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"A Different Light"

A Different Light - 10 April 2021 "As winter nears so does the aches & pains"

We are well into April, Easter has been gone and it feels like Autumn has only just begun. While I always enjoy the hot balmy Summers of Tai Tokerau, Autumn brings a welcome relief with it's relatively cool and crisp mornings being an excellent antidote to those long hot summer days and stifling restless wakeful Summer nights. The bedroom windows are now being closed. Hurrah and thank god! I have spent the last two months being persecuted by mosquitos that can bite with such stealth (due to the anaesthetic qualities in their saliva, yuck!) to then wake you by dive bombing your ear with a loud high pitch buzzing whine that makes one try and slap at it where you inevitably miss the mozzie and give yourself a thick ear. By this time you totally awake so you can endure the next 20 minutes of insane itching now their slobbery anaesthetic has worn off. The mosquitos don't seem to bother my wife who finds the heat somewhat more disturbing, hence the open bedroom windows. Autumn signals the need to start preparing for the winter season. I bought a winter coat in Wellington the other week to replace my old one which has shabbier and shabbier over the years and was starting to have a homeless quality about it. Then there's firewood to get in, I always seem to get it wrong either to wet or to long or too fast burning or to slow burning. This year I hedged my bets with a mixture of pine offcuts and manuka.

Something I have noticed this autumn is the ever increasing aches and pains I'm having. I guess one can put that down to old age or bad luck or the increasing stress on joints and muscles caused by the unrelenting involuntary spasms of Cerebral Palsy. A few months ago I was convinced I had gout, the joint in my big toe ached so much that I could not walk. I went to my GP who declared I did not have gout I had bunion. Fantastic! I felt 10 years younger. Not! After having 3 vertebrae in my neck fused and bolted together, I'm sure I can now feel the vertebrae underneath slowly turning to talcum powder as they take up the stress of their top three ridged ombres. Last Saturday we had what I think would be the last BBQ for a while. We had our girls around and their respective partners and our mokopuna and my mother who is now 89 and in contrast to me looks to be doing pretty well. While I was manning the BBQ, cooking a whole eye fillet my wife said "give me a look at your other

elbow, your right one. Oh my god!", she said "Your left elbow is so swollen". I had been moaning about my elbow for last couple of weeks and chewing on the occasional vultarin to try to thwart the pain. Helen our friend came to stay the next day. She is a nurse and has been working up to her neck in managed isolation facilities. I showed her my elbow, she said "Oh my god! That elbow is so swollen, and it's hot, you had better get it checked out." On Tuesday morning I rang my doctors and the receptionist declared that they were absolutely chocker that day. She did sympathetically ask if it was urgent. Can an elbow be urgent I thought, "No I said, it's not urgent" I said in a wavering voice. My PA with a sadistic curiosity said "can I have a look". After I revealed it her reaction was the same "Oh my god!"

By this time I felt like I had elephantitis of the elbow and that this was not a welcome addition to the other slings and arrows I had been enduring. I rang the doctor's surgery again and secured the next available appointment. You can't stop the commencement of the seasons but hopefully you can quell aches and pains or at least some of them.

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