

# For Whose Benefit?

By Mike Trippitt

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*"There are two kinds of apology,"* said the speaker. *"One for the benefit of the wronged, and the other for the benefit of the wrongdoer."*

Years later, when I was a solicitor practising in local magistrates' courts I was given a horrible, humiliating and very public dressing down by the Chairman of the bench for "keeping the court waiting", only to be given an apology hours later when the Chairman realised he was wrong. In contrast to the criticism, the apology was private. Very, very private.

The words came flooding back: "There are two kinds of apology."

That episode and the wise words have stayed with me, not only for when it comes to apologising, but also to question my own motivation for what I do, and on occasions to question the motivation for what others do.

For ten weeks in the Spring St Iviens Clapped for Carers. It was an uplifting experience and an opportunity to show our collective gratitude to frontline NHS staff for their efforts treating COVID 19 patients in almost impossible circumstances. The overwhelming majority of carers appreciated the show of support and solidarity. It was for their benefit and it made them feel better.

But during the ninth week Annemarie Plas, the founder of the Clap for Carers concept suggested that the following week should be the last. She told the BBC: "Because this is the ninth time - and next week will be 10 times - I think that would be beautiful, to be the end of the series."

She said in a later BBC interview that she thought it had become politicised: "I think the narrative is starting to change and I don't want the clap to be negative."

How perceptive. How true.

We only had to look at the news media as the weeks went by to see shows of applause becoming more elaborate, and to see celebrities and politicians getting in on the act - being seen

to be clapping - lest it count against them in a popularity contest had they not. For whose benefit were they clapping, and for whose benefit were we clapping. The questions were being asked.

In fairness to Ms Plas, she was at pains to stress that she was not discouraging those who wished to carry on from doing so, and many, though not all, on the frontline continued to be moved by the gesture.

Annemarie Plas' wonderful idea is, like Captain Tom, one of the great triumphs of this crisis. They have done their bit. It is now down to us. Will the nation support the NHS where it matters in resourcing, in funding and in remuneration for the benefit of our frontline. Or will we, for our own benefit, just stand and clap. Only time will tell.



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