

## Brad Brain: There is no Mary Poppins

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Brad Brain: "Understand your role in your own success. Take responsibility for that success and be accountable for it. Trained professionals have expert knowledge, but none of us are Mary Poppins."

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As with many of the articles I write, this one was inspired by real events. I received a phone call. Someone had a tax situation. They were looking for a way forward, and so they called me. But then they got frustrated.

"I just wanted a simple answer!" they exclaimed. But, really, that is not what they wanted at all. Because I gave them the simple and correct answer.

The reason for their frustration wasn't because they did not get the answer. They were frustrated because it was not the answer that they wanted to hear. They were not looking for an answer to a question; what they actually wanted was a quick fix to their problem.

Unfortunately, in the real world, life doesn't always work that way. In the real world, Mary Poppins does not just snap her fingers and the children's room cleans itself, whilst everyone sings a happy tune. In the real world someone actually has to put the toys away.

If this were a one-off incident you would never hear about it. But it's not. I get calls like this from time to time, where people think I can just Mary Poppins their problems away.

Now, don't get me wrong. I'm not saying that you should refrain from calling a trained professional. If you have financial questions, absolutely you should call a trained professional with expert knowledge. Expert knowledge is better.

Rather, the transferable message here is to understand your role in your own success. Take responsibility for that success and be accountable for it. Trained professionals have expert knowledge, but none of us are Mary Poppins.

Here is what I mean: Let's say you ate nothing but junk food, smoked and drank heavily, and never exercised, and you did all this over decades. In time, feeling the consequences of your excesses, you book an appointment with your doctor. How realistic would it be, after years of bad living, for you to go into that appointment expecting the doctor to be able to write you a prescription for some pill that will instantly make you healthy and happy?

It is intuitive that this would not work with your health, but I see this type of behaviour with people's finances. I have worked with people to restructure their finances only for them to spend themselves back into the same problems that made them come see me in the first place.

Here is a little something that I am going to let you in on.

When it comes to financial planning, there is no secret formula. There is no magic potion or silver bullet or hidden door that will make everything right. There is no Mary Poppins. Some people come to me thinking that there is. They come to me thinking that I can just snap my fingers and the room will be clean, and they won't have to lift a finger themselves. Well, that sure would be great, but...

Here is how it works in the real world. There is me, and my knowledge. And then there is you. And your dreams, and your hard work, and your sacrifices, and your persistence, and your ability to make decisions that are consistent with your objectives, and your ability to stick to the plan.

These are the two, equally important, parts to the equation. I can't fix things if you don't do your part too. Be responsible. Be accountable. We'll get that room clean, but it won't happen just by me snapping my fingers.

We need to work together.

Then we can sing the happy tune.

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