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# WHO WE ARE

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## MY STORY

My first encounter with wealth management took place during the Global Financial Crisis of 2008/09: my Mum was worried because her investment portfolio was down by almost 40% and so she asked me to set up a meeting with her financial adviser to investigate what was going on. Up until that point delegating the management of her nest egg to someone else had worked just fine as it had risen in value over the years without too much of a bump in the road along the way.

Regrettably, having met the investment manager, it turned out he shouldn't really have been called a financial adviser, since seemingly no financial advice and definitely no financial planning had actually been given over the years, I advised my Mum to liquidate since it was clear to me that her portfolio was too high

risk and the fear, i.e. the noise of the market, was overwhelming. Unbeknown to us at the time, of course, we ended up liquidating close to the bottom of the market! I now know that this is referred to as "the big mistake" in our profession.

A professional financial planner will always devote sufficient time and energy to understand fully your emotional tolerance, capacity and need to take investment risk in order to reach your goals and objectives before recommending any particular strategy. It is crucial also that a thorough analysis of current and desired future expenditure is mapped out, and I now see it as my mission to ensure that this predicament doesn't befall others under my watch in the future.

Having started my career at Mitsubishi UFJ Trust in London, after several years I decided to pursue a two-year MBA degree at IESE

in Barcelona, one of the leading European business schools, in order to broaden my knowledge base. I must admit that the prospect of living in Barcelona for two years also greatly appealed to me. Whilst I was there my Mum sold her flat after the sad and sudden death of her husband, my stepfather, and so she was looking for a new adviser to help her invest the proceeds. She wanted my help to assess a few options and the individual that impressed us most was an adviser working with St. James's Place (SJP). Once I learned more about SJP's model and in particular the fact that advisers run their own businesses under the umbrella of this large publicly quoted company, I felt that this entrepreneurial set-up would suit me well and I applied to join having completed my MBA.

It was at SJP that I started to develop a passion for financial planning and investing as I learned more about it and started to witness first-hand the positive impact sound financial advice can have on people's lives and wellbeing. As time progressed, however, it became clear to me, as countless studies show, that active managers do not, on average, add sufficient value over the long-term to justify their fees. You are therefore far more likely to achieve better risk-adjusted investment returns if you follow a systematic, evidence-based, low-cost approach. This realisation led me to look beyond SJP since my investment beliefs were no longer fully in line with theirs.

Like Callum, I got in touch with Dimensional Fund Advisers (DFA) as it was the pioneer of this evidence-based investment approach and works with a number of independent financial advisory and planning businesses in the UK.

They gave me a shortlist of eight firms to approach and having spoken with them all, Bloomsbury was the firm that impressed me the most. What particularly attracted me to Bloomsbury was:

1) It was one of the first planners to work with DFA when the manager launched in the UK in 2004 so was and still is a UK leader in evidence-based investing and therefore putting client interests first.

2) Its commitment to fair fees. Given my previous experience, this is very important to me. Our fees are prominently displayed on the website and are proportionate to the value we deliver.

3) I wanted to join a small team of highly experienced financial planning experts who prioritise looking after existing clients to a very high standard above seeking new clients, which is the primary focus at many other firms.

4) It also emphasizes the education and professional development of the team. Bloomsbury was among the first CISI Accredited Financial Planning Firms, so all Bloomsbury advisers must hold the internationally recognised Certified Financial Planner (CFP™) certification, which is effectively the gold standard of excellence in the financial planning profession.