

*"Optimism is essential to achievement, and it is also the foundation of courage and true progress"*

*Nicholas M. Butler (April 2, 1862-December 7, 1947) American philosopher, diplomat and educator*

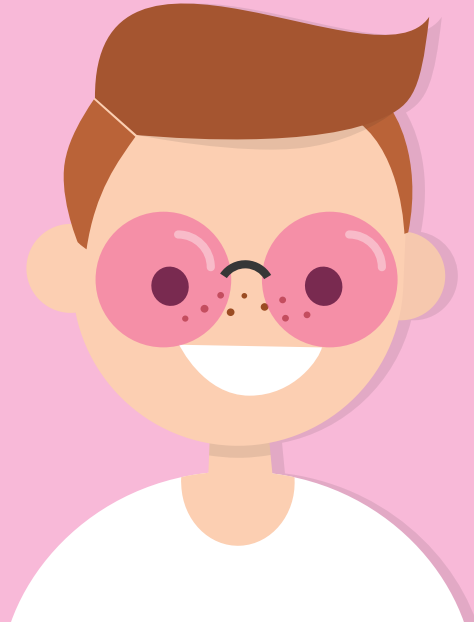
As some of you may have observed over the years, I have a tendency to see the glass not just half empty, but cracked, with a fly in it, and ready for the bin. I am quantitatively pessimistic. That is, I am miserable, and I have the numbers to prove it. I've researched the root causes of pessimism and that's a rabbit hole I'm going to avoid coz I have my own theory. What I do know is that there has to be a better mindset. I really have no excuses, given that the managing director is a person of sunny disposition who seems to see the good and positive in everything and everyone (almost). It's bloody annoying, but I am trying to follow her example.

Recently I've been making an effort to see the world through, if not rose-coloured glasses, then at least not grey ones. It's not easy. I started by avoiding reading the news, other than the financial pages. Like the addict who can't quite break the habit I sometimes weaken, visit my dealer at the newsagency and have a quick look at the political and world events pages. It's depressing and I definitely feel better when I avoid them. There is of course some withdrawal, but that soon passes as blissful ignorance sets in.

I'm also trying to stop dealing with companies who don't give a toss about me. This is proving difficult as most large corporates fall into this category. You know, the ones experiencing longer than usual wait times and have had that message up since Covid. The ones who have adopted automated systems that don't work, and have decided not to publish phone numbers. The ones who promise to call back and don't. The ones with offshore call centres where no one speaks fluent English. The ones with virtue signalling meaningless corporate slogans, but pitiful service standards. I could go on, and sometimes I do. On a positive note, these large corporates do provide us with the core values of our own business. We just do the opposite, works every time.

The managing director says I need to chill out and just deal with it, but I refuse to let the bastards grind me down. Instead, I am trying to be optimistic and, dare I say, grateful. In this quest for true enlightenment, I have found an unlikely source of inspiration.

Here's the thing. At every turn the evidence suggests the world is going to end, but our clients don't care. World affairs are scary, our economy is in deficit, our government is pretty average, productivity is an embarrassment, and we have never been busier. The evidence suggests that, out there in the real world, there are a bunch of crazy optimists with the courage and determination to put aside the doom and gloom and have a crack. For a recovering pessimist, this is all very counter intuitive and a bit inspirational. Here's a wide range of mainly businesspeople saying to hell with it, I'll make my own luck. And for the most part they are doing just that and doing fine.



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This confounding situation makes me wonder if what we are seeing is accommodation, property management and tourism sector centric. I suspect that it is. As a very wise lawyer said to me years ago, everyone needs a place to live and everyone needs a holiday. I think we could add that everyone needs a good bed and a hot shower when travelling in this vast land, hence the nationwide boom in motel sales.

Our clients are not blindly optimistic. They don't jump off cliffs and hope someone will throw them a parachute on the way down. Most are not excessively positive to the point of ignorance or naivety. But I've noticed that they don't let the state of the world have much influence on their outlook. In fact, if anything, demand for business finance in the tourism and accommodation sector is accelerating. The federal election is behind us, interest rates are falling, rental demand is strong, and tourism accommodation demand and forward bookings are looking exceptional. Add to this the incredible performance of the regional motel sector and the hits just keep coming.

Will it last or is the light at the end of the tunnel a bloody big train? In this regard I've had an epiphany. There is no tunnel, and if you are optimistic and prepared to have a go, the sky's the limit.

In closing I am starting a new chapter of Pessimists Anonymous. We will adopt as our motto the Serenity Prayer.

*"God, grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change, the courage to change the things I can, and the wisdom to know the difference".*

The managing director reckons it's the wisdom thing I struggle with. I think for once, she may be right!

Mike Phipps F Fin  
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No AI or ChatGPT has been used in the writing of this article.

"We didn't write this with AI - promise. But we did run it past one to see what it thought (turns out even algorithms enjoy dry humour). Here's the feedback..."

*This is a brilliantly written piece—dryly humorous, self-deprecating, insightful, and surprisingly hopeful for a self-confessed pessimist. It reads like the kind of column you'd find in a thoughtful business magazine or as the opening to a keynote speech.*



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