

Casablanca, Montessori, and You

I happened to watch the classic movie “Casablanca” the other night. It is a great film with Humphrey Bogart and Ingrid Bergman. Most of us have probably seen the movie. Hopefully, you might want to watch it again or for the first time after this article. Very short synopsis (so as not to ruin it for new viewers.) The start of the movie, but not the start of the story, opens in Casablanca, Morocco in the early days of World War 2 before America was involved. Humphrey’s character Rick has opened a café in Casablanca and in the film his girlfriend, who had abandoned him when he was fleeing Paris comes into the café with her husband. And the drama continues. It is in the middle of the film that we hear the beginning of the story and can understand the drama that we have seen so far. But their love story is not the focus of this article. Much of the story of our own lives is understood in retrospect.

There are several supporting roles that make this classic movie memorable. There is Sam, the piano player, Carl, the headwaiter and Louis, the police chief. None of them are the stars or even the focus of the drama but without them you do not have “Casablanca.” So, what is the purpose of this article? To draw attention to the supporting characters in the drama of your own life.

Each of us may have a Sam, someone who plays the music of the soundtrack of our life. Sam’s contribution is the song “As time goes by” which you may have heard without ever having seen the movie. Or you may have heard the classic line in conversation, “Play it again Sam” which is not exactly what was said in the movie, but which is another lesson in life – we often hear what we want to hear.

Each of us may also have a Carl in our life. Someone who brings humanity and lightness into our circumstances. Someone who serves – with a big smile. Someone warm and cuddly.

Then there is Captain Louis. Not quite a friend but involved in our life close up and from a distance at the same time. Maybe someone who admires part of our life but not necessarily embraces us and maybe helps us from time to time. And it is Louis

who inspires another classic line at the end of the movie from Humphrey Bogart, "Louis, this could be the beginning of a beautiful friendship."

There are two parts to the supporting roles in our own lives – to recognize them, bless them and to cherish them because they also make our life a "classic." The other part of supporting roles that requires us to also recognize, bless and cherish is that God may have called us into the supporting role. Sometimes that is tough on our ego and on our perception of the story of our life. However, in understanding and embracing what God revealed to Dr. Montessori about the role of the guide, we have a great picture of the nature of our "supporting" role. We are no longer the child saying, "Mom, Mom watch me" as we do some "daring" feat, but we become the mom, dad, guide who encourages and says, "Yes, you can" with all our attention being on the child.

On reflecting what makes a great Montessori school, lovely buildings and campuses are nice, beautiful materials are great, having a wonderful director is fantastic but, in the end, what makes a great Montessori school appears in your mirror every day. Your "supporting" role is really the starring role of the movie God is making of your life.