



Five days left in 2020.

Five days to take stock

Five days to change course.

Five days to clear the decks.

Five days to be ready for a fresh start 1 January.



I trained as an accountant with KPMG in Dublin, Ireland and sat my finals 30 years ago in December 1990. My post KPMG career has predominantly been in senior roles in public and private organizations, large and small, in several sectors too.

And I'm good at it. I'd go so far as to say I'm very good at it. That's what makes it hard.



My passion is consciousness, awareness, philosophy, psychology – what and who we are, why we're here and where we're going.

An honest account of my life story would have to have chapters on loss of a parent at a young age, being bullied, being a bully, learning to become invisible, stealing and lying, being sexually abused, problems with alcohol and drugs and the inevitable troubles those bring.

Unemployment and homelessness. Hopelessness and despair. Suicidal behavior, suicide attempts, being less than one breath away from death.

Redemption and salvation. Physical recovery. Mental recovery. Emotional opening. Spiritual

and psychological seeking, striving and growth. Falling in love. Finally growing up and becoming an adult. Studying. Getting married. Becoming a parent. Getting hired. Getting fired. Moving house. Moving country.

In all that, being curious – about learning, about life, about choices, about why some things are easy and others are hard, about things I find easy to do that others find difficult, about struggling with issues that the people around me don't seem to have any problem with.

And I could go on, and on.

Throughout my adult life I've had to deal with people wanting to know why I don't drink. Mostly, I haven't bothered about what I tell them – it's none of their business anyway so anything milder than telling them that is a courtesy – and when I have, I usually just say I drank too much and don't get into it.

My internal dialogue on how and why I started drinking and taking drugs tied it back to the death of my father when I was 6 and the loneliness and isolation I felt after that. I conveniently skipped over having been sexually abused. Anytime it came to mind or the subject came up in conversation, I discounted it, deflected and distracted.

The first time I read Alice Miller's "The Body Never Lies" I saw myself on every page and also found Penny Park's "Rescuing the Inner Child" very powerful. But I wasn't ready to take the next step. Two years ago a friend confided in me that he was anxious about attending an upcoming family event. He had been sexually abused at the age of 13 and his abuser would be there. From my detached perspective, it was easy to give good sound advice about what the options were.

The unintended consequence was my own experience came to front of mind. From 1975 to 2018, I carried this as a silent burden, a secret shame. Now it came bubbling back, my 43 year old stew simmering away inside. The upheaval was tremendous – I felt that I was back in

it again and even though I knew it wasn't happening again, I was flooded with anxiety, pent up emotion and pain – sorrow, anger, betrayal and abandonment, shame and guilt.

I was sexually abused in 1975 in Newbridge College, where I was a boarder. I was 13 years old. My abuser was a Dominican priest, Vincent Mercer. He was the Junior Dean i.e. head of the Junior College. He is a serial paedophile, convicted in 2003, 2005 and 2103 for the sexual abuse of young boys between 1970 and 1994. Still a member of the Dominican Order, he lives in Cork City. A psychologist testified in one of his trials that his chances of reoffending were less than 16%. This man preyed on children for at least 24 years and I find it hard to believe he has changed.

In the last two years I've been fortunate to have had professional help and guidance and the support of family and friends. Although Ireland has a shameful history of the abuse of children, our health services are not configured to meet the needs of adults who have been abused as children and what support is available is fragmented and difficult to access.

Our police services are excellent however. When I went to my local Garda station in December 2018 to report the abuse, I was treated with respect and sensitivity and the detectives I spoke to devoted several hours to helping me give as full a statement as I could. The file was then passed to the district where the abuse occurred. I attended there for lengthy sessions over 3 days, including a cognitive interview with a detective trained in this area.

Before Vincent Mercer assaulted me I was a normal boy – quiet, shy, a bit of a swot, and had just started puberty. I was academically bright and at the top of my class. Within a few months of this, I was smoking and drinking and less than a year later started taking drugs and getting into trouble. My life for the 10 years following this abuse was hell and brought me to the point where I sincerely saw no way out other than to kill myself.

I had made several attempts before the one that pushed me over the edge and my life was

out of my hands – I drank a bottle of paraquat, a very powerful weedkiller and I almost died. I came to in a renal unit to be told my kidneys had failed and if I survived, a life of dialysis was most likely. In the meantime, I drank what felt like gallons of a Fuller’s Earth solution. I recognized that it wasn’t that I wanted to die. What I wanted was to not live the way I was living. The problem was, I didn’t know how to change. But I was willing. That was the turning point for me.

I’m telling you this for three reasons:

1. It’s part of my story. My life and my experiences reveal me. I am inviting you to take a journey with me. It’s right you should have some idea of the kind of person I am.
2. Child abuse is far too common. Abusers are expert manipulators, expert shamers. Bringing it to light harms no-one and may help many.
3. If you are today like I was before, then maybe this can help you step out of the shadow, out of the shame, and into the light.

The Road Not Taken by Robert Frost

*Two roads diverged in a yellow wood,
And sorry I could not travel both
And be one traveler, long I stood
And looked down one as far as I could
To where it bent in the undergrowth;*

*Then took the other, as just as fair,
And having perhaps the better claim,
Because it was grassy and wanted wear;
Though as for that the passing there
Had worn them really about the same,*



*And both that morning equally lay
In leaves no step had trodden black.
Oh, I kept the first for another day!
Yet knowing how way leads on to way,
I doubted if I should ever come back.*

*I shall be telling this with a sigh
Somewhere ages and ages hence:
Two roads diverged in a wood, and I—
I took the one less traveled by,
And that has made all the difference.*

From "Mountain Interval" Published November 1916 by Henry Holt & Company, New York.



I am hosting my first In the Mystery Summit from Monday 22nd to Sunday 28th of March 2021.

This will be a super event with over one hundred great speakers talking about consciousness and awareness and the challenges of being in the world (doing business, making a living) but not of the world (having a life).

I'll be writing more about this over the coming months so keep an eye out for that.

If you'd like to be a speaker, or you can recommend someone you think I should talk to, please let me know in the comments below.

Till next time, be safe, be well and be happy.