



The Devouring Landscape

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From little acorns.

“If you’re in the luckiest one per cent of humanity, you owe it to the rest of humanity; to think about the other 99 per cent.”

Warren Buffett.

It falls upon each of us, to make the most of whatever we are able from our lives.

Wherever we may come from or sit within whichever grouping we may be classed; all will leave a legacy, of one sort or another. Whether good, bad, or indifferent, it is our responsibility to bestow.

I cannot start my stories without recognising the debt I owe to so many others, for what has, and is, being done to assist whatever passage we are all making. The quotation from Warren Buffett, has positioned that remarkably accurately.

Clearly I have failed to achieve the wonderful status of being in that situation of being one of the lucky one percent. But I feel that I am now doing something that can make a positive difference, which is the best I feel able to do.

Positive or negative, the effect of family life enables so much, however that may be applied; it is here, from whence our journeys begin. I am thankful that this was mostly positive, like most families we have had our times, but we have made it thus far and are still talking.

My life has probably been more of a roller-coaster than would suit many. Whilst my stories will be about many of my rides; they should not have that sort of an effect upon any of you, they are only used as indications to enable the permeation of the facts available. All I can ask is that you should sit back and take it in for enjoyment, knowledge, plus (if I dare say it) increased interest.

I have had diabetes for longer than almost everything else in my life, being an inseparable partnership that I just had to learn to live with. Becoming betrothed at such an early age with this questionable condition; which was, according to most of the Specialists encountered then, intent on leaving me in a mess for the rest of my life it would appear, or so it thought?

Here is a thing, and it has often occurred to me, why on earth do we not get any form of guarantee with our bodies? It really is a shame that, unlike a faulty product, you cannot take your pancreas back and replace it with something that works.

So much for ‘Lifetime-Warranties’ I think Trading Standards should be on to this. I seriously doubt that anyone could believe that two-years could represent any sort of a lifetime. Unless, of course, you may be a fly, or insect of some type; in which case you will be seen as being rather aged and not able to be doing this.

“Now where is that receipt?”

That brings into distinct view another simple fact that is worthy of note at this time. For this replacement surgery to happen, it would mean that some other poor and unfortunate, has lost their battle to remain with their own lives.

However, even when using such replacement bits, there is a distinct possibility, especially for the diabetic community, that our own bodies, with more trouble from our rogue immune system; could simply choose to reject such. By doing that, we are often placed further back than we were at the start of any procedures.

I suppose our biggest hope is that soon enough we may be able to start either growing new or rebuilding the one we have in place. As diabetics and our risk profile as far as infections may be concerned, we have so much more to think about here. I must make the point that; here is where my profits are being devoted.

Being one of five children, second eldest by a factor of a mere ten-minutes, but simply by virtue of that fact; I was going to be the youngest boy, which was fast to become a much-treasured portal back then. Indeed, all my siblings are still around somewhere, either here or America, at this moment in time.

For a multitude of reasons Heather has been my closest sibling, that maybe because we are the youngest brother and sister? But more likely because we appear to share a, slightly, deformed sense of humour and have enjoyed quite a few lively times together; and that is lively with a capital F, for ‘Fun’ in case you were wondering.

Mum is still going strong, but unfortunately, dad passed a few years ago. I say ‘unfortunately’ but he just went into a shell of his own making, not allowing anyone back in. What did not help this situation, at all, was that he appeared to be getting himself back on-track immediately prior to ‘cutting-ties’.

That would be dad all over, up, down, and all over the place, most of the time. But he was an amazing father, and grandfather, when the love oozed both ways, which was always the most prominent quality;

displaying whenever we were together. All the grandkids loved him dearly, like myself now; grandad would do almost anything they wanted, within reason and legality, of course.

However, this was his bi-polar at its worst, his abstinence from any form of contact made this a hidden-depth, none of us were aware of until far too late. I so wish I had tried harder, but c'est la vie, it was an extremely harsh lesson learned when too late to do anything; I am deeply upset that I could not fix this.

This was going to affect me more badly than I ever thought it would, but things have a funny way of working out over time. Although it came on late for me, I do believe we have a heaven up there, with the other place below of course. Dad will be up there keeping a further watch out for us all, I am sure, and I have no doubt that he will still be smiling.

I am still close to mum, but she is in Florida and, I suppose, it must be true to say I am closer, proximity-wise to my diabetes. I share my life with this type 1 diabetes pal of mine and do not have to get on a plane to be with it. Although it must be said, I have known mum for longer than my dear friend; and familywise the same can be said of David, but how a sub-two- year-old can know anything like that, is anybody's guess.

Coming from a relatively large family, I have confidence that all should be able to bear witness to the trials and tribulations of a diabetic youth and, possibly, at least some of my onward life. Mind you, my early years were remarkably absent of any diabetes problems; ably assisted by an appropriate management profile denying much of the associated issues here, in its wake.

Being five children, the split went into two distinct groupings; David, Christine and I were always considered the 'older-ones', with Elizabeth and Heather taking the 'younger-ones' birth. But I was always the younger of the two boys; for whatever reason that was generally announced during any introductions made and I had no idea of its value at that point.

Our early childhood days were littered with 'fall-outs' of one sort or another, although Elizabeth and Heather rarely had issues of any sort. I would, because I am not totally perfect (Caron tells me that often), have the occasional fall out with either David or Christine, which I think is supposed to be a natural progression being relatively close in age range.

David and Christine were always falling-out; and the mayhem that would follow could be dynamic. Unfortunately, the proverbial fireworks would fill the sky with the disruption to any silence; that never seemed to sit within our house, when they achieved the levels, they could easily do.

Whilst most rooms will have four corners, most of the time these will have been taken; for either or both to be stood in, for one reason or another. Very occasionally, I may have been told to be in one or the other.

When slightly older, the two, then three of us received a roster of duties, for which to earn spends, dad wanted a good grounding to be learnt; and realising that:

“Money doesn’t grow on trees,” was perhaps, the first of many lessons here. This roster, mainly, involved washing, drying, and putting the pots away; involving mere pennies in those days, but those pennies had a real value back then.

However, David was always attempting to get the upper hand in whatever he was going to be doing; probably emphasising the early point of this small group, being more identified with two brothers and a lone sister. Whilst it was never actually broached, I think it was often expected that I was to be David’s wingman as Christine never made any approach about that, but then again neither did David, he just took it for granted.

Gosh, that last statement appears to have an indication that could easily lead to the thoughts of bullying being performed, which could not be further from the truth. All that we ever got involved with was the one- upmanship that could be created, then performed; by whichever of the two would be most likely to do such.

That aggravator was usually going to be David as he had enrolled me, not that having such made much of a difference. But Christine had no wing person with whom to operate.

Back in the day, one would wash the pots, one would dry them, and the other would be tasked with putting away. Every so often an opportunity presented itself, if David was washing and Christine drying, I would be the ‘putting away’ part of the equation.

David would get me to pass the pots back to him so they could just be wet again. This would go on for as long as would be appropriate if we had nothing better to do.

After the first pass, the only additional workload related to the drying of those re-wet pots; all I did was pass them back and David dipped them in the water. Poor Christine would be drying up for an eternity before she picked up on what was happening, or mum would find out what was taking so long, bless.

I do believe even ‘Hell’ could freeze over from just one of those looks Christine would then deliver, to say nothing of the very occasional outburst, or more like, explosion. Needless to say; on a changed roster, or range of duties, something else could always, and often did, happen.

Happily, I was never to be served such tomfoolery, I guess my childhood was spent being treated like a poorly young thing, tending to remain untargeted. Either everyone cared too much to do anything against me, or they feared whatever wrath would be served, were they to do so.

This wrath was not served from yours truly but would be delivered by either mum or dad who were both in charge of most of the early protection duties. Whilst away from their watchful eyes, it was David that assumed such a responsibility, being ten-minutes older meant he was always going to be in some sort of charge.

Let me be clear on this matter, I was never really a poorly young thing, nor am I a poorly middle-aged thing now. I think it worthy of mention here that “middle-age”, covers an increasingly wide-spectrum when you get to my age.

But I was always going to take advantage of any situations that could see me miss, some of the work, or being taunted to the point of distraction; I mean, why would I not? If they are prepared to peel my grapes, as far as I am concerned; they most certainly can, and I will not stop them.

Mum is a fully qualified Nursery Nurse, which came in for some extra use as I was growing, I say is, and she is now well into her 80’s, but mum is truly amazing. Driving to become the proud owner of a successful Day- Care in Florida; ‘Nanny Jeans Academy’. A business which is thriving, with many decades of successful operation, where the outlook is great: mum, Eric, and the girls have done remarkably well out there.

Dad was a Civil Servant, starting at the Post-Office; moving up until he retired. He did spend a lot of time running his own sideline as a Decorator and Gardener, he even had his own business doing that; but was never destined to become a millionaire. Dad was always working and playing; he had been married three times which is more attributed to his playing, I think.

All the children have done well; David is a successful Financial Advisor, Christine has worked for one Airline for most of her working life, Elizabeth and Heather have both succeeded in the USA. I like to think I have also been quite successful, but you are about to read about most of this going forward, you can establish whatever you like from that.

Times were never short of something going on, we had a busy household, with friends and relatives always around. Mum or dad were always preparing, readying, tidying and, for dad, working or playing, it was non- stop.

A house often full of children, friends, neighbours, and family; was a great place to be when we could not be outside because of the weather. I am not sure what you may have heard about the weather in Manchester, but indoor-play areas are a defined requirement, whatever your age.

These were also the days before the advent of the wonderful ‘Adventure’ play areas we now have, for a wide variety of children’s interests. Excepting the local, if there was one, swimming baths, or parks there was little for the children to do. But that never stopped any of us enjoying ourselves to the full, our own imaginations had to work much harder back then, which in retrospect, was certainly no bad thing.

We played on the streets, near rivers, in woods and a host of other, now considered, unsuitable areas for children to be in or around for a mass of Health and Safety reasons. Coming home with cuts and bruises, for many were considered natural play elements, although severely frowned upon today. I doubt any of us felt we should not be doing such, indeed, many cuts and bruises became the prized memories of a truly wonderful childhood.

When we moved to a bigger house; we came close to having a pet dog, Sally-Sue a puppy-poodle that mum and dad decided may be good for the boy’s development, I think we were around six-years-old at this time. It had been envisaged that we may start to realise some responsibility by having a dog we would need to walk, look after, and play with. The last part sounded just up our street; not sure we had any idea that this may involve any work elements!

Unfortunately, Sally-Sue was with us for just one week, she kept finding things to chew, slippers, toys, and towels. However, when she found a way to get into the cabinet housing my diabetes requirements; dad decided that enough was enough. But for the fact it was summertime, it looked like a Christmas setting; white cotton wool all over the floor, pure white, excepting the yellow bits which were plainly obvious.

Even after this first, and extremely minimal taste, of cohabitation with ‘a man’s best friend’, I have developed a distinct passion for our four- legged friends. Not only are they the best of company to be with, but they are also somewhat responsible for the discovery of our life saving medication treatment. For so many more reasons now, this is an ever- increasing passion, that I cannot see any end here.

Just to cap off this short introduction to my inherited family, I think the best way is to use a quotation from, in my opinion, one of the masters of satirical literature, George Orwell. If you have not seen or are not aware of his works, he has a number of classics, which were and still are a great read:

Animal Farm (1945)

Nineteen-eighty-four (1949)

The quotation referred to is:

“If you can’t get rid of the family skeleton, you may as well make it dance.” With such a large family circle, you can be sure I have my fair share of skeletons to deal with, unfortunately, as you are about to discover most of mine go around in heavy clogs or boots.

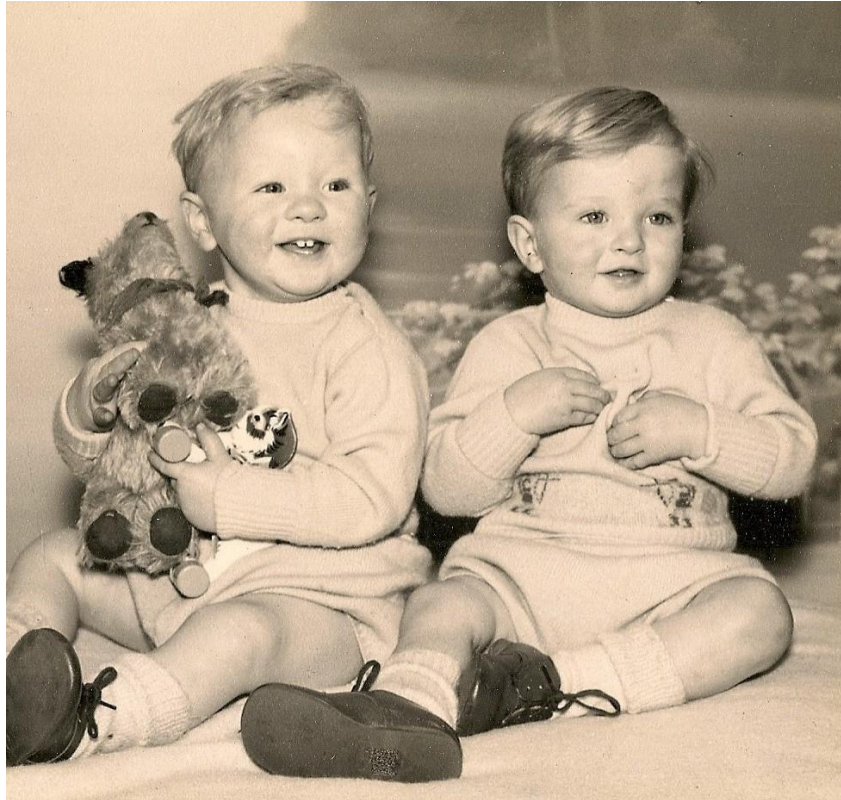


My thanks are extended to Paula Morin for this image. The likeness here is most remarkable, but a few break points would greatly add, for the real today.

On Your Mark, Get Set....

“Art is a process, not a product”

Maryann Kohl.



Little me, with my twin brother who was always to be found holding the teddy!

We may all build or create so many things, but being smart, idealistic, and gaining real assistance can make all the difference!

The day had arrived, my stork had left the station and I was born in 1956, making an entrance as the unexpected twin! These were the days before scan availability and they could only check for a baby, or baby's, heartbeat. In the case of a multiple birth, if the baby's heartbeats were in unison; these types of mistakes could happen.

From the very start David was always going to be in some form of charge. At this point he had taken charge of the cuddly toys, and should anyone attempt to take any away, he would scream the place down. Even then, he had a booming set of vocal chords, the practice of using such was going to be extensive throughout our young lives and beyond.

We do, I feel it is worth pointing out, have some rather interesting names associated with twinship relations:

“Twins can be either monozygotic (identical), meaning that they develop from one zygote, which splits and forms two embryos. Or dizygotic (fraternal), meaning that each twin develops from a separate egg and each egg is fertilized by its own sperm cell.” <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Twin>

Now then, that tells a story of greater magnitude than I can give it justice in a few short sentences. However, you did not acquire this to understand more about twins so the slightest attention will be drawn.

With the former version the zygote has undergone this separation, so I must have things that David did not and so on. Diabetes, impeccable charm, good looks, and modesty, were obviously part of the agreement, with the latter being my strongest suite.

I am not sure if I should ever try to explain this to anyone, verbally I mean; how would explain that you are a ‘monozygotic’ twin? It sounds awfully frightening, and would probably lead to awkward questions like:

“Where in the world is Monozygot?”

Mind you, the term ‘dizygotic’; sounds too close to the truth here, and I can only leave you to determine that, though they appear to spell it with just the single ‘z’.

As you may start to notice, ‘science, communication, and tongey-speak,’ are languages separated by an enormous gulf; the former is so missing of the fun and exotic elements, generally over-included with the latter. This is akin to being a new version of ‘pidgin English’, but never having had to have discourse with that particular feathered friend, I cannot claim anything of the sort.

Being ‘unexpected’ bore its own issues; one name chosen, pram needing changing, shortage of nappies, and much, much more. With mum being otherwise engaged; dad was sent out to obtain as much as he possibly could for the expected new arrivals.

On the name side, I was named after the doctor that delivered us both, Dr. James Iain Waddell, and I arrived some ten-minutes following my brother. My name was set as; Ian James which appears quite natural; but I often wonder what name I may have been given, had my life started some years later?

Of course, this would not have been an issue as technology has all but removed that possibility; it is more difficult to hide in a scan. Nevertheless, it is fascinating to wonder; what it may have been, especially, as we are now so cosmopolitan as a nation?

Mind you, I would have hoped for something a little better than:

“The other one!” A classification bestowed upon me by my mother, of all offenders:

We were over in Florida a few years back, celebrating my sixtieth Birthday. We took the family out for a dinner and mum stood up and described our entry to this wonderful world as:

“David arrived first and then the other one.”

Quickly correcting this:

“Ian followed ten-minutes later.”

Frantic apologies about being so busy, a slip-up and ‘old-woman’ stuff, hey this is my mum; such can never be a problem. This would not have been that bad but for the fact that I, “the other one,” was sat but a few feet from her, and David was some 4,250miles away in the UK. But having my name changed was not something I thought about engaging with; it had been my handle for sixty-years and “the other one” did not have the same, if any, appeal at all.

We were born at the height of summer, during a stormy warm night, according to nan and auntie. Not sure if we were ever told what the time was, excepting the fact it was during the early evening is about as much as I can say. Thankfully, mum is still, at eighty-seven, furnishing me with some of her wonderful memories which I can only assume are right, or as right as they need to be.

Mind you, if you look at any of our photo’s it may be noticed that we have a distinctly different look, especially considering we are supposed to be identical. Looking carefully, I am sure you will agree although it grieves me to say that I am the most handsome, but far too modest to say anything of the sort.

How this could be the case, is anyone’s guess, but I think that when they were leaving the hospital after our birth, mum was a little shocked and said to dad:

“That’s not our child!” Whereupon dad will have replied:

“Shush, it’s a better pram.”

David and I provided so many interesting problems for the family to sort out. Our most prominent skills included wreaking havoc and making lots of mess whenever and wherever possible, we were two very young lads who just loved to play, and play-up, as much as possible. Which is what growing up is all about; just how far can you press those buttons and how many at the same time.

Things left out, broken and all over the place could reckon highly on my Curriculum-Vitae for this period. A job for a local dismantler beckoned at this point; although my actual wish, in the early days, was to be a Zookeeper.

For which I can lay the blame, fairly and squarely, with the wonderful Johnny Morris who presented 'Animal Magic' in the 1960's a wonderful programme for any kids, with animals talking, or made to look like they were talking, just did everything for me. This was a series running for over twenty-years with forty-two series, four-hundred-and-forty programmes, all combining to drive any addictive tendencies.

With that and 'Mr. Ed' on the television, I grew up believing that animals could talk. You can probably imagine how I felt when 'Doctor Doolittle' had its movie release, I may have mentioned: "I told you so!"

We started our lives, in a small-terraced-house in Stretford; for those uninitiated of you this is a 'two-up-two-down' habitat, in the heart of 'Industrial Manchester'. That is, two bedrooms upstairs with a kitchen and sitting room downstairs, hence the emphasis on two.

Families tended to eat at a table in the kitchen area, when and where meals were generally consumed as a family unit. A dining room, with bathrooms including indoor toilets were for much posher domains then, but they could not be any 'two-up-two-down' obviously.

These properties would generally come under the title of detached with whatever multiple of bedrooms and bathrooms could be boasted. Our house was the start of a journey on the property ladder for mum and dad, which was always destined to move forwards and upwards as would be everybody's want with such.

I am too young to recall, but mum tells of me having to go out to have a wee in some atrocious weather, just for testing purposes. I had to bring the liquid back in to complete the function required, and this was done by using a potty, suitably covered to protect from unwanted dilution, protection afforded by use of a newspaper. Now that was a biggie referring to the workload associated, but then again back then, most things were a noticeable drain compared to now.

Bath-night was the enjoyment of a tin-bath in front of the living-room-fire, not sure this was made for two, but mum had to do what mum had to do. Perhaps the squeeze to get us both in and out of this will have caused repercussions, with my size and height in particular. Something constantly being squeezed into a space may adjust accordingly, which is nature just doing what it does, and there just has to be a reason for this.

I like to think that we displayed the properties of what could be considered quite posh back then, watching television whilst being bathed; surely fits that profile. However, this was because of the tin-bath, being in the front room and the families newly acquired rental television in view.

Watch with Mother, Andy Pandy, Bill and Ben, Noddy, and the Wooden Tops served at specific times for anxious young viewers. Later these would change for more age-related programs: Fireball XL5 with Robbie the robot, then Doctor Who, Stingray, Thunderbirds to Captain Scarlett, for which, would result in me experiencing nightmares.



However, none of these; older children's programmes would be enjoyed whilst bathing, that time also passed. There was always something new and we tended not to miss out on most new things, this was an extensively changing environment and would prove to be such for a long time to come, in so many ways.

Obviously, being such a young age meant we had potties, for our use indoors; not sure if watching television whilst sat on a potty could ever be considered posh, even now. But once potty-trained this was not a luxury that would continue, our toilet facilities would then be outside, in the backyard toilet, until we moved.

My earliest memory, of anything at all, was of sitting on the potty with spots protruding all over my body. Apparently nearly two-years-of-age and I was suffering from 'chickenpox'; I am given to believe that this was shortly before my life-changing condition became apparent.

Other than that, I have absolutely no idea why I have such a distinct memory of this, of course nobody would have realised it at that time, but it appears to fit even if only in retrospect. Is it possible that my memory may be related to the fact that this may have been when my 'diabetic antibodies' became present; to begin a lifelong relationship and start their dastardly deeds?

The body creates antibodies to attack any foreign bodies that may appear, this is a protection being provided. Let us start by looking at what these antibodies are:

“A blood-protein produced in response to and counteracting a specific antigen. Antibodies combine chemically with substances which the body recognises as alien, such as bacteria, viruses, and foreign substances in the blood.” In the simplest of terms, ‘tongey-speak’ version, the antibodies are generally disposed to depose of any alien content that could be harmful.

However, sometimes these antibodies are released by mistake and cause their own havoc, with the immune system in question. The antibodies responsible for bestowing insulin dependence upon its victim are:

Glutamic acid decarboxylase (GAD).

Islet cell cytoplasmic autoantibodies (ICA’s).

Insulinoma-associated-2 autoantibodies (IA-2A’s).

Insulin autoantibodies (IAA’s), which are more common in children than adults.

Whilst there are few, if any, firm conclusions as to why this happens; it appears to be more common following a battle the immune system may have been in with other illnesses. Having been released to perform a specific task, there may be rogue antibodies left to cause other issues. In my case the guilty party, causing my antibodies to be presented will probably have been chickenpox, as already mentioned.

Nowadays, there is a test performed where they may not be certainty of type being established: Because of the inability of the pancreas to produce insulin this results in little, if any C-peptide being present. The pancreas produces this substance to measure the effectiveness of the insulin delivered; no delivery of insulin equals no requirement for C-peptide.

Conversely with type 2 whilst the body is producing the insulin, it is lacking its usage effectiveness. This can result in the C-peptide levels being raised somewhat.

Let me be totally clear on this detail, neither I nor my parents knew anything about this at the time; so for us, mostly mum and dad then, it produced a quandary that was ever-growing to the point of actual discovery. This will be explained a little further on.

From an incredibly early age, we both played our hearts out; both before and after my life-changing event, absolutely nothing was going to stop us, and myself in particular. A couple of young lads who were having so much fun with, of course, a readymade playmate, it just could not be better.

When young I seemed to be the instigator of a lot of things, not a ‘fire-starter’ but close. I must add here that this is reflective of the fact that I was the one who would set the blue touch paper alight to start something off, rather than engage in illegally starting a blaze of any other sort.

I used to wind David up in an unmerciful fashion, whenever the opportunity arose. It was a great way to get a reaction that, for some reason, I found to be amusing.

David had a remarkably close attachment to a ‘Noddy’ doll and most of my time was spent telling him, when together in the bedroom separated, for my safety, by cots of course:

“I am going to pull Noddy’s head off.”

This drew the perfect response; whereby David would have an absolute fit and bawl the place down until mum or dad appeared, to stop me, at least for that moment. It was such fun while it lasted, at least I thought so. I am still not sure why he had such a close attachment to Noddy, but he did love his cuddly toys.

From what is recalled; our house was close to the Manchester Ship Canal which was a stone’s throw away. This was 9 Radnor Street, and a wall at the end of our road separated us from the canal itself which, was often a great, if not overly safe, play area for all.

Not far away were Old Trafford Football and Cricket grounds; literally a short walk if you cared to visit. If you promise to keep it a secret, I can tell you that I visited both quite a few times, purely due to it being so simple to get there and it mattered not, in those days.

Growing up we always had active playtimes, even after my life changing diagnosis, I may have mentioned that nothing would stop me. But, in those early days, I was too young to understand any of this medical malarkey, which transcended for many years to come.

When a little older, around seven or eight-years-of-age, we were having a pillow fight in the front room whilst mum and dad were doing the shopping. Whoever was looking after us was otherwise engaged, with one of the girls. Those pillow fights usually ended up with one or the other of us being in a bit of trouble for breaking something, and this was to be no exception.

Just as they were returning home; I caught David with a great shot, such a shame we did not have any closed-circuit television (CCTV) in those days, as this was a real beauty of a hit. He was off guard and

when my pillow landed, he fell off the couch, straight through the window and right in front of dad's car as it came to park on the drive. Had this been caught on camera it would have made a real statement for doing falls, just right.

The window had been closed, and he was so lucky not to have been seriously injured, by either the glass, the fall or, indeed, being hit by the car. Double glazing was not a thing, back then and if mum recalls correctly; we were banned from having pillow fights ever again, until the next time, of course!

I am not sure that David ever used his full force at any time when we 'ruff-and-tumbled' in our play games. His 'big-brother' position of being in charge and looking after me was always a presented pose, as was his want.

I think we both enjoyed our little games, at least I know I did, in retrospect this was extremely foolish of me, as he was going to be much bigger and more physically powerful than I. My relationship with David has been based upon natural, although competitive strains throughout.

Unbeknownst to myself at the time; David provided a protective shell for me to reside within, but as we grew older, I provided some assistance and support the other way around. I must point out, and those who know me will understand this, my support was not of any sort of physical kind.

I am not one of those that would ever sit comfortably as being:

"One of the boys that will sort this matter out." If I were ever to turn up after such a warning being delivered, whoever it may have been would have been in more danger of laughing their heads off.

It was remarkable how my behaviour at school improved so that I could be moved up into David's groups; not because I wanted to be with him, I just could not understand being below his top-sets level. Perhaps this was the best; kick-up the backside I could have received at that time.

When we were working, he was determined to catch up when I was doing so well in the IT marketplace. Providing an invisible spur to drive each other, appears to be a benefit of our twin- ship relationship for mention here.

In our very early years, we were regularly taken for walks around the locality and especially any parks. Longford Park in Stretford was the closest and most favoured, back in the days when footballers were relatively ordinary blokes doing what they loved.

Our home was close to the ground occupied by Manchester United and Longford Park was somewhere that the players of that era spent time playing and training. Without the paparazzi, these guys would be kicking a ball around with the sort of freedom unimaginable today.

The 'Busby Babes' were such a side and according to mum, and they often chose to push a ball or two in our direction. According to mum we would be running around after anything we could, including shadows, a sight that, for whatever reason, I doubt ever was seen by the manager as neither of us were invited for trials.

Duncan Edwards and Denis Violet were a distinct memory from mum as being those that chose to try and involve us, although being so young I do not recall any of that. The joys afforded back then seem incomprehensible now but were nevertheless a wonderful accomplishment at the time.

Besides my diabetes interference, which accounted for most of it, I think we spent most of our very early years causing mum all sorts of trouble, playing and playing-up being a skill set we were both well fitted for. With having, each of us that is, our own 'wing-man', a look-out or trouble- starter, everything was perfectly set to enable the greatest of playtimes possible.

Often, when mum would be otherwise engaged hanging out the washing in the backyard, we would lock her out of the house. It was quite simple really, just turn the key in the lock and there you go, at such a young age, technology was not going to defeat us, or get in our way.

In those days, this was about as far as technology went or was available to the likes of two young lads. This happened so regularly that the local locksmith was a frequent visitor, he may even have been on our Christmas list. Not sure why we did this so often, except the fact that we could, and it may have seemed like fun at the time?

I mentioned earlier about "besides my diabetes interference", but diabetes always had to be a major concern. Whatever we may have done, this must have been the first fear associated: was I okay, did I need anything and so on must have been foremost concerns? Of course, the welfare of David was also of great importance, but I guess diabetes trumped everything in its wake.

We lived in what could be described as a sporting heartland, football, cricket, parks, and lots of play areas. However, you were to look at this, it was always going to be a fairly dangerous place for any diabetic child to be undergoing their diabetes apprenticeship. Our lives were supposed to be more docile and languid than would be considered as anything normal.

Diabetics lives were to be driven devoid of extreme exertion of any type, both play and worktime should be reflective of that. Hypoglycaemia, being the greatest concern, meaning removal of the risks should be implemented as fully as could be possible. Both mum and dad had a fear associated with this, of course, but would seek out alternative ways of managing that area as a defined need for both their boy's future progress.

Dad, unfortunately, was never interested in cricket, football, or any sort of sport for that matter, excepting snooker and I am not sure that snooker was in evidence with dad at this time. This meant he did nothing to promote the play with a ball during our early years, he was far too busy anyway.

Our thirst for the beautiful game was served, initially, by Uncle Derek, a near neighbour and football fanatic. He would play ball with us and took us to Old Trafford a few times to increase our ardour for the game. In those days, the 'Stretford End' would be packed, and we would be passed over the heads of lots of others and placed right at the front, so to get a view of some sorts.

Uncle Derek would be keeping a watch over us and deliver us home following the game. Because, at this time I needed special attention being delivered, almost everyone was going to be carrying lots of boiled sweets in case of any need arising at any moment. Mum and dad's training plan always required an extended reach, it would appear the further and wider the better.

I am told that none of these sweets were ever left by the time we arrived home and I dread to think what levels may have been evident from that, although I am sure that I will not have had them all. The only associated issue being associated herewith, involving overly frequent visitors to the toilet, which required an adult to supervise both my delivery and return in the early days.

We were only young when the whole of the world appeared rocked, by a particularly fateful day, 6th of February 1958 when the Manchester United Team were decimated by the Munich Air disaster. Football, about what might have been and the awful realisation of the event, was the only talk for many years!

And our walks in the park would never be the same again. In fact, I am not sure any training resumed for a long time following and it may have been a different situation by that time anyway. Of course, I can only kid myself that I knew what was going on I was far too young to have any realisation at the time; but it was plainly obvious that something dire had happened.

This was possibly coloured, somewhat, the fact that it was at this time the beginning of my relationship was being brought on. According to mum it was around that time my spots started to appear, and chickenpox was settling in, apparently paving the way for further issues ahead.

Obviously, the timeline did not appropriate any allowance for much at all to have happened. However, from detail that had been recalled, we were reaching certain stages of development that would, undoubtably, affect my future, whilst yet unknown, life pathway.

Please allow me to extract just a few seconds of your valuable time to enable a brief outline of what was happening:

Not long after rationing; coming up to two-years-of-age, we were well versed in the solid edibles marketplace of the time. Into that mix were being introduced an exciting array of sweets, chocolates, cakes, and suchlike which all required consumption before, either being taken away for disposal or by others who may want them.

You must take my word for it, but I am sure it cannot be beyond your imagination, this fayre was always going to be consumed with as little delay as would be possible. Almost everyone visiting had acquired a choice of sweet treats for the boys as often as our little tummies would enable.

Although not realised at this time, but with me being a presumed heir apparent to a relationship with diabetes, this particular development was going to engage further far-reaching problems. In fact, it could well be that such an introduction was the catalyst for identification of the same, being intrinsically aligned to the digestive system it was bound to have an impact after all.

With specific regard to the quotation used. I like to think of myself as a carefully produced piece of Art, crafted to emphasise just how simple things can be, if done consistently and effectively.

I am afraid I could not give you Caron's impressions of my last comment, they have had to be redacted, but I do believe some form of "art", or even "artist", was mentioned somewhere.

WHAT IS GOING ON?

“I haven’t failed; I’ve just found 10,000 ways that won’t work.”

Thomas A. Edison.

This quotation lends itself, perfectly, to my way of life.

Failure is, often the route to the greatest of all successes. Having attempted many things, I remain undaunted in my quest.

It was sometime towards the middle of 1958 that my situation appeared to be getting out of hand, suddenly I was representative of a wreck, and on a non-stop course for becoming much worse. But these were times when most tried all sorts before seeking professional medical help or advice.

Whilst the NHS was readily available, it did not represent the first option of choice, with mum and dad, like Edison, looking at everything they could do themselves to sort this out. Somewhat due to the previous choice whereby payment was required to avail oneself of the service, the population was still getting used to this remarkable option.

I had experienced a frightening fall down the stairs; stairs which were not designed with comfortable falls in mind. ‘Health and Safety’ was not the power it is today, practicality being the only thrust to provide for any requirement. Solid, awfully hard, wooden stairs went up and they also allowed going down, what more should you ask for?

It was not certain if I had broken anything, but the need to go to hospital was delayed as I just got up and continued whatever I was playing with at the time. I was just coming up to two-years-of- age and not long since recovered from ‘chickenpox’. Play was more important than almost anything else for me then; just as it should have been!

I think I was badly bruised following, but it may not have been noticed that my bruising did not subside as quickly as it would normally do. With so much happening, this did not strike mum and dad as being anything to worry about, at the time that is. We are talking about the late 1950’s and only coming up to two-years in of this much longer journey, normal was not a concept that had any time yet, to become recognised.

It was after that fall, however, my life started to change. I seemed to drift into a state of, what appeared to be, constant trance, at two-years-of-age I seriously doubt, I was thinking about much at all. I began displaying extreme signs that something might not be right:

- Drenched nappies, overnight, and noticeably much more often than, David who, at worst was now having the occasional slightly wet one.
- Although potty-training, I was failing miserably and constantly wetting any non-nappy-wearing-pants.
- I was in an awfully lethargic state, I could be, staring at something and for no reason, just falling asleep.
- With a raging thirst, I desperately needed to drink all the time, which was thought to be the reason for my nappies and accidents.
- I did not enjoy eating as much as drinking, which I now craved, my appetite was no match for my unquenchable thirst.
- I was an awful colour, my complexion was a sickly grey, in comparison with a healthy David.
- I was drastically losing weight; it was just falling off me. A skinny young boy next to his far healthier brother was something that could not possibly be right.

Now here is a thing, mum tells me that after any period of energetic play I would perspire incessantly. Whilst it was not unexpected after a lot of running around, this did not subside for what seemed to be an age.

Perspiration is an issue associated more with Hypoglycaemia than Hyperglycaemia. Is it possible that, certainly during whatever honeymoon-period I may have been on at the time, I could have been going that way through such energetic play?

Whilst my levels will have been driving upwards, the end production of the pancreas together with whatever play I was able, made for a different issue. Because the ‘honeymoon-period’ was not commonly understood, I am not sure it was known about, so whilst my comments are only supposition, they seem to fit.

Compared to David, I was beginning to look like a stick drawing. Nobody could understand why I was being ravaged by something, but David appeared to be totally untouched by whatever it might be? Medical issues were not that well known or understood at that time, we are, after all, talking about twelve or so years after the end of the Second World War and only a couple since the end of rationing in the UK.

Having just made that factual statement; I do feel quite old and not sure why that is? Oh, that's right Caron tells me:

“You are old!”

The National-Health-Service (NHS) was a mere ten-years-old and any treatment for diabetes was still in relative infancy. Development in managing diabetes had remained on something of a ‘back- burner’, because of a World War and Depression, with little progress being made.

However, it was and would be the NHS that would be the prime mover to ensure, my future remained somewhat in plan. A service provided to the patient at point of delivery without charge was, indeed, the most effective way to handle any issues of this sort, or any sort for that matter. This was, indeed, a service that would serve me so very well for the period currently under review and beyond, my deepest thanks must go to:

Mr. Atlee, Mr. Bevan, and Mr. Haywood-Smith; the NHS was their baby.

Today, there are so many experts and knowledgeable people about, a plethora of resource now exists to help us. Coupled with the availability of so much information on the internet, we are now extremely lucky compared to only a few years back.

My situation, however, was not improving in any way, everybody was troubled as to what was going on, however, no signs of the same from David, maintained a degree of confusion here. Something desperately needed to be done, but the pathway ahead lacked the clarity that most can take advantage of now.

Prior to the introduction of the NHS, almost every working family, in the UK, used to get on and try whatever they could before calling on a doctor. Although the service now existed, it was still taking some time for the population to readily accept that this should be, at the very least, one of the first calls they should make.

Various attempts were made to correct what appeared to be a growing mountain of imbalances:

- I was being fed more, and more often, to try to correct the weight thing. Unfortunately, this would serve to aggravate the situation I now faced.
- I was strictly limited to the drinks I was allowed to have.

Further exasperation provided, as urination was the only assist to removing some of the growing sugar load.

- We were going to bed earlier to try to stop me falling asleep.

Whilst it did not help, at least I was getting sleep nourishment which must have assisted something, somehow.

Just like the search by Edison; we had not got there yet and would not rest until this, ever-growing, problem was fixed. This quote epitomises our lives, as diabetics or any condition for that matter, treating things with a little added caution, whilst always searching for answers, was my future highway.



Thanks are extended to Tom Fisk for this image.

It may be of interest to know that Edison was also a diabetic.

