

# overheard at the extra-curricula café

## Celebrity fragility

**Cappuccino:** Late again! I hope you realise you are causing me real misery?

**Latté:** Am I; how so?

**Cappuccino:** Well, when you don't turn up on time, I am forced to read the newspapers provided so thoughtfully by this café.

**Latté:** What's so wrong with that? Silent reading has been in and out of fashion in the curriculum over the years.

**Cappuccino:** It's alright when I can get the larger papers, but sometimes I am forced to read the smaller ones.

**Latté:** Larger, smaller? What's the difference?

**Cappuccino:** Quality, veracity and newsworthiness is linked to page size.

**Latté:** Really?

**Cappuccino:** Everyone knows that. When you are not here, I am reduced to reading about celebrities.

**Latté:** Oh dear. Well I'm here now. Remember that some of us are busy steering happy ships of learning. You remember, those jovial communities where everyone is realising their potential.

**Cappuccino:** Something tells me there is an element of cynicism in your words. A bit like the smaller papers really.

**Latté:** Anyone who thinks that schools can unlock every child's potential has no idea of the complex and bizarre aspects of human nature. And that's just the staff for starters.

**Cappuccino:** The smaller papers seem to me to have double standards. On one side of the page is a picture of a celebrity sunning herself on a Caribbean beach, whilst on the other side of the page is a disgraced celebrity who has been found to have committed some selfish act.

**Latté:** It's not like that all the time, surely?

**Cappuccino:** Well, mostly. In the paper today there is a 1960s wholesome television personality whom most people adored, whom, it seems, was leading a double life.

Then there's a well respected pop star who, it allegedly turns out, is avoiding paying tax. Then there are two school teachers who have been suspended, over, and I quote, 'an alleged 'sex tape''. And most days there is a church minister who has apparently done something incompatible with his calling.

**Latté:** That's just the unending desire for ordinary people to worship something or someone, and then see that their idol is flawed, giving themselves a feeling of self-righteousness. They can say, 'Well, at least I'm not like that'.

**Cappuccino:** So maybe fame, fortune and flaws go together?

**Latté:** Romans 3.23 '... for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God,'. When we praise and raise people up onto pedestals, their flaws often become more visible.

**Cappuccino:** Even squeaky clean celebrities, about which no dirt can be found, can eventually be labelled as bland, boring and out-of date, and consigned to the heap of 'has-beens'. I wonder what young people make of this current notion of lifting people up so that they come crashing down again?

**Latté:** Let's hope that they adopt a more biblical attitude to life, which doesn't shrink from the facts of the human condition: made in God's image, fallen in sin, but may be redeemed and restored to new life.

**Cappuccino:** Absolutely.

**Latté:** Which reminds me.

**Cappuccino:** What?

**Latté:** Next time you come here ...

**Cappuccino:** Yes?

**Latté:** Bring your own reading material. Something improving. I know: a book about how to get a fantastic Ofsted report, so that you can have one of those plastic banners tied to the railings outside the school, proclaiming its attributes?

**Cappuccino:** You mean, how to achieve celebrity status? I think not. ■