



CASE STUDY

BARRY STAFFORD

ELIZABETH SPEAKS TO **BARRY STAFFORD**

(with a guest appearance by **Bev Stafford**)

AS WE START TO PONDER, AND PLAN OUR OWN 'BESPIRING', READING AND HEARING ABOUT OTHERS EXPERIENCES CAN PROVIDE US WITH INSPIRATION AND IDEAS ON HOW WE MIGHT LIVE OUR NEXT CHAPTER TO ITS FULLEST. ELIZABETH SPEAKS TO BARRY STAFFORD AS PART OF OUR CASE STUDY SERIES EXPLORING THE MANY WAYS PEOPLE TRANSITION FROM ONE PART OF LIFE TO ANOTHER.

Barry Stafford is a man who knows what he wants. As a young person Barry arrived from the UK with his family and started school in New Zealand. When his family relocated back to the UK he knew he wanted to stay in NZ to sit his university entrance exams and join the State Services Commission as a cadet at the age of 17.

From there followed a career in the law as he went through university studying and working part time. Law degree in hand Barry moved to London along with his wife Bev to enjoy the life that London has to offer - not as common as the OE is today. Working for the British Trade Unions as the Deputy General Secretary of the Writers Guild of Great Britain - a very high faluting title for someone in their 20's, Barry had a fabulous experience working with television and film scriptwriters. Barry's claim to fame was that he lived in Abbey Road next to EMI.

Returning to Auckland and law firm Simpson Grierson, Barry became a partner, and worked there for 20 years before deciding that it was time to do something different (a man who knows what he wants) and set up his own firm.

His eventual transition from legal eagle to retired was an interesting pathway. He had become, in his words, 'past my use by date'. This was primarily around the use of technology. While Barry was able to learn how to use the systems, email etc, he found it frustrating, particularly learning to type! He also recognised that it was taking him longer to do things and besides, there were other things he wanted to do.

This is an interesting point in a person's life when they realise that they are ready to move on to something new. Sometimes we can hold onto things for longer than we should which could be for lack of a plan, fear or financial need.

Interestingly Barry didn't have a plan for his retirement which may have been a good thing given what happened next. Barry was out for one of his regular bike rides when careening down a steep hill in Remuera he realised the brakes on his bike had failed. Seeing his own driveway approaching he aimed for the hedge at the end of the driveway and hoped for the best.

*'Bespiring' to describe the next phase after 9-5 work, at whatever age/stage you are. A time where you're creating your bespoke world that inspires your next chapter.



That 'best' meant his bike came off unscathed but Barry less so. A tracheotomy, punctured lung and broken shoulder blade required 3 weeks in intensive care and six months of recuperation and hastened his formal retirement from his firm.

Now fully recovered Barry has found fulfilment in 1:1 tutoring at the Pacific Advance Secondary School where he tutors in reading and writing. Quite a different relationship to that of client and solicitor. Does he miss the work?

Not at all! 'I have plenty to occupy myself'. Rotary is a big part of Barry's post retirement life as is his family (he and Bev have 10 grandchildren). He continues to mentor and support two of his children who are also lawyers. He is still in touch with previous work colleagues and has an eclectic reading list.

As for Bev (I mentioned she'd make an appearance) - how was it having Barry at home all of a sudden? 'Initially there was some concern as I was used to having the house to myself!' This is a common challenge with couples who have had independent lives when suddenly thrust back to together - how to navigate the togetherness and maintaining some sense of space and individuality.

Luckily for Bev and Barry they get along well and have a number of shared interests.. Barry did say that he made a real effort to keep out from under her feet - although acknowledging he probably talks to much and too loudly on the phone!