

Don't Dream It's Over

by Daniel Tse
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Hi, my name is Daniel Tse. I am 36 and from the UK, and to say I am a Neil Finn fan would be the biggest understatement ever made.

Here's my story.

My older brother Jason was the original 'Finn Fan' right from the Enz days; he was my hero and I followed suit in becoming a Crowdie when I was in my teens. We went to Crowded House concerts together and met the lads twice; on one occasion Nick made a huge deal out of us being brothers as he also has an older brother and told my brother quite frankly "Look after him", as we said goodbye.

My brother was fortunate enough to see the guys on their *Woodface* tour in Manchester when Tim was still in the band. This was something he was pretty proud of as he loved Tim too and had witnessed a Crowded House performance many would never have the privilege to.

Life stopped for me in late August of 1996 when my brother took his own life, an event that cut through me and my family like a knife. As surreal as it sounds, Neil, without knowing, managed to make the whole ordeal much more comforting.

My brother requested "Don't Dream It's Over" to be played at his funeral which we honourably did and from that day on it became the most sacred song in history for us. Many times through the struggling years my family and I found huge comfort from this masterpiece of a song and it became a soundtrack of Jason's legacy as people associated him with it. When the song randomly came on the radio or played in the background of a shop or restaurant it was almost like a message from my brother, letting you know he was watching and the words always seemed so relevant.

The first unbelievable thing happened when we planned the scattering of his ashes at Anfield, Liverpool Football Club's stadium, as Jason was a fan of them too. Around that time Neil decided to end Crowded House and subsequently "Don't Dream It's Over" was released as a reissue on the very same day that we chose that song for the ceremony. We had no idea of this beforehand, but it was comforting and special for us all. We also played the track on the pitch as a full rainbow hovered above us, which was spine chilling indeed. I was also recently informed that Neil is a fond fan of Liverpool Football Club.

I have "Don't Dream It's Over" tattooed on my chest in the very same font used at the beginning of the official video, which I showed Neil years later. We also knew that Neil's auntie took her own life so the connection was also apparent. In 2007 my wife was heavily pregnant with our first child, a girl, and she went to the local newspaper (where my brother used to work!) to put an advert in the paper. Right then, "Don't Dream It's Over" came on the radio offering a competition to win tickets to a private concert in London to see the new Crowded House lineup for a live recording on BBC Radio 2. She rang me for the answer needed and lo and behold, a

couple of weeks later we were informed that we had won! We then went on to meet Neil and the boys again, who toasted my wife's 'bump'! A glorious moment for us.

"Don't Dream It's Over" saved us. I always say without Neil this family would have been in a much worse state and possibly even more tragic. The beautiful song-writing and fitting style of lyrics and music has brought a family in ruins on their knees to stand tall with pride and happiness.

A year after Jason passed in 1997 a tribute to Princess Diana was released and Neil re-recorded "Don't Dream It's Over" for the album. It was nice to see it being used as a memory for someone so highly held in people's hearts; it also felt like another tribute to my brother.

At our local crematorium where my brother has a plaque it has a few heartfelt words from us, the first line being "Don't Dream It's Over".

My second child, a boy, arrived in 2011, would you believe on the very same day my brother died, 30 August? We named him Jason; this was really quite something for us. 'Hey Now' is what he sings now, Uncle Jason's song.

When we learned of Paul Hester's suicide it was very haunting for us to hear of another wonderful soul lost to such a tragic death. We saw the boys on the *Time on Earth* tour in Manchester; they turned on a light for Paul at a point in the show, and I like to think that light was for my brother too.

Nobody knows what happens when we pass, but one thing for sure is, some coincidences are hard to explain even for the most sceptical out there.

Thank you Neil. You really don't know what your song has done for a family in severe turmoil. I will be forever grateful.

Don't Dream It's Over.



The memorial plaque for Jason.