

Friday 3 July 2020

“Each day, life will send you little windows of opportunity. Your destiny will ultimately be defined by how you respond to these windows of opportunity.” — (Robin S. Sharma, The Greatness Guide: Powerful Secrets for Getting to World Class)

“But, soft! what light through yonder window breaks?” (Shakespeare – Romeo and Juliet)

Earlier this week I wrote to you about the importance of windows and the functions they perform - they are more than a piece of glass. Today is a continuation of that.

I love Shakespeare's Romeo and Juliet and this quote shows just what Romeo thinks of Juliet as she appears through the "window". A vision of light in the darkness of the night lighting up the world like the morning sun and lighting up Romeo's life. Throughout the play, Juliet is likened to the light and to the sun. It once again shows the strength of literature to create a clear image in our minds - we can all picture Juliet standing on the balcony with Romeo below. The opening of the window is so powerful - without opening the window and taking up the opportunity, perhaps Romeo and Juliet would never have managed to get together....and the rest may have been history!

I apologise that I have written 2 quotes today but I wanted to finish with windows and move on to another part of the building and our journey. I love this first quote and it further emphasises how important it is to take up opportunities as they appear in your window. Never look back and think, I wish I had done that when I had the chance. Respond to any window of opportunity on your journey even if you are parking it for later on.

Yesterday, 2nd July, signified that we are now over half way through this year - it was the 184th day of this year and there remain 182 days this year ...so today (3rd July) is the 185th day of this year with only 181 days remaining. It has been a long year so far. Remember back to the celebrations which marked the beginning of the 20s and my assembly at the start of 2020 when I told you that I have now lived in 7 decadesand how you all did the math and worked out that I must be 70!!! What a long journey I have been on.....and I don't look a year older than (you can fill in the gap here).

It has been a long year and there has been much suffering during the year and once again, as we reflect at this midpoint, we must not lose sight of the fact that (depending on the figures you read) over 50000 people have lost their lives to Covid-19 in the UK. This is a huge number and each individual was an individual person as part of a family - a brother, sister, father, mother, aunt, uncle, stepfather, stepmother, grandmother, grandfather, daughter, son, friend or colleague. Each individual leaves behind a grieving family. The loss is devastating and I appreciate that many of you will have faced this over the last few months, some of you for the first time. I never met one of my grandfathers as he passed away in his 40s before I was born. However, I well remember my other grandfather and I was thinking about him just this week as he passed away at the start of July in 1982, 38 years ago. I remember the grief and the loss that we all suffered. He was a tiny man with a big stature and he made his own business by selling drain covers and metalwork. My grandfather fought in the first and second world wars and he lived most of his life suffering from back pain after shrapnel was embedded close to his spine. To his dying day, he never talked about the war. He started his business under the arches of the railway line in south

east London. He had a wicked laugh, always wore a hat and, whenever we had fish and chips, he would always order scampi. He always went on about supporting Dulwich Hamlet football club. The car he drove had leather upholstery and I can still feel and smell the inside of that car all these years later. It is these little things that you sometimes miss most when you lose someone from your family or someone close to you. But, it is important to have these happy memories. My thoughts are with you if you have lost someone dear to you over the last few months. It is very tough so make sure you get the support you need at this very difficult time for us all.

I wanted to finish on a more upbeat note so that we don't spend all our weekend staring out of the window wondering what is going to happen next. Last Friday, many of you took part in the virtual sports day. Today, for years 7-9 it is the STEM challenge day. I hope you enjoy working on the activities today and that you discover something new while working on them.

Finally, the DfE, published their guidance for schools for September. In it they stated that, "It is our plan that all students, in all year groups, will return to school full-time from the beginning of the autumn term." We are continuing to work towards this ambition over the coming weeks and will keep communicating to you about this.

With my best wishes to you, your friends and your family at this time.

Matthew Brown