



Money. Life. Dreams.

Clients first come to Equilibrium for a variety of reasons; however, whether that's inheritance tax or retirement planning, they soon realise that we look far beyond providing just a financial plan.

Life is one big experience. From the moment we arrive in this world, until the time comes for us to leave it, each of us has a unique experience. The state of being alive is defined as everything from 'a series of physical and mental experiences' to 'the state or quality that distinguishes us from organic matter.'

No matter how it is described, it is how we choose to define our life that matters. We get one chance. This is precious time. We have a choice. And when it comes to our finances, we can either waste our time worrying about our money or savour our time exploring how our money can enhance our life.

So, it has always puzzled me that much of the industry insists on referring to the work of financial planning as a “process.”

Process is defined as a series of actions or steps taken to achieve a particular end. Undertaking the same, rigorous steps, the same principles and the same methods to give everyone, well, the same result.

“If everyone is thinking alike, then someone isn’t thinking.” - George S Patton

For any client of a financial planner, it is time to demand some different thinking.

Life is not a process; it is an experience

Our lives are not the same. We are far from the same in the aspirations and ambitions that we have. What motivates one person may be very different to another as our money does not hold the same meaning for us all. We are not the same when it comes to those we love, we don’t all want to leave the same legacy. James Bond actor, Daniel Craig, for example, prefers to “get rid of it or give it away before he goes.”¹

While the principles and methods of financial planning are sound, we proudly and purposefully place the client’s perspectives on their life at the heart of everything we do.

Our purpose of ‘Making People’s Lives Better’, ensures that we hold a bigger agenda that goes beyond financial planning, to help them to experience their life in full.

“The value of experience is not in seeing much, but in seeing wisely.” - William Osler

When clients see their money wisely, things change.

Spend a day with one of our financial planners and you won’t ever hear the word process.

What you will see and hear is the shift that happens for our clients when they begin to see the value of their money in direct relation to their life.

We call this ‘The Equilibrium Experience’ of financial planning.

Experience *noun*

- 1.** A practical contact with observation of facts or events.
- 2.** An event or occurrence which leaves an impression on someone.

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The Equilibrium Experience is...

- That moment when a couple who have been prudent and cautious with their money all their lives, realise they can afford to do the things that they have always dreamed of and that it is now or never.
- Sitting by the side of someone who is recently bereaved and being able to help them feel confident and comfortable in seeing that their future is financially secure.
- Watching the face of a new grandparent when they discover that one of the most tax-efficient ways to financially support the newest member of their family will also have a positive impact for generations to come.
- Facilitating a family meeting between parents and children to better understand each other's financial position. We provide an open forum to discuss the difficulties that each may feel about gifting or receiving, and their emotions surrounding this topic. We start by asking our clients one simple question: "If you are uncomfortable gifting small amounts to your children whilst you're still here to provide guidance and support, why would you leave everything to them on your death when you have no influence at all?"

- A conversation with a client whose competitive and workaholic nature has allowed them to be financially successful throughout their life. As they approach retirement, we don't give them a process, we encourage a more courageous conversation that will serve them better. We'll ask what it would take to release them from their commitment to getting rich. We'll talk to them about not being able to stop, ask what life after work looks like for them and find out what they consider to be a comfortable retirement.

- A two-way, shared experience, between the planner and client. We are often inspired by clients who have spent a lifetime building a business which they are planning to sell. The result of a life's work can be gone in a transaction over the course of just one day. Helping the client prepare for that sale will be critically important. Only then are we able to make sure that, as they sail off into the sunset, their lifetime of work continues to deliver value for themselves and their families throughout the rest of their lives.

This is life:- business sales, family, grandchildren, bereavement, dreams.

A series of experiences that we dare to create for ourselves and some that happen to us often when we least expect them.

This is not in a linear order; this is not a process.

That is why the experience of financial planning here at Equilibrium, is to ensure that life can be fully lived and your money best supports that to happen.

Life planning comes first

Financial planning supports the plan you have for your life.

"A dream without a plan is just a wish."

- Katherine Paterson

And life planning takes precedence. We all harbour hopes that we don't even realise unless someone takes the trouble to ask and we are given the time to answer.

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Only when we have taken the time with our clients to explore their dreams, to understand what it is to live the life they want, to look after those they love and to leave a powerful legacy, can we even begin to look at the financial plan.

“Nothing ever becomes real until it is experienced.” - John Keats

The experiences we choose to create with our clients firmly relates their money to their lives. Financial planning is made real as we support them through a life fully lived and prepare them for when life events just happen.

Without apology or exception, we dare to ask about their dreams, to pose the questions that may change their thinking, to have the courage and care to work with all that their life brings. By focusing on the impact of their money means we can best serve them in making their own lives and the lives of those they love, better.

Time to think differently?

If you are thinking differently about the role that financial planning can play in this experience that we call life,

then this article has done as it intended. To our mind, it is only the experience of financial planning - and not the process - that is truly capable of making people's lives better.

(1) news.sky.com/story/james-bond-star-daniel-craig-says-he-will-not-leave-children-substantial-inheritance-as-he-finds-practice-distasteful-12384357.

Find out more

To find out more about our latest events, please visit www.equilibrium.co.uk/events/ or to speak with one of our financial experts, call us on **0808 156 1176**.

