

Screaming Obscenities

By Claire Weaver – Unpaid Carer.

So, there I was.

Naked.

Dripping wet.

Arms flapping.

Wobbly bits wobbling.

Screaming obscenities.

Picture that for a moment.

Why was I naked, wet, flapping, wobbling, and screaming?

Well, you see, it was the middle of Covid. I hadn't left the house in days. I had a cough. A nasty, rattly, gurgling cough. I had a leaking tap for a nose, and what was leaking out was not water. I had a headache and a sore throat. Every muscle was aching. And I had a pending Covid test that was stressing me majorly. And, to top it all off, my bedbound, chronic-pain-ridden, constantly fatigued, severely disabled, attention-consuming partner, was grumpy. Ugh.

So, I decided to indulge in some self-care. A nice, hot, steamy shower should do the trick. Time to myself, time to think, loosen up the lungs, clear out the nose, soothe the aching muscles. Yes, just the thing. You'd think, wouldn't you?

My partner's physical abilities had slowly been deteriorating for years. Consequently, a lot of the routine home maintenance had been let go. The shower exhaust fan stopped working? That's okay, the one over the toilet still works, use that. The toilet exhaust fan stopped too? Easy to buy another one, even easier to keep putting off installing it. The sliding bathroom door jamming due to excess steam swelling the wood? Oh well, at least it's stuck open, not going to get trapped inside! The smoke alarm in the hallway continually going off as it can't tell the difference between steam and smoke particles in the air? No problem. Just flap the steam away with a towel.

Just flap it away?

Yeah. Just flap it away. Just like that.

Just flap it away while the klaxons from hell are screaming through my skull?

Yeah. Just like that.

Just flap it away while the water steadily drips and puddles on the floor, waiting for me to slip?

Yeah. Just like that.

Just flap it away while my jiggly bits wobble and my wobbly bits jiggle, putting on a show for the gods and anyone who cares to watch?

Haha. Yeah. Just like that.

Just flap it away while the corner of the towel catches the glass wall-sconce light-fitting and somehow flicks it in the air, where it turns in a graceful arc and glances off the top of my head on its way to hitting the floor and breaking in two?

Um, no. Maybe not just like that. Yeah. Well. But keep flapping. The alarm hasn't stopped.

Pick up the towel from where it fell on the floor and keep flapping. Keep flapping, keep flapping. And still, still, the alarm hasn't stopped.

So, the self-help didn't help this self. Instead of giving me time to myself, it gave me a mess to clean up. Instead of soothing my aching muscles, it left me cold and shivering. Instead of easing my symptoms, it added a headache and mild concussion.

But do you know what did help?

Screaming obscenities.