politics, with a large and small 'p,' is in every workplace and some would say, every aspect of life.

Following meeting Bill, I reflected on a number of issues: 1. Politics and the truth. 2. Political electability and non-electability. 3. The internal self and the projected self.

At a less thoughtful level, I am very pleased to have a photo of Bill and myself in our house. It reminds me of happy days and the opportunity to greet a celebrity, whatever their politics!