

Positive thinking on tax

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I note [Jolyon Maugham](#) is worried about me this morning. At just after nine this morning he tweeted:

I was able to reassure him a few minutes later when the next was out, and he responded:

This follows a series of exchanges between us over the last couple of days where we have most certainly disagreed - but good humour has been retained. I make the point for good reason: it can be done.

But in the middle of all that debate Jolyn made another point that I found interesting, and surprising, when writing about me. He said:

How followed that up with:

and

And Jolyon's right. Whether I'm right or wrong (and I have an opinion on that) from the beginning of my work on tax justice I have been solution focussed. It's never been enough, as far as I am concerned, or as far as the Tax Justice Network has been concerned, to point out that something is wrong. It has always been necessary to point

out what can be done about it.

Now I am not saying there aren't others who do not propose tax reform. Judith Freedman did with the general anti-avoidance principle, and that was important. And after that I struggle to think of more examples until I come to the right wing and the IEA with flat taxes, curtailing the state and so on, none of which have a hope of achieving any significant political support.

This suggests that Jolyon's conclusion is appropriate. The tax profession expends enormous amounts of energy on negativity. Positive thinking that is within the sphere of political credibility is rare. And that's a shame as far as I'm concerned.