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## "A Different Light"

### **A Different Light - 7 November 2020 – “Sold for a Song”**

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We will be selling our house in the not too distant future. It's a process that I don't particularly relish. The violation of weekends through Open Homes, the intense negotiations and high stake haggling. But preceding all this is The Preparation. The enormity of decluttering after years of unbridled consumerism is dawning on me. We have a relatively small 3-bedroom house and it's chocker. My wife frequently enjoys hunting and gathering at Second-hand and Thrift shops. Our interior displays the quarry of such a past time. One of her more flamboyant purchases was a retro caravan. A tiny Anglo Sprite from the mid 70's. We had visions of restoring it to become a Writers Studio or a library, a place of solitude and reflection. However over the weeks then months then years it turned into a rather expensive outdoor ornament, that slowly got more dilapidated over the years. It did get put to use last year when one of our daughters used it for her art studio/art storage place. Now she that has moved out, however it is back to being a two wheeled redundant symbol of 70's Kiwiana. In this time of shedding our superfluous paraphernalia the caravan was a prime target to get rid of.

My wife suggested that we advertise it as being free for removal because "removal" was going to be like mission impossible as the caravan had been stagnating in back yard for a number of years. "Hang on" I said, "I think those old caravans are quite popular, don't low ball it! Why don't we put it on TradeMe with a \$1 reserve and see what happens?". I was promptly delegated the task of listing it. For some reason my iPad wasn't liking the TradeMe app and I had to resort to the limited visual real estate of my phone. I managed to rather unskilfully stumble past the option between an Auction and a Classified listing and unwittingly forced myself into putting down an asking price. I put down \$100 thinking I would go back and edit it to be an Auction. Naively I then paid for the TradeMe listing which sent the listing live into the ether. I kid you not, no more than 30 seconds later my phone started ringing. It went ballistic! It didn't stop with people wanting to buy it. I instantly realised that I had clumsily under-priced the caravan which is why it was attracting so much instant attention. There was no going back. After the second phone call we sold it to a couple from Hamilton who offered us \$200 not because we were negotiating but they

obviously felt guilty at paying such a low price. I felt sickened. I was vaguely nauseated that I had managed to foolishly deprive ourselves of a potentially exorbitant price. When I started to vocalise my discontent, I realised Sally was looking at me with her head cocked and eyebrows raised in disbelief at my reaction. "It's good to have it sold", she said, "to people who obviously want it and know what they are doing".

The next morning the enthusiastic purchasers arrived at 7 o'clock in the morning. They had left Hamilton at 3am. They were enraptured with their prized purchase. Luckily they had come equipped with a large flatbed trailer, wheels, winches and all the necessary gear to execute the somewhat tricky extraction

Watching the caravan go to its new attentive owners I had a mild epiphany that this transaction was actually a symbiotic swap that unloaded what was an unwanted problematic relic into the arms of a pair of practical appreciative beholders. Sometimes things just work out.

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