



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

"A Different Light"

A Different Light - 26 September 2020 – “Pays to Listen to wife’s advice when it comes to hairstyle”

Sometimes you need to listen to people around you. Sometimes you need to take stock and make a change. And sometimes you need to realise that things do not look as great as you thought. I’ve been sporting a combover hairdo for the last couple of years. When I was younger, I adamantly declared that if I started to go bald I would shave my head instantly and that would be that! However, I was heavily influenced by *Peaky Blinders*; a British period crime drama television series created by Steven Knight. Set in Birmingham, England, the series follows the exploits of the Shelby crime family in the direct aftermath of the First World War. The 1920s crime gang all sported variations of the combover which looked to me just as good now as a hundred years ago. It’s a short crop with shaved sides and back, but the top is still significantly longer. Perfect I thought, stylish, gangsterish -with the bonus of covering my bald spot. I set about growing my hair out on top to the point where I could slick it back with an ample amount of product. While it took a fair amount of maintenance with frequent appointments to my hairdresser Marty, and a rather involved morning procedure plastering my hair with a product that set like bitumen, I was happy with the look, at least from where I was looking: dead ahead in the mirror.

Over the last couple of months my wife Sally has been urging me to change my hair style. Telling me it’s just too long and lank and looks like extreme from the back. I have been stubbornly ignoring her advice until this week. I had a sudden flash of realisation that this hair cut wasn’t that flash. I think my friend Robbie underpinned it when he said “your combover is getting a bit thin”. I went to the hairdressers and got my hair closely cropped all over and shaven on the sides. It was actually very liberating not having to worry about my long hair being locked into place not having to worry about long strands of hair hanging down. It’s a fresh get up and go” kind of a feeling. I have always been very particular about my appearance, bordering on being vain, some people have brutally claimed. However, when you have a very visible physical disability like Cerebral Palsy you want to accentuate the positive. Easier when you’re young but as you get older it does get harder.

Sometimes there's 'no fool, like an old fool' but I am grateful for my wife's harsh but appropriate advice.

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