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## "A Different Light"

### **A Different Light – 11<sup>th</sup> November 2023 – “Infamous examples of mistakes been made more than once”**

I have been conducting my own water sports lately and they have not been fun. In the middle of the night, I went to look at the time on my phone (a habit I do even when I am half asleep) and had an involuntary spasm and flung a full glass of ice water over my chest. I was instantly wide awake, eyes wide open and gasping that gasp only iced water thrown over you can produce. The next night we turned off the light, I leaned over to take a sip of iced water through the straw in the glass and somehow managed to do exactly the same thing. WTF! My wife was absolutely incredulous. I myself, couldn't believe it. How could I possibly make the mistake twice in a row? Haven't I learnt? There had been infamous examples of mistakes been made more than once.

Ford's ill-fated Pinto, produced in the 1970s, is infamous for its design flaw. The car's gas tank was located in a way that made it prone to explosion in rear-end collisions. Despite early safety concerns and a high-profile lawsuit, Ford failed to correct the mistake, leading to tragic accidents. Ford thought it was playing a game of "Explosive Bingo" with the Pinto, where every rear-end collision was a chance to win big! Unfortunately, nobody wanted to participate.

NASA had a real "blast from the past" with the Challenger, but not the good kind- the Space Shuttle Challenger disaster occurred due to a failure of an O-ring seal in one of the rocket boosters. This disaster was a result of NASA repeating a critical design flaw from previous launches, ignoring warning signs, and ultimately, it led to the loss of seven astronauts.

The Deepwater Horizon oil rig explosion in 2010 led to one of the largest environmental disasters in history. The mistake here was overlooking safety concerns and failing to take adequate precautions, despite previous incidents and warnings within the oil industry. The rig was being leased by the Oil

Company BP. BP's approach to safety was like trying to use a sieve as a water bottle. They forgot the most crucial rule: if you have holes in your plan, things tend to leak!

In NZ we have had our own oil related disaster. In 2011, the cargo ship Rena ran aground on the Astrolabe Reef off the coast of Tauranga, causing a significant oil spill. This incident echoed a previous mistake from the MV New Flame oil spill in 2007. Both incidents highlighted the need for better maritime safety and response measures, and the Rena oil spill, in particular, demonstrated that similar mistakes were made despite a recent precedent, leading to environmental damage and a lengthy cleanup process. The Rena oil spill was like the sequel nobody wanted: 'The Oily Chronicles Part II.' It's as if they thought, 'Hey, the first spill was such a hit, let's see if we can break our own record!' It's proof that in the world of maritime mishaps, lightning, or rather oil spills, can strike in the same place twice.

If you always do what you have always done, you will always get what you always got. It's a phrase my PA frequently and wisely trots out. The disability sector in New Zealand is looking to change how services are being delivered in a widespread project called the System Transformation. The changes are going to be based on the Enabling Good Lives (EGL) approach. This is a concept that endeavours to put disabled people and their whanau at the helm of deciding what services they need and how they will be delivered. It will require major paradigm shift in the sector, particularly from key players. Let's hope the sector can make these changes without repeating old behaviours.

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