

## The Ethics of Fame and Celebrity During Covid 19

Covid 19 has changed my world. In some ways, my world has shrunk to the size of my individual households, the views outside my window and the short walk or cycle which is my only outing every day. It has shrunk to the people in my immediate family, weekly zoom meetings with the grandparents we are missing so much and online chats and gaming with our friends. Some days my world can feel very small and I miss simple things like seeing friends in real life or playing rugby and tennis in my local clubs.

But actually, in many ways, this horrible illness has also made the world more accessible. Whether you live in a luxurious castle or a small bungalow, you are living the same restricted lifestyle. As we are now all socially isolating at home, suddenly we all share the same experiences. I have never felt like my daily routine had anything whatsoever in common with the celebrities I look up to. During Covid 19, I am at home playing board games with my family, going for walks and eating lots of experimental baking. However, my favourite youtube stars like LazerBeam and McCreamy are also staying at home with their families and doing the very same things. Our experiences are similar in a way they never were before. There is something very levelling about that.

This made me think about the idea of being a celebrity. Some of my favourite celebrities are online gamers like Fresh or sports stars like Tadhg Furlong. They are famous because of the combination of luck, talent, fame and money. But I think we should now look again at the entire idea of being a celebrity. Are these good enough reasons for us to look up to someone, to respect them and spend our money on products they promote? And even more importantly, what are these celebrities doing now to prove that they deserve our respect and admiration?

I have been researching some of my favourite celebrities and have discovered that many celebrities have indeed been pitching in to support their communities, local and global. For example, some of our favourite youtubers and streamers have been conducting charity streams to raise money for health services in the battle against Covid 19. Jacksepticeye did an 11 and a half hour live stream to raise \$660,00 for covid relief. Joe Wicks is keeping us all fit at home while also raising millions for the NHS.

Carol Vorderman made her Maths website accessible to help keep children educated and entertained during Covid 19. She also donated a private plane to the NHS staff for the delivery of personal protective equipment. Lady Gaga organised a 'One World' virtual concert for Covid 19 relief and managed to persuade lots of her celebrity friends to participate.

These are just a few examples of the things celebrities are doing to boost the community global spirit.

However, while doing this research I came across something much more interesting. I discovered a new form of celebrity. These new celebrities are not famous because they are good at soccer, look good or are rich. They are becoming famous for their good deeds during Covid 19. For example, Claudia Bucchini and Andrea Zucco, who both teach at Fiesole Music School in Florence, play music from their balconies to entertain their neighbours. There have been many other examples of people singing and playing music to raise spirits.

Another example is when more than 24,000 Irish people responded to the call for former health care workers to return to work. 75 year old GP Ken Egan returned to work, despite the worries of his family members. He wanted to do his part in the fight against Covid 19. Wealthy business couple

Dan Kiely and Linda Green-Kiely from Cork, donated two Sonosite Ultrasounds to the ICU at Mercy University Hospital.

These people all have something in common. They promote a sense of community spirit at a time when we need it most. They give their time, money and talents for free to support their neighbours. Covid 19 has made us all want to reach out and help our neighbour.

My own favourite, 'new celebrity' is Captain Tom. He raised almost €33 million for the NHS by completing 100 laps of his garden by his 100<sup>th</sup> birthday. Since then he has kept our spirits up with his cheerful commentary and determined manner. When children around Ireland and all around the globe are missing their grandparents he is a welcome sight; cheerful, determined and kind; reminding many of us of our own grandparents. I think that Captain Tom is a true celebrity; honest, kind and hard-working. So I would like to end this essay with a quote from Captain Tom,

**“For all those finding it difficult: the sun will shine on you again and the clouds will go away.”**



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