

The squeaky wheel gets the oil

It's easy to write someone off before we understand who they are and why they are that way. Has that happened to you before? Justin Brady from Test of Time Design is today's guest blogger – he challenges the way we view those “squeaky wheels” in our lives.

The squeaky wheel does, in fact, get the oil. This metaphor is remarkably accurate, conveying the idea that the loudest most obnoxious things are typically what get our attention. Some people clear away when this wheel is near them, while others avoid it entirely, hearing its approach from a distance. You can also be sure, the next time they encounter a wheel they may be hesitant to use it, checking one after the other to ensure they aren't put through that irritating experience again. After all, what if it needs oil a second, or third, or fourth time?

Despite its accuracy, there is a small facet of the traditional adage that is often overlooked. The wheel probably wasn't always squeaky. At one point in this wheel's existence it was silent and helpful, transporting well-being from one spot to another. It was faithful, dependable and good, but along the path, something happened; it wasn't maintained.

Maybe this squeaky wheel was overlooked or perhaps it went through a rougher patch than most wheels go through. Maybe it was maintained, but with the wrong kind of oil. Perhaps the person maintaining this wheel used something else entirely when they were just too busy doing other things.

We are quick to hate the squeaky wheel and simply wish it would be thrown away but consider, for whatever reason the squeaky wheel projects its unpalatable pandemonium, it's

likely it wasn't given the care and attention it needed in the first place. What would have happened to that wheel, if it was maintained regularly? What if premium oil was used instead of oil that was just "good enough." What if someone simply took the time? Could this small effort have prevented the wheel from being squeaky at all? What if all wheels were maintained from the start? Do you know of some wheels that haven't received the maintenance they could benefit from? Do you think it would be worth your time?