

Lessons Learned from a Man with a Bowler Hat and a Cane

A man of many talents, Sir Charles Spencer Chaplin, commonly known as Charlie Chaplin, is most famously revered for his acting skills displayed in silent films. Upon simply hearing his name you may be transported back to the black-and-white films of the 1900's: a time when the film industry was truly beginning to find its foothold in society. Widely praised for his comedic on-screen abilities, Charlie Chaplin also wore many hats other than the iconic bowler. In addition to acting he has demonstrated his skills in the areas of directing as well as business, making him perhaps one of the most versatile and valuable players in the game of film-making.

Charlie Chaplin's movies played a memorable part in my childhood. At the time I could not quite understand what made these movies so special, other than laughter-induced tears running down my face as I sat with my parents and my sisters on the couch. Re-watching these movies later in my life has provided quite a bit of clarity. As a current business major and theatre enthusiast, I relate to and am inspired by the work and success that Charlie Chaplin had in the film industry. Perhaps one of the things that I admire the most about Chaplin as both an actor and a director is the remarkable and creative ways he was able to communicate both emotions and entire movie plots without the use of words. I am particularly passionate about the area of international business, a field that often requires not only the use of words but also the base knowledge of multiple languages. Movies by Charlie Chaplin have and will continue to inspire me to be imaginative in my career. Communication is key to being successful in any job, and through his skills as a director and an actor Charlie Chaplin has provided an innovative toolbox that can enable us to creatively reinvent how we interact and communicate with others.

Neither his films nor his roles could be coined as boring or predictable, but were often considered outgoing, comical, and even quirky. I do not view myself as an outgoing person. With the exception of my closest friends, many people who have come in contact with me would likely say I am quiet, reserved, and a bit shy. While I am comfortable with this in my personal life, it has unfortunately become a repetitive pattern in my spiritual life as well. I have never felt comfortable engaging in street evangelism, or even openly talking about my faith with people who are not close friends or family. Up until recently I was so hindered by shyness that I felt uncomfortable and anxious just bowing my head and praying at restaurants. While I have not made a total turnaround in this area, Chaplin's movies, and his attitude displayed towards being outgoing and not embarrassed of who you are, have inspired me to be more bold in my faith.

Charlie Chaplin was a remarkably talented individual who displayed his skills primarily in the areas of acting, directing, and business. Painting his films with a brush of creativity and imagination, his many works have been a source of inspiration for me both in my future career and my spiritual life. Chaplin was not afraid to outwardly portray himself or his ideals, and was bold in taking risks. Moving forward I hope to continue to adopt and develop these characteristics, keeping in mind this quote from a poem attributed to Charlie Chaplin: "Life is a play that does not allow testing. So, sing, cry, dance, laugh and live intensely, before the curtain closes and the piece ends with no applause" (A Quote from Charlie Chaplin).

References

"A Quote from Charlie Chaplin." *Goodreads*. N.p., n.d. Web. 09 Mar. 2017.
<<http://www.goodreads.com/quotes/780059-life-is-a-play-that-does-not-allow-testing-so>>.