

An appeal for help

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As will be obvious to anyone who watches my videos, this morning's short video, which was recorded yesterday morning, reveals that I was not, and still am not, my usual self.

During the course of yesterday, I had to discuss the fatigue I suffered over the weekend. As a result, I was read the riot act by Jacqueline, my close friends, and my sons, who told me I cannot keep doing this. The unambiguous message is that I need to take better care of myself, which I have not been good at.

As Jacqueline has put it, interoception is not one of my great strengths, and I have persistently treated my body as a tool to carry my brain around. I now need to respect it a bit more. The point I have been making about needing to reduce my work effort by changing moderation policies is not optional, it is absolutely necessary because the continual presence of comments awaiting moderation has been one of the pervasive stresses in my life of late as their volume has risen, from the moment that I wake in the morning to the last thing I do at night, and even then I have not always stayed on top of them.

I also had discussions with Andy Moyle, who handles the website development for me here, yesterday. As a result, we are looking to set up a system where I can invite all people who have posted more than 100 moderated comments, and others if we so choose, to become members of the site. We will be seeking to identify all people who qualify, and you will be invited to join in due course by email with a very easy sign-up.

This will have no cost and will confer no benefits other than the fact that these comments will be automatically posted when made. This will actually improve the level of commentary in most cases, because comments will be more timely and because most comments come from these people.

We would also like to recruit a number of people, with no specific limit, to act as moderators for the site. They would have a number of roles, including approving comments not automatically approved in the process I have just described, and recommending that those who are clearly trolling or abusive be blocked. Finessing that

mechanism may require that I be the person who does the blocking but, contrary to all the rumours spread by the trolls, the number of people blocked here is not high. On average, it is less than one per week, and given that existing spam filters remove many more wholly inappropriate comments, the number of post rejections that will have to be made by moderators will be quite low. If that task is spread among a number of people willing to review comments whenever they come to the site, this should not be too onerous. It may also be that moderators will get the right to admit people to membership when they are obviously making appropriate comments, but that is something yet to be decided.

At this moment, I am seeking confirmation that people would be happy with this arrangement, and I am looking for volunteers to be moderators. I stress that if there were 10 of these, it would be great, because that would spread the load around, but I am looking for people who have had a long relationship with the site to do this, if at all possible.

If you do not wish to make your volunteer offer in public, please email me at richard.murphy [at] taxresearch.org.uk. Thank you, and please do understand that this change will represent quite a wrench for me because moderation has been a part of my life for a long time, but this clearly has to change.