

**BBC RADIO 2**  
**NIGHT TIME PAUSE FOR THOUGHT**  
**Sunday 5<sup>th</sup> July 2009**

'Dear Noel Edmonds

I watch you on Swap Shop every Saturday morning. So please can I swap a Doctor Who Annual and a 'Mama Mia' single for a Rolf Harris Stylophone.

Signed

Tony, aged 11 and a half, Belfast '

I never missed the Multicoloured Swap Shop in the 70s. But sadly this request for a swap was never taken up. As Noel himself would say today, it was 'No Deal'. I still have my 1975 Doctor Who Annual and a rather scratched original 'Mama Mia' single. I had no idea both would still be so popular nearly forty years on, while the Stylophone has been consigned to ignoble electronic history.

But in this summer of 2009 I am looking forward to a much more successful swap. We are doing a house swap for our holidays this year. It's a good low cost credit crunch holiday.

My family in Northern Ireland are swapping our home with a family in Spain for a week this summer.

We are going to stay in their house near Barcelona and they are going to stay in our house on the North Coast of Northern Ireland.

Of course we were convinced that we're getting the better deal. After all we are going to be staying in one of the most beautiful cities in Europe.

But to my surprise, our Spanish counterparts believe they are getting the better deal because they are coming to one of the most beautiful coastlines in Europe.

It's made me think. I live in an area of outstanding natural beauty beside the Atlantic Ocean, surrounded by miles of sandy beaches. But I obviously take it for granted. It takes a family from Barcelona to help me appreciate it.

Isn't it interesting how we take for granted what is around us every day? We don't appreciate what we have. We fail to count our blessings.

And I think we can take the people around us for granted too.

How many times have you felt unappreciated as a partner, as a parent or as an employee?

Feeling taken for granted can wear you down.

But an unexpected thank you or a little bit of acknowledgment can go a long way.

So why not swap a few words of appreciation to someone close to you today and let them know they are not taken for granted?

And by the way, while I'm on the radio, would anyone out there like to swap a 1975 Doctor Who Annual and scratched 'Mama Mia' single for a Rolf Harris Stylophone?