

## **After the Lord Mayor's Show**

There is a well known saying, 'If you want something done in a hurry, give it to a busy person'.

I had occasion recently to need a local lawyer. I asked a number of friends and the one who I knew the least well and who has the most stressful and important job, answered immediately and introduced me to a partner in a top local firm. His email was clearly written by himself and he copied in the partner. Others who had little or nothing to do either answered vaguely or failed to reply.

I mention this as it highlights an interesting trait among the busy and important; they have time for the small things. Busy means clearing your in-tray; it is called efficiency and it is a lesson well learned. Others let things pile-up until they are too ancient to be relevant; this is called procrastination. Some people welcome responsibility with open arms while others shun it.

Another side to this moral tale is reciprocity and politeness. Answering the request of a friend is common politeness, it shows you are willing to put yourself out for them and they in turn will be keen to do likewise. Manners are about consideration for others; negative matters like not hurting a person's feelings and positive things like serving them before yourself or being the first to proffer payment for a meal. In such manner lies true nobility. The ill mannered are as selfish as the mannered are generous.

A former friend from university refused to return my greeting sent via his wife. Apparently I had offended him fifty years ago, something to do with a drunken undergraduate prank, apparently - I had no recollection of the incident. At the time this fellow with an unremarkable career had become Lord Mayor of London - probably because he was an hereditary peer; his life dedicated to pomp and position rather than substance. As the old London saw says, 'After the Lord Mayor's show comes the dung cart'.

I have observed that the successful in life, and here I am talking about things other than just accumulating wealth; tend to be polite, generous and available to others. The pompous hide behind their hollow rank and position; the generous display their nobility.