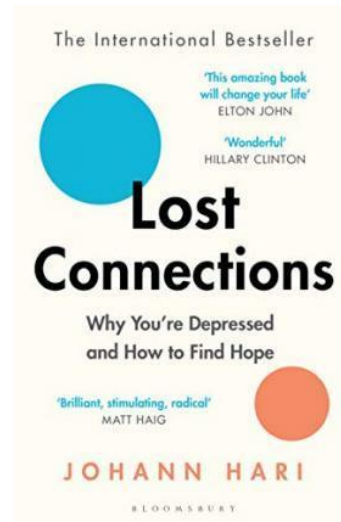


The book that made me grateful for what I do as a profession (part one)

During the holidays I picked up the book “Lost Connections”. The book explores the worldwide epidemic of depression and anxiety. The author Johann Hari has uncovered evidence of eight different causes of depression and anxiety and provides practical solutions to help us understand and overcome this silent epidemic.

The eight causes Hari uncovered are:

1. Disconnection from meaningful work
2. Disconnection from other people
3. Disconnection from meaningful values
4. Disconnection from childhood trauma
5. Disconnection from status and respect
6. Disconnection from the natural world
7. Disconnection from a hopeful and secure future
8. The role of genes and brain changes



When I finished reading this book, I realised just how fortunate I was to have a career that provides our clients with the necessary tools and an outlet to overcome all eight of Hari’s causes of depression and anxiety, but in the process, provides me and my team the same tools.

Rather than merely wallowing in eternal gratitude and satisfaction, I thought it would be worth sharing my thoughts on why a financial planner should be grateful for a career that not only makes a gigantic difference to the lives of our clients, but in the process, presents us with all the ingredients for a happy and fulfilling life.

I plan to explore all eight of Hari’s causes of depression and anxiety and illustrate as best I can how they relate to what we do as financial planners.

In the interest of your time, over the next eight weeks I will devote a weekly article to each of the eight different causes, starting with the first cause ***“Disconnection from meaningful work”***.

1. Disconnection from meaningful work

Financial planning is a great deal more than simply investing clients’ retirement savings and providing adequate insurances for protection in the event something goes wrong. In fact, I could easily write a book in similar volume to War & Peace if I broke down and analysed everything we do.

To give you an idea of just how involved and diverse our function can be, I have looked back over the last month and considered the multiple interactions we have undertaken, all of which provided me with rewarding and **meaningful work**.

Provided retirement advice

Our clients Joan & Steve (names changed) had been in business for many years, and for one reason or another had delayed their retirement. Finally with a combined super balance of well over \$3,000,000 we converted their accumulation into pension funds with both close to the maximum caps. Joan and Steve have a secure future (addressing cause 7 in Hari's causes of depression) receiving over \$200,000 tax free every year.

Insurance

We wrote many insurance policies in the month of December, but our focus was on the ongoing claim of a long-term client who suffered a massive heart attack mid-2021, with ongoing ramifications. After his release from hospital, money and self-worth were a concern. We converted his accumulation fund into a pension fund but left a small amount of money in the accumulation fund to pay for the Death & TPD cover. We lodged a TPD claim and continue to follow this up. It is great we can secure our client's future (addressing cause 7) and in the process, maintain the status and respect he has (addressing cause 5).

Marriage breakdown

With the assistance of *Katrene Halteh* from *Urban Family Lawyers* and our [online settlement calculator](#) (developed by Katrene, me and a long-term client Garry). In the month of December, we aided a client and numerous new clients with an idea of what they are entitled to with their property settlements.

Education of children and activation of savings plans

As part of the value add we provide to our clients, we make our services available to their children for little or no fee. We assisted a client's daughter to set up a savings plan like one we set up for her brother earlier in 2021. Our generous client is matching 50 cents for every dollar his daughter contributes to her savings plan - the idea is not only to provide the right framework for her future money habits (addressing cause 3), but with continued investment will provide her with a sizable pot of money that can be used to put a deposit down on a property in the future (addressing causes 2 and 7).

Assisting with estate planning

We are fortunate enough to have great referral partners in the estate planning space and referred a number of clients to our referral partners. Many clients and non-clients took advantage of our [online estate planning tool](#) (addressing cause 7).

Job changes

In December we had two clients who changed their respective jobs for entirely different reasons. The first client changed his job because his wife secured her dream job interstate, and of course he supported her. The second client's job-change was a sign of the times, his employment was terminated due to vaccination protocols. In both cases we spent a good

deal of time discussing a multitude of issues to ensure the best outcome for each of their situations (providing solutions to causes 1, 2, 5 and 7).

Now that was December and it was only a short month but it should give you a taste of what we do. Whilst it was great to assist clients, it also provided a meaningful job and an ideal opportunity to assist clients in meaningful ways. What do you think?

