

Jeff Around Town – March 18<sup>th</sup>, 2025

**Jeff:** Time now for Jeff Around Town. So, when's the last time you played hopscotch?

Imagine you're out for a walk after all of that cold weather. Suddenly it starts feeling like spring and so you go out for a stroll through the Hanscom Park neighborhood and as you're going along down the sidewalk you see a child and her mom on the sidewalk. As you get closer you can tell they're playing hopscotch.

Your first reaction, well, do you cross the street or at least walk along the curb or into the street to avoid it all? You know, you don't want to disrupt their hopscotch. But then you realize your actual concern. You're worried that the little girl is going to ask you to hopscotch. I mean, if you're of a certain age you sure don't want to make a fool of yourself. I mean, who are we kidding? It's been years, maybe decades, since you've last played hopscotch.

A moment later, just as you say hello to the mom and her little girl, the mom says that in order to proceed down the sidewalk you must first play hopscotch. The little girl looks up at you with these big hopeful eyes. Oh gosh! You can't disappoint her. You make a joke about maybe not remembering how to play hopscotch. So, the girl shows you herself hopping over the number with a rock on it. And now it's your turn.

Why on earth would something so simple, so ingrained, suddenly feel so clumsy and awkward and terrifying? But you ask yourself, what's the worst thing that can happen? You accidentally hop onto the square with a rock? So what?

So, you take off, hopscotching down the sidewalk, skipping over the square with a rock. Mission accomplished. The little girl and her mom smile. You thank them and go on your way. But you kind of want to do it again. Why? Because it was liberating, carefree. It was a gorgeous afternoon and for a brief moment you felt like a kid again. In this world of complications and difficulties and responsibilities, when someone asks you to play hopscotch, don't worry about making a fool of yourself.

Skip stones on a lake. Stop at the lemonade stand on the corner. Laugh out loud at that movie. And if you're able, when someone asks you to play hopscotch, always, always say yes.

And that's another Jeff Around Town.