



Read our CEO **Jonny Wilkinson's** regular column in The Northern Advocate

"A different Light"

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It can be a cruel twist of fate – the way in which Time seems to speed up, the older you get.

I am writing this on my youngest daughter's birthday. She's 25 today. A quarter of a century! Kids are often a good way to demarcate the march of Time. My eldest daughter, will be 30 next year, another brutal reminder of my age (mind you, I was a child bride!). When we had the girls we lived in Auckland, in what I thought back then must have been the busiest road in Australasia. Four lanes of solid traffic, 24 hours a day heading towards and coming back from Titirangi. We bought the house, along from Avondale racecourse; just before the Wall Street Crash and consequently we 'enjoyed' negative equity in it for a while (we owed more than it could be sold for). We sold it after seven years, which I explained to everyone who came near, was the seven year itch. If we had hung onto it, Time would have rewarded us substantially, especially over the last 5 year hike in Auckland house prices.

Fast forward to the here and now. Let's be mindful. I'm mindful right now about how bleeding hot it is! Time is rolling on, hiking up global warming. It seems extremely evident today- my legs encased in skinny jeans feel like skinny cylinders of piping hot corned beef. The streets in my neck of the woods, in the Bronx of Ruakaka, are lined with Pohutukawa which are now flexing their flora with red creeping over their sea anemone-like structures. With the summer heat comes the build up to Christmas and the swell of the Northland population with the early migration of Auckland holidaymakers adding onto the disillusioned Aucklanders who have made a permanent pilgrimage to an easier way of life.

Parking gets harder, drivers get rattier, and agitation seems to be the flavour of December. I'm waiting for that magical six day gap between Christmas Day and New Year's Day (I would have said New Year's Eve but I feel too old). That window when we all relax and let the tides of lethargic leisure rise and fall. The trouble is the build up to Christmas seems to take an eternity while that timely window of relaxation seems to be gone in a flash. Albert Einstein in an archaic sexist kind of way said "Put your hand on a hot stove for a minute and it seems like an hour. Sit with a pretty girl

for an hour, and it seems like a minute.” Donald Trump probably loves that quote. I prefer Einstein’s one-liner “Life is like riding a bicycle. To keep your balance, you must keep moving.” And I’m glad I forwent the riches of the Auckland property market some 20 odd years ago and moved ‘up Norf’ to enjoy the richness of Time and the beauty afforded us, especially this time of year, in our little tropical paradise.

Jonny Wilkinson is the CEO of Tiaho Trust - Disability - A Matter of Perception. A Whangarei based disability advocacy organisation.