

CORONA GRAMMATA

Abalinx 9 March 2020 Peter Adamis



This is a Greek joke that only those growing up in Australia of Greek heritage would understand. It has nothing to do with Corona Virus and therefore readers please do not take offence. At times like these we need to look on the bright side of life and acknowledge that the challenges we face today will be overcome as long as we are united and don't panic. This is one of those times.

When I was just a young lad, I would get into mischief all the time. My curiosity, thirst for learning and exploring was legendary. I would play amongst the train tracks, climb trees and create cubby houses, dig deep holes and tunnels; create tiny fortresses amongst the coal and wood yards close to our home. I would rummage through the ruins of old homes that were being demolished for new housing complexes seeking books and the odd trinket or two. Playing cricket, football, marbles, hide and seek and cowboys and Indians in our local park. I would always come home dirty, scratches on my legs and arms, hair messed up and clothes probably torn from my escapades.

When Mum would see me she would put the fear of God in my by telling me "wait until your father gets home". I knew what that meant. A few slaps around the head, whipped with an electric cord or a kick up the backside. Many times my brother Phillip and I would take turns who would get a belting first. Sometimes I would push my brother first because my Dad would be tired after thrashing my brother Phil (bless his heart) and sometimes Dad dragged me first and I received a hiding. If we did not get whipped he would put up his huge right hand and ask us one by one:

"What do you want? CORONA or GRAMMATA. I always asked for the CORONA. For those that don't know: CORONA was a back hander and GRAMMATA was a slap. Others referred it to HEADS or TAILS, but for me it was a back hander or a slap. I lost count how many CORONAS I received as a young fella. The word CORONA means CROWN and the word GRAMMATA means LETTERS. Therefore Dads meaning was whether you want the Crown or letters. I guess in hindsight I liked being a king. (Ha ha ha). After the hiding or Corona Grammata, I would go and hide in the toilet bawling my eyes out at receiving such discipline. I am sure Dad could have tried another approach.

As the years went by and I left to enlist in the Australian Army the word CORONA GRAMMATA became synonymous with bullying and fear that haunted me for years. Today I reflect back on the years and wonder about the positive and negative effects of CORONA GRAMMATA and whether such harsh discipline made me stronger.

I spoke with my Dad back in 2013 when I accompanied him back to Greece for a two month holiday and asked him whether he could have handled matters differently. He said that back in those days such discipline was not unheard of and as we boys always got up to mischief he could not see any other way. In any case he said you grew up ok did you not. I instilled in you the attitude of "Never giving up".

I was not convinced by Dads response, yet the discipline I received held me in good stead as I grew and developed as an adult. I confess that I used versions of CORONA GRAMMATA on my four son's as I was raising them alone; so there must be some truth in positive effects of this concept for they are all well and good citizens today. Well that's my rant for the day. Have a great week, enjoy each day, stay strong and never give up.



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