You ok? I can hear your mind going from over here.

*It was a full on day!*

Yes, it was. There wasn’t as much there as I normally do.

*Wasn’t there? It just seemed more.*

Hit you with some big concepts today.

*??? (00.43) by the big concepts.*

Yes, you need a break. So, when are you going away?

*I’ve got the first week of April off. We’re not going away. My little one’s school starts on Monday, a month’s Easter holiday, 2nd April, next week a couple of days out and then he goes to a sports camp for a week and then he’s going off to Greece with his mum, his aunt and his cousins and that’s it. They are all going and I’m at home by myself. ??? exhibitions and ???*

You are right. you can just keep going, so much, can’t you and then you just ...

*The tipping point, actually, I’m less and less effective and then your effectiveness swings up again towards the time when you’re going on holiday. Clear your desk and go so you’re not coming back until ...*

And do you ever sit there in a cafe somewhere or beach or wherever, on a boat, and just think “why do I do this to myself? Why do I do this? I just beat myself up.”

*Every year I say, right end of every course I feel great and if I don’t plan it, don’t factor it in ??? (2.07) then I can???*

Excuse me just a second. Hilary, could you leave your telephone number for me. Simon, do you have a business card?

*I do, yes.*

David, do you have a business card, at all? Gary, do you have one? Thank you. Can I keep this one? Good. Can I keep this one, yes? Thank you Simon. Do you have your own pretty card?

*Me, I have two pretty cards. I’ll give you one, though.*

They are getting more and more sophisticated, these cards.

*I have two cards depending on whether I’m Carden or Carden’s Pensions Services. That’s Carden.*

Simon, thank you. I hope that was hard but I hope not as much detail as normal.

*No, and the concept of next generation.*

*I would welcome a chat. This is just the same as Simon, I think buying into the whole package is probably not right for us in that there are definitely where we are so far ahead of the game that it’s ... but, there are certainly bits of it which I could value additional work with you and your team, so, yes, I will welcome a chat.*

Have you left your feedback sheet? Jolly good. Don’t forget to leave your feedback sheets behind, please. I’ll give you a call, then, Tony. Good meeting you, good luck out there. OK, do I have your feedback sheet? Thank you. Good seeing you, Tim.

*I’m not off yet, I’ll feedback. Have you got a card?*

Do you know what, I’m the only person in the room who hasn’t got a card. I’ve only got a 37 page workbook, that will have to do.

*I’m a bit non-techie, you see, I have little folders with cards in and I go through them every so often.*

Drop me an email, I’ll drop you a card. Tell you what, drop me an email, I’ll drop you a book. Is that one upmanship or what?

*Martin does the stuff in the south, does he?*

Yes, that’s right. he’s the marketing consultant for the south so drop us an email and if you get you and Martin together or me and you, whatever is appropriate.

*So you would come out if we wanted to?*

Yes, we would meet somewhere, define what the agenda would be, roughly and then ... very good seeing you. I’ll call you soon, take care. I’ll be seeing you again.

*Take care of yourself, we’ll be in touch. You are going to be working over the next two days?*

Yes, I’m going to be pretty intense, Wednesday and Thursday. Thursday I’m up in Manchester all day.

*I’ll email to talk to you, roughly, on Friday about the support things.*

Yes. ok.

*My problem is to solve my initial where I’m going. Because if I’m going to phase it down I’ll be taking one marketing tack. If I’m taking it up it will be a different marketing tack and I think what today... it’s been in my mind all the time but it’s focused me to think, well, I’ve got to answer that question.*

What I think I would love to let Martin, Peter and Andrew do everything. It’s been so good. What might be appropriate and maybe we can talk about this on the phone is from a global point of view perhaps you and I meet first and define...

Hilary, I’ll call you soon and we’ll see where we’re going, yes?

*Yes.*

I hope some of that... you look tired.

*I’m not brilliant. I thought I’d get to the end of this but my throat has been... so I fell a little bit...*

Drained.

*Yes, and it’s just so hectic at work as well.*

We’ll call you. we’ll see if you want to join us on the IFP thingie and your one on one meeting or whatever. Is that OK?

*Yes, thank you.*

And maybe, just take a global view and I might say to you actually it isn’t me, you’re right, it’s not me you need to work with, it’s Martin.

*So, we’ll speak tomorrow morning. Safe travels.*

Ok, but I do want to ask that question, should we both go together.

*We’ll talk about it tomorrow. Give me a buzz I’m in the office all day.*

Cool. Good to see you, take care.

*I’m going to leave you in peace and quiet.*

Soon, Mr Inner Circle Man. Ok.

*See you soon.*

Yes, indeed. Talk soon, ok.

And then at the end of our meeting it probably is going to be our meeting, then I think I’ll point to you, actually you either do just need an Andrew or Martin or whatever or you need part of a program. I’m happy to...

*The only decision I’ve got is if the world wasn’t going to change we’d be quite happy doing what we’re doing but the world is going to change and if I’m very clear that even if we kept an isolated cash flow financial services comes up with shocks and you’ve got to have the wherewithal to meet those shocks and our personal finance is completely separate from the business. My father went bankrupt when I was 18 so I learned that lesson a bit less painfully than you but it’s right there in my mind. I was very lucky because I was at a public school and he just about managed to get the last fee paid before I went off to university. The lessons of what happens if it goes wrong are well learned by me of old.*

*But, my wife is... it’s always complicated isn’t it because my wife is... I’m 53, my wife is 61, so the business model, it’s not as if we’ve got a clear 10 year run. I don't’ want to stop until I’m close to 60 but what’s the business going to be, merger, bring in staff, if you get the staff you’ve got all the responsibility of staff, all the compliances. How much can I outsource. All of that stuff is going through my mind.*

Maybe it’s not even 10 years, maybe it could only be five, whatever.

*Yes, so that’s all still going through my mind. So, it’s not necessarily the question to ask of you, that’s the problem.*

That may be to ask of you or maybe just for a coach to be with you and to ask the right questions and challenge you in the way that you’re thinking because I meet with some people and, really, they’re just talking about a five to six year plan and then really there are other things they want to do with their life, it’s not about financial planning.

*I do life planning. I’ve done it forever, I love it. I would do it for free, I would. So, I’ve got no problem with that. It’s not a chore, well, the admin is and the compliance is but talking to the clients it’s I get kicked under the table by Jeanette. At ordinary friends meetings I’m talking about funding. I love it! you know!*

There is, what would happen if we were to meet, whoever you meet with in the team there would be 25 of those questions to answer, 12 you’ve already answered and the others just flow off from there so I would need to see a copy of those and the balance of the questions before we ever met, long before we met so I get a feel for what‘s going on in your heart and your mind. That way we don’t waste time just gathering data at the meeting. We go really deep as a coach first, not as a mentor but as a coach, to try and understand what is it that’s behind that, why are you feeling that way and where are you heading with that thought process, where could that actually end up, what do you really want to create here and what would you exit to do? What do you want to leave behind you and all those kind of ...

*I must be still quite ambitious because we’ve got a holiday home down in Lyme Regis and we’ve just set up an office down there. We’ve got our first client down there and I’m always .. there’s always a bit of a play because our first client down there, we can justify to the Inland Revenue that we’ve got revenue down there so it’s clearly not somebody stopping there. I wouldn’t have bought the printer and the photocopier and set it up again. So, lots of conflict going on and I don’t know whether it’s a marketing thing or a business coach thing.*

Martin is purely marketing strategy. Once the business broadly knows what it’s heading and why the individual driving it wants to head that way then a Martin will come and say... and he will work at quite a high and deep level as well. but, on the back of wherever it is you think you’re going with this, where you are going and where your head and heart are going and where the business is going with you.

My sense is that probably is where I would start and then on the back of that would be a marketing conversation if that’s where you thought we should go. Then it would be up to you to name the shots. I get what Andrew does, I get what Martin does, I get what you do, right, I really need him. That’s how I feel right now. Does that make sense? That’s my initial reaction.

 *I do need to think it through a bit more. I went, years ago, I can’t remember his name now, a chap in Milton Keynes, started to add marketing and bits, picked up your IFA Adviser Gym emails and the stuff that comes through, ESP or DSP, Develop something and prosper, he had quite a good business. I looked at his business model and thought this can’t work. He charged £1,000 for the day but there were only two of us and I thought, well, we’re not doing any repeat business and he’s got no renewal income, I didn’t know how he worked. He sort of disappeared and then he reemerged and he didn’t have any staff, I mean, he had marketing stuff, it just poured out of him, thousands of ideas. But that set me thinking that marketing is not selling.*

No, it’s not.

*It’s not even close and then I started thinking, ok, the office and the card and the website and memberships and that scores you one point, that scores you 1.5, that’s two points and you get enough little bits together and it starts to gel. But, we haven’t quite got that USP yet, not quite there.*

You’ve read the IFA Marketing Manifesto from the website?

*Yes, I’ve got it, maybe what happens is you get through it when you’re quiet, then you get busy, it’s that. We must be doing something right because we are getting more enquiries than we want so we are refusing business that doesn’t fit but we’re not only getting the absolute, so absolutely gem of a client, the 1.2 million spread between ISA, share portfolio and the city who doesn’t spend it. We get 0.5% and we have two meetings in a year. We have a few at that level with four or five meetings a year, we work quite hard for but the revenue is there but if we could have only those sorts of clients and none of the 100,000 over 500, that would be the icing on the cake.*

Well, I think you know how I feel, the way I feel is that the material we went through today, the concepts and principles, the context, not the content, we went through today to me is foundational for whatever a business then does because that will produce something that’s quite exceptional and almost magnetic and attractive to whoever it is you want to attract. Then, you layer on top of that, really, 28 hours of marketing workshop there to teach you, really, what marketing is really all about rather than what everybody thinks it’s about and you can either go on that or you can have a one on one marketing relationship with Martin. So, my sense is I’ll call you next week and say, here’s what I’m suggesting, what do you think. You know how much it costs, it’s all in there. Where are you based?

*Loughton, Essex.*

So, we’ll either meet out that way or...

*Because one of the things there was using the power of the internet which probably doesn’t add a lot of attraction to my clients, on the internet, it’s not their driver. So, some of the other stuff looked very good but there was one in particular, increasing fees was definitely one. Honing the business proposition. My fee agreement is introduction, implementation and then servicing. But, the network always wants to poke its nose into how it’s all worded and invested. And when we get feedback from clients the one thing I thought they have understood but they haven’t, if they tick we’re brilliant, tick, tick, tick, what they say we’re good at is understanding whether we’re fees or commission. Another one, the networks made us change our feedback to treat the customer fairly and they said what service did you have and they tend to tick all three, so they’ve had information only, advice and something, but you’re supposed to tick on and the clients have ticked all three really not understanding, it’s a bloody useless form but it’s what the FSA want. Unfortunately we changed it. we had an earlier one, a much friendlier one which they asked for comments and we got some nice comments on that but since the change we haven’t gone back and asked for those feedback comments. So, I’m aware of that sort of stuff and then I get back and don’t do it.*

I think one of the reasons these people use with in the inner circle is they just need an accountability factor, amongst other things, apart from genuine mentoring, coaching, models, concepts, context, content, they need all that stuff. They also need somebody who will just make them accountable because they are the MD and they’re accountable to nobody, to say, well, you know we have a plan here and you will achieve it if you just get on with that one action point you promised three weeks ago.

*I have got my wife who is a complete finisher. I get told what to do. She’s good at that. she says, no, you’ve got to do it that way so the files are fantastic.*

So, what is April and May like for you?

*Well, end of tax year is...*

A nightmare.

*See you David, see you soon mate.*

Keep awake! Sorry I beat you up, today. Nice to speaking to you again. I’ll talk to you next week.

*I saw you at the Essex meeting last year, IFP. And London as well.*

Oh, my goodness and you still come, you still turn up.

*I’ve got all your videos and I still came!*

Goodness gracious.

*Are you going to resign from the Institute of Chartered Accountants, England and Wales.*

*I hope so, tomorrow.*

I’ll call you next week and see where you want to go with this. I might call you Friday and see if you want to join us for the marketing program.

*I will have a look at the workshops, actually, yes, but at the moment, where I am at the moment is I’m going, purely by chance but now by design, I’m trying to sell my accounts practice and I’ve had two initial discussions with an accountant and then the plan was to start with build up the ??? (20.06) end side because my ceiling has always been my accounts practice. So, that’s where I’m at now but I’m trying to go through the motions of selling that business and then build up an ??? side. But, they’ve also suggested that I might consider joining their financial planning company. So, I’ve got to explore that but I’m not convinced at the moment from what I’ve heard so far that it’s what I want to do. It’s old style, I think, three IFAs, late 50s early 60s, all they talk about is trail and ... so I’m not sure it’s right.*

Don’t want to change, yes.

*Yes, I don’t know what they want so at the moment I’m very into transition in a lot of areas but I think whatever way I’m going to go I’m going to go to the workshops.*

Ok, well, I’ll talk with you, probably give you a quick call Friday just about the workshops, ditto for yourself whether that’s right for you or not. I am April for me is a bit of a nightmare. So, I might give you a call next week about May/June, if that’s ok and just say here’s what I’m suggesting what do you think?

*Safely, back, thank you David, thank you very much for your time.*

I’ll give you a call about whatever. See if you want to take that further.

*Good to see you again, David, take care. Safely back.*

The man says, the sheet says, right...

*The sheet says, this is the price so that’s what you’ve got to pay.*

You can’t argue with it.

*Indeed. I don't think we had a chance to speak but I’m sure we’ll see you at the next one, take care.*

He’s having good fun.

*What was that one?*

Oh, this is Mark is very new, he’s just joined the inner circle so he didn’t realise, doesn’t realise yet that he’s entitled to come to this workshop anyway which is the next one in the series because it says “I would love to attend that, I understand I’ll need to be on the Adviser Gym coaching program” which he has now just joined, bless him, so he’s excited, which is fine. So, they get workshops, they get fortnightly coaching, they get weekly email coaching, they get a new online program that’s being rolled out in June which will be a 12 month online coach yourself program with videos, audios, interviews, feedback sheets, that kind of technology stuff.

*I’m sure everybody has got different agendas but what is the average of what people are trying to get out of the workshops or is there no such thing?*

Yes, I think they’re coming from so many different angles. Broadly, it’s this. Most when they join are still struggling with their fee structure. They’ve kind of got one but it either doesn’t really work that effectively or it’s a bit of an excuse, it’s kind of they’re almost apologising for the fee structure because it’s really not that powerful and the service is pretty poor. I ask them what do you do for 0.5% or 0.75%, or 1% and it’s a bit naff. It’s sort of quarterly reports. Well, I can get all that stuff online. I don’t need you to deliver all that.

*Yes, I had a chat with another IFP member, he came to see me a few weeks ago, asked me the same question, what do you do for the 0.5%? because he was looking, asking questions as if he was a client. Then, that made me sit back for the first time. I have just followed the herd, 0.5% for this; the way I see it with the IFAs, if you like, looking from the outside as an accountant, is historically they’ve earned commission and they’ve swapped commission for 0.5% assets under management or 1% assets under management implementation which is 3% commission. It’s the same thing under a different label. That’s the way I see it.*

That’s why in today I said take away all commission, now tell me about your business. Generally what could you create as revenue for next year? Clearly it drops down like a stone, straight away and then gradually builds up.

*Well, what I’m not sure of is although we’ve got about 120 renewal and all clients have signed an agreement, or the vast majority of them, but the core ones know it, they know they’re paying 0.5% although there are a couple that don’t but they would still pay. But, it’s that middle block where they’ve got 100,000, I’m getting 500, we have a review meeting, I’m doing more than 2 hours work and I’m, my qualification level I should be notionally I charge out at 200 but I probably should be nearer 300 or more if I was in the city with a big firm they would be charging me out at 400. IFP chartered and certified, banking exams, member of SOLLA 30 years experience.*

That’s a lot of money, that’s a lot of value. That’s why I say to all of you, and I wasn’t being glib, unkind or flippant, I was just trying to say, “look, I know what you people have been through to get where you are today and we’re not kids anymore, we’ve earned our spurs, we’ve worked blooming hard and we’ve also gained incredibly useful knowledge. You genuinely are worth, as a base, 250K”. That’s the base as far as I’m concerned, per adviser and

*And that’s gross to the business?*

And that’s gross and really that should be recurrent revenue, 250K recurrent revenue, that’s what you’re worth. Then, you need to go on from there and that’s why I said in the marketing stuff, the advertising break through the half million pound revenue barrier. I meant it. I never did that. I was just almost scared of the best I got was about 350K, most of it recurrent revenue and I realised, you know what, I’m not brilliant at this, I’m good but I’m not brilliant, I’m actually brilliant at something else.

*My problem is I run the business as the cash flow for my personal stuff. I’m not doing anything very ... but I’ve got some buy to lets and got the pension sorted out, Jeanette’s pension so we’ve got the ISAs, so I’ve taken my own advice and what I was thinking through the workshop I was thinking I‘m using the revenue just to cash flow that. We don’t want to live an extravagant life but we want a nice lifestyle. But, then, I think we both do enjoy it. So, then, you get all these mixed feelings and messages coming in and it’s that direction you need to actually say that’s what we really want to do. But, very tough questions. I need, I’ve often thought that IFAs should buddy up and do an IFA planning on each other.*

I think that’s appropriate and Martin said, once we get our models straight this year which is add another two programs at the lower rate than the current inner circle program and then get this online thing rolled out which kind of releases me, then we need to talk about creating like Phil Cowell has done a proper forum, maybe a big one but an inner circle forum, as well, where you genuinely are buddied up, not casually but formally buddied up. Maybe for six months two of you work together and then change partners every six months. I think there’s enormous value in that but coming back to one of my first points.

I’m not talking about being a bigger business, maybe one or two people might be needed to support wherever you are going, I don’t know, but I’m talking about doing something exceptional within the small business and saying going back to that comment, if we are there for 35 – 50 hours, whatever it is, why not do something exceptional, why not? Why not shape the business so it’s even more effective at changing people’s lives? To me that’s worth coming to work for. It’s more than financial planning, it’s the real power of financial planning.

*I’m on that tipping point. We’ve had a couple of clients where you really think, I mean, one of them she was in a complete state, and after about a year of working with her and she’d been widowed suddenly, then she came in with her daughter and she just sat there and rattled off all the investments that we’d set up and what they were doing. The daughter just turned to her and thought “what, that’s not my mother talking!” So, I had got the whole process in place, knew what the fixed rate deposit account was and what the premium bonds were doing and what that guaranteed bond were doing and all the bits and pieces and it was really a bit of a mess because it evolved as the probate came through. It’s not what I would do now, although it’s only a couple of years ago, but now I would have gone straight to discretion management. But, then, I was making the products fit. Now, I’m a bit more confident and I would just say it’s all irrelevant, discretionary fund management can do all the products you need, they’ll do the ISA, pension is not appropriate, unit trusts, capital gains tax, unused capital gains tax relief, all that stuff, he’ll do it all. I will tell you which one to go into. I feel I’m getting very close to where I want to be. But, you can always hone it, you can always tweak it.*

But it is stuff, a lot of it. and so going back to the first objective of being next generation, it is, is your business structured within the clear intent not to deliver financial planning, that gets done anyway but to demonstrably change the conditions of a client’s life. And, when you know, know what that really means and when you’ve done it regularly, time after time, after time, as Tina Weeks said to me “I wouldn’t ever want to go back to working any other way, ever. It’s just become so meaningless the way I used to work”. When you do that, it is life changing, as Craig said, for him.

It’s life changing. He used to be Craig who left early, he used to be one of your old inter-reliance, top performers at 400K a year. He’s a brilliant sales man, he’s just mustard. He’s also very bright and he does a lot of seminar selling and he’s actually pretty good at it but he just wants more than that. He wants a better business than that. he wants to do something more exceptional with his life than that and so he’s keeping at 400K, he hasn’t dropped but we’re trying to shape a support team behind him of better quality people and then the work he does at the coal face he wants to be life changing and that he has just begun to get it, really see it. He said the lights are coming on in their eyes, I’m helping them achieve yearnings that they thought they couldn’t achieve and the light is coming on and it’s magic. Now I get it, now I get the power of what I can really do and the money, well, that will come anyway because I’m pretty good at what I do.

*Money is a very bad motivator. It’s not what...*

So, I will call you Friday, see where you are about the marketing programs, ditto, if I may with you if I can reach you but then maybe talk about May/June and see whether a meeting is appropriate.

*On Friday, Jeanette doesn’t work Friday so I’ve got clients coming at 11 which is a referral from the discretionary fund management so I’ll probably be out the middle of the day but if you can tailor your time or we need to leave it till next week, maybe.*

I’ll drop you an email and see where we are.

*That will be great. Thanks very much.*

Great, thanks for your input today.

*Can I give you a lift anywhere?*

*I’m going to Newbury station if you’re going that way?*

*I’m going to the M4.*

*I’ll get a taxi.*

Ok, you sure you’re ok?

*Yeah, no problem.*

Talk to you soon. Thanks chaps.

Hello.

*I’m going to stay here, for some reason my key, it won’t turn... doesn’t work in my car to turn the engine.*

So have you got AA membership?

*Yeah, I’ve just called them. So, I wasn’t sure... it’s such a nuisance. It was working and the last time it was serviced the key came apart, I think they taped it together but they cost about £150 or something to get a new key!*

Blooming heck! Any idea how long they’ll take?

*About an hour.*

Ok. I’m just going to gather all this stuff.

*It was a very good session today. Unfortunately my mind is...*

I know, Paul Bailey was exhausted, he said he came in exhausted because of the... he’s not so much rushing round on end of year stuff, he’s just got a lot of stuff on.

*It’s all the reports and things you’ve got to do after that.*

Yes.

*It’s complicated and it takes time. That’s why I use templates!*

Give us more templates.

*Can I ask you, you know on this hand out that you gave about the four day course is that to new members or is that...*

That was really saying to the guests in the inner circle we’re going to cover this anyway because you get coaching and everything that the guests don’t get but there is this program, it’s been set up, it’s just marketing, it’s nothing else, there are four workshop days spread over four months and that’s it, they don’t get any coaching, nothing else. I just think we’re really excited about it because I think it will just deliver amazing stuff to the industry that nobody else is delivering. So, if you wanted to go on it as well as whatever else we’re doing.

*Well, I need to spend my time with people like Martin and money on that. So, ...*

It may be that the marketing workshops, per se, you’ve actually got all that stuff, you really have, it’s all in your workbooks, it’s just packaged slightly differently amongst four workshops, not three or two, so it’s less intense per workshop. It may be that all you need is help, now, from a Martin or a Peter to get your stuff to market. It may be that’s what you need, some project consultancy. Does that make sense? Let’s talk about that.

*What was good about today on this table, that guy Tony, he was quite cock sure of himself and he was obviously dictating to Simon and me because of what he had done and it was like half way he started to think.*

I saw that happening.

*You know this thing about not listening and people finishing sentences and all that, so I just kept quiet every time he said something, he was finishing your sentence but towards the end I think he ate a bit of humble pie.*