



# January 2015 Newsletter

*The usual Bad Tempered Special (because it's January).*

*Big, bold and bombastic?*

## Book of the month

Seth Godin – “What to do when it's your turn (and it's always your turn).”

Seth muses on the nature of freedom and responsibility. A plea to take chances, seize opportunities and generally go for it.

According to Seth, there are 3 problems with freedom:

- Things often don't turn out precisely the way we hope
- Resolution takes too long
- And we might fail

A tonic for the New Year.



## Divorce boom to come?

The first day back at work after New Year is the traditional day for starting divorce proceedings, looking for a new job or generally dealing with crap from the previous year. The Government has noticed that relationship failure rates are higher in cohabiting as opposed to married couples. There's also a socio-economic element (marriage is middle class), but cause and effect is far from clear. So, they've tried to legislate the problem away:

<http://gordonlutton.co.uk/blog/general/cohabiting.html> Watch out for the Law of Unintended Consequences. At least the divorce (or maybe non-divorce) lawyers are happy.

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## Extra of the month

Whiplash found this in a book she was reading about punishment. It sums up the world of work rather neatly:

“It's a simple point – that a business needs to make money – but you'd be surprised how often it's overlooked. After working in the same job for a couple of years, people tend to forget. They stop thinking about their company as a business and see it more as adult day care. It's the place they go to keep busy between weekends. They forget that a business has only one purpose. Not to entertain them. Not to fulfil them. But to make money. For someone else. That's all.”

[Fantastic use of really short sentences – Ed.]

## Auto-Enrolment: the point

I know most folk are heartily fed-up with the issue (cost, administration and general grief from employees), but the Sunday Times ran a whole supplement on the subject and, buried within it, was a clear statement of the problem: the country can't afford its pension commitments. So they asked MPs what they thought:

- 15% of MPs don't expect there to be a state pension in 30 years' time. [Presumably, for everybody other than MPs.]
- 61% of MPs say auto-enrolment pension contributions must rise. Probably to 15%.

Given the forthcoming election, the next question is who gets to pay the 15%. EE or ER?

## Do TRs count?

The Sage has his say on what constitutes compelling work:

<http://www.thepositiveapproach.global/c-common-sense-compelling-work/>

## Video marketing

The team that made my new App have produced a video of a dancing accountant:

<http://www.myfirmsapp.co.uk/dancing-accountant-abba/>

I'm not entirely sure why, but it's quite fun.



## Government theft

This is a good rant about overpayment of NI and directional auditing:

<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/finance/personalfinance/tax/11300887/Why-you-may-have-been-paying-the-wrong-National-Insurance-for-years.html>

Given that NI was invented to fund pensions, it's extremely unlikely that it will be scrapped (or renamed "tax", because it is) once compulsory pension are bedded in. The Coalition talked about reclassifying NI when they first came to power, but before they discovered just how bare the cupboard was. Such an idea is now political suicide.

## Feel the romance

If you found coming back to work after New Year something of a challenge, then you need to reframe the issue – feel the romance of work. Seek out moments of unexpected beauty by:

- Talking to strangers – encounters with strangers generate positive emotions
- Being a stranger – extend that sense of strangeness by sitting in new places around the office and getting a different view of a very familiar world.
- Holding "thick" days (eating that frog) – work on a single task, with a limited number of colleagues and no distractions. You'll make progress and feel satisfied as a result.
- Cherishing the pressure of

# Top Tech of All Time

The IT Faculty ran an article on technology that's changed accounting. I got quite excited until I read the article – telephone at no. 3; calculator at no. 4 etc. Incredibly dull.

My 3 favourites are therefore:

- The extended trial balance: (ETB – those A3 shaded sheets. Mine always looked like they'd been attacked by spiders). From the time at which double entry was invented (1400s?) until the 1960s, all accounting took place in ledgers and was hidden. With the arrival of the ETB, you could see where you were on a job and get a real feel for progress. Unfortunately, I could never get them to add (but Sue could). Sadly, superseded by computers.
- Decimalisation: This was somewhat before my time, but you have to be in awe of 3 column ledgers. And how did they cope with the ha'penny?
- Women: they were getting fairly common when I started, even in audit. Now ubiquitous (and all powerful).

Any other suggestions?



## Disclaimer

Please be assured that your emails will be deleted in the order received.

No special clients in this business.

*Does this describe your thoughts/feelings after reading my bit of the Newsletter:*

*"We got wet, tired and scared. We got what we came for."?*

*If not, you must be ready for the serious section. Pay attention to:*





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