



USING THE MAXIMS THAT ACCOMPANY PITW GAMES

By Wilson McCaskill

The beauty of maxims is that they tend to resonate within all of us. They lodge in our memories and even if merely a few words in length or substantially longer they have a power beyond their size.

Maxims can be of great help to children. They say what needs to be said and nothing more. Used in classrooms and displayed on school walls they serve to sharpen understanding, guide behaviour and stimulate positive attitudes.

Once learnt in childhood they become mental notes for life. Maxims can be shared, exchanged, added to and created. They penetrate the dark of unease and indecisiveness, and become a welcome signpost when confusion abounds and clarity is in marked absence.

Maxims, proverbs, aphorisms and sayings have lost their place of prominence in our daily interactions and efforts to navigate the many and varied situations life constantly puts before us. Once upon a time we recalled them when necessary and voiced them to assist, inspire or calm others. If you are old enough you will remember adults being a limitless and often frustrating repository of these parcels of wisdom. There seemed to be one for every imaginable situation and their brevity and clarity made them hard to refute or argue with. Perhaps that explains why they were sometimes annoying to listen to and why they have become a nearly lost means of support and guidance.

Maxims have much value still. They can be utilised to great affect and much as technology may have advanced at mind-boggling speed, our human needs have advanced little from those of our ancestors. We still want to understand each other and ourselves. We still want to make sense of what we go through and find our role and place in the overall scheme of things. We are often confused, frequently perplexed and often requiring direction and purpose. And if not us, our children certainly are...which may explain why mankind has, over the ages, amassed a great abundance of maxims. Unfortunately, they seem too rarely used at a time when they can be of great assistance.

Teachers should take note of the one or more maxims that accompany almost every game. These are doorways to valuable class discussions and are all too frequently disregarded by teachers.

The maxims are especially valuable and relevant for those teachers who find it hard to think of insightful and penetrating questions to ask during games sessions.

They are there to deepen the social and emotional understanding of students and can be discussed at an opportune moment later in the day. That said, it is important that



time is actually found to discuss the maxim/s, especially if insightful and penetrating questions were not asked during the game. The maxims are an important part of the games process. Those teachers who guide an effective and age appropriate class analysis of the meaning and implications of the maxim/s help students to build a through line of understanding from the game to life and classroom learning.

Invariably, maxims shift the belief that PITW games are “just games” to the realisation that the games are a means to habituate patterns of behaviour that are culturally appropriate and personally effective. The maxims create the opportunity to deepen the understanding of what is required to profit and benefit from life and learning without facing the consequences of reality and being unduly hurt by the experience.

Maxims make excellent catalysts for assembly items. By selecting a maxim that has significance to their life and learning journey, a class can create a performance that shows their school community the meaning and influence of that maxim.

An effective touch at the end of such an assembly is for the performing students to give every classroom a copy of the maxim, with an invitation to further explore the implications of the maxim and reap the benefits of its wisdom.

Harnessing the potential for school assemblies to deepen the philosophical awareness of the school community is worthy of consideration.

Awareness, on the part of school leaders, teachers and support staff of the maxims accompanying a game is the first step to giving today’s children something that proved to be of great benefit to yesterday’s children, and will prove to be of equal benefit to tomorrow’s as well.

You might find trying to complete the following maxims a bit of fun. Can you think of roughly how old you were when you first heard one or some of these and can you think of a maxim/s that was a favorite of you parents?

A stitch in.....

Don’t cry.....

Sticks and stones will.....

Slow and steady.....

Pride comes.....

Don’t count your chickens.....

There are two sides.....

Much wants more and....



Easy to despise what.....

Fine feathers don't.....

One swallow does not.....

Honesty is the

Necessity is the

One man's pleasure is.....

A bird in the hand.....

They complain most who.....

Let well enough.....

Misery loves.....

Revenge is a

Birds of a feather.....

Those who seek to please everybody.....

He laughs best that

Once bitten.....

Out of the frying.....

One good turn.....

Avoid a remedy that is

Fine weather friends are not....

Many a slip twixt.....