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Dreamhouse: the right kind of reality



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Every so often a TV show comes along that changes the way we think about others, about society, about ourselves. Positively, for the better and in a way that enriches the lives of everyone.

Andrew Denton could have been speaking for us all when, 21 years ago, he described an episode of his unconventional talk show *The Money or The Gun*, in which he rounded up teenage cancer patients, as one of the most positive experiences of his life.



Cheeky young adults: *The Dreamhouse*.

It wasn't the first time Denton had taken his show down the path of people or topics that are rarely part of the TV repertoire.

A couple of years earlier *The Year of the Patronising Bastard* had irreverently and humorously looked at people with disabilities, and the prejudices they encounter. It won a United Nations Media Peace Award prize.

What distinguishes the dozen or so shows like Denton's, *The Choir of Hard Knocks*, the recent *Taking on The Chocolate Frog* and Adam Hills's show *The Last Leg*, is that we remember them today, as we did when they first aired; as programs that first and foremost entertained, challenged, moved and stimulated us. Their so-called worthiness largely fell by the wayside.

The six-part factual series *The Dreamhouse* is the latest addition to this tradition. It focuses on three young adults with disabilities who are realising a rite-of-passage that the rest of us take for granted. They are flying the nest and setting up house independently. In turn their proud and doting parents are learning to "let go", as their children face a world that barely recognises let alone accommodates their special needs.

The Dreamhouse reminds us of the hurdles faced by the disabled, their families and carers and the daily opportunities they are denied.

But what it does best is present us with three funny, cheeky, sensitive and irreverent young adults, who remind us of the value we all place on independence, compassion and the thrill of one day making our own way in the world.



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