

Fatigue - the follow up

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I am aware that I had to declare myself too fatigued to undertake much work on the blog this weekend, and I am equally aware that I have just published another blog. I think this needs explanation, especially since many of you expressed kind support in response to my initial declaration.

Some, too, seemed to be genuinely concerned. I appear to do this every couple of months or so, and I appreciate that concern, although those who know me well recognise that this is part of a pattern in my life. John Christensen, with whom I worked very closely for over a decade, always commented that I could work flat out for eight weeks and then collapse in a heap, needing recuperation. I have been going flat out for more than eight weeks. The trip I am taking to Edinburgh in two weeks' time will be part of that recuperation, although there will be an afternoon of light work as part of the process.

Why do I do this? I have only recently come to understand the process, and that has required me to accept that I am both autistic and have ADHD, which is attention deficit hyperactivity disorder, although I greatly resent the suggestion that it is a disorder, or that there is any deficit involved.

The autistic characteristic explains my dedication to writing an average of more than three posts a day on this blog for more than 20 years. The ADHD aspect explains my continual enthusiasm for looking at issues from new angles to create what I hope might be new insights into them. The combination has ensured the longevity of this blog.

I did a little research on that longevity using a couple of AI search engines this weekend and discovered that this is a decidedly unusual achievement. Most blogs last only a few months. Daily blogs have an even lower life expectancy. The number that have been sustained over the period I have maintained this one, for with multiple postings per day, is tiny. I am, perhaps, amongst a few dozen people in the world who have ever done such a thing. At the same time, over the last two years, I have also been publishing a daily video, sometimes more than one a day. I am told that this is an exceptional level of output.

To me, it seems normal. It is what I do. It is the way in which I understand the world around me. My ideas are formed at my fingertips. This, by and large, is also true of my YouTube videos, for which outline scripts are prepared in advance of filming. So not writing creates a sense of frustration that makes things more difficult than if I do write.

The actual cause of my stress and fatigue is that very often I am not able to achieve as much as I want, not that I have done too much.

This is true at present. I have not been able to produce a summary of my thinking on Modern Monetary Theory, nor have I had the chance to develop the issues around local authorities and their funding as a core component in the revival of the UK economy, which I wish to spend time on. It is this that causes me stress and burns me out.

It also means that I do not fully understand what people mean when they tell me to relax. For me, writing is relaxation. Writing this blog is not work. Nor, to a very large degree, is making videos like work. They are not the cause of my feeling tired, so I have had to think about what is, and what could give way if I am to achieve the things that I want.

One thing that has to give way is the numerous requests now being sent to me for comment and support on other people's projects. In the last week, I think I have received at least one request to review someone's ideas or project each day. Many of the documents I have been sent are up to 100 pages long and would often require considerable time input to provide the requested response. I know people ask me to do this very politely, and I am flattered that they are seeking my opinion, but the reality is that the more time I spend on this, the less time I have to do my own work, and that only increases my stress. I will therefore decline all such invitations in the future unless they come from someone such as a political party or a major think tank I have already worked with. Please accept my apologies in advance, but I simply cannot provide the time input people would like me to deliver. Trying to do so is wearing me out.

The other thing taking a lot of my time is the comments here on the blog. In practice, this is the only forum where I moderate comments. On YouTube, X, Facebook, LinkedIn, Substack and elsewhere, comments on my posts are not moderated because there is no time to do that. This has not proved to be a problem. On YouTube in particular, where the level of comments can be very high, and indeed much higher than here, the positivity is generally extraordinarily high, and I appreciate that fact. The number of idiots is low, and they are generally called out by others. That space moderates itself as a result.

I am, however, spending up to four hours a day moderating comments here, and, in terms of my overall output, I am wondering whether this is now as useful as it once might have been. Given that I am now working at least 12 hours a day on average during the working week and four or more hours on most days at the weekend, it seems that comment moderation might be the one thing that needs to go if I am to manage

my workload and achieve my own goals.

This would worry me because some spam occasionally gets through the filters, and I would need a mechanism to prevent it, which would involve other moderators. It would also mean that I would not be offering the personal response service I am effectively providing to those who raise questions about technical issues. But, if I am honest, the development of AI over the last year or so does mean that many people could find answers to the questions they ask me by posting the material they are querying into an AI search engine and asking for an explanation of a point of detail about it there. In most cases, they would get the answers they need without difficulty. I am therefore spending a lot of my working life substituting for those who do not wish to use AI to answer questions that they could resolve in that way, and I am no longer sure that this is the best use of my time.

Why have I explained all this? It is because I am seeking your guidance on what I should prioritise. Please feel free to comment, but I have also put the options in questionnaire format below.

What should I prioritise?

- * The blog
- * YouTube
- * Developing new ideas
- * Writing omnibus explanatory materials, for example, on MMT
- * Blog moderation
- * Answering individual queries
- * Events

You can have four votes.

[poll id="346"]