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Editorial

True success is not measured solely by individual achievements. We all know that there is the proverbial "village" behind all individual achievements. The fathers, mothers, brothers, sisters, aunts and uncles and many, many friends who all played their role in assisting that one individual to achieve something that might have been out of their reach. But it stretches further than those growing years. It is also about working together as graduate professionals. Those achievements we celebrate as teams and businesses. The collective empowerment of professionals working together.

At PPS, we believe we can become part of this "village" supporting our members thanks to our ethos of mutuality – built on shared growth, shared wisdom and shared success. This ethos drives us to continuously seek ways to empower our members' futures. Whether through financial solutions, knowledge sharing or community-driven initiatives, we recognise that collaboration is the key to a thriving professional landscape.

The theme of this edition of *The Professional* – **empowering futures** – is all about this focus. It is all about providing the tools, insights and support needed to navigate an ever-changing world. It means equipping our members with the knowledge to make informed financial decisions, cultivating leadership that embraces both innovation and responsibility and ensuring that mutuality remains at the heart of all we do.

In our spotlight feature, *Empowering our futures with discipline,* on p. 8, PPS Group CEO Izak Smit delves into how intentional, disciplined strategies pave the way for sustainable success. Discipline remains a cornerstone of long-term prosperity in both financial and personal spheres.

From an investment perspective, PPS Investments Chief Investment Officer David Crosoer provides a forward-looking analysis in *2025: Balancing risks, opportunities and evolving strategies* (p. 12), exploring how to navigate risks and seize emerging opportunities – an essential approach to future-proofing wealth in a rapidly changing economic landscape.

Financial well-being is a recurring theme in this issue. In *Money talks, futures listen,* PPS Life Solutions: Chief Executive Wimpie Mouton reminds us that the way we approach financial conversations today shapes our financial security tomorrow. Meanwhile, Head of PPS Wealth Advisory, Johan Gouws, challenges us in his article *What does money mean to you?* on page 26 to consider our personal relationship with money, offering perspectives that extend beyond the numbers.

In a rapidly evolving world, true leadership requires more than just technological proficiency – it demands a balance between innovation and human insight. In *Beyond algorithms: Nurturing human potential in the age of automation* (p. 17), PPS Executive: Human Resources, Masenyane Molefe, explores how professionals can leverage technology while preserving the human element that defines effective leadership. This theme of continuous learning extends to Mzwandile Mtshali, PPS Group Executive: Advice and Distribution's article *Closing the Knowledge gap: Why financial literacy is non-negotiable* (p. 28) underscoring the importance of accessible financial education in empowering professionals to make informed decisions.

With 2025 marking the United Nations' Year of the Cooperative, our mutuality feature: *Shaping tomorrow together* (p. 24) highlights the power of collective action in driving sustainable, inclusive growth – an ethos deeply embedded in PPS's commitment to knowledge-sharing and professional development.

As telemedicine reshapes the healthcare landscape, medical graduates must develop both digital expertise and strong virtual communication skills. In *Navigating the digital frontier in telemedicine* (p. 30), Jiyaad Khan, PPS Health Professions Indemnity: Service Consultant, explores the opportunities, challenges and essential competencies that will define the future of digital healthcare in South Africa.

Werner Bosman, Chief Executive of PPS Short-Term Insurance poses an intriguing question on p. 32 in *Home security: Are we protecting our homes or our minds?* The piece delves into the psychological aspects of security and what it means to feel truly safe.

Maintaining a balanced life is crucial for long-term success and the article *Mental health and professional support: A winning combo* on p. 34, I look at how seeking professional support can be a game-changer in sustaining mental and emotional well-being.

We also have our regular lifestyle (p. 37) and travel (p. 42) features, recipes (p. 40) and book review (p. 45).

As you can see, this edition of *The Professional* features various topics that I trust would interest our members, regardless of where they find themselves on their financial journeys.

Pour a cup of coffee or tea, sit back and enjoy the read.

Elvira Wood is Positioning Manager at PPS. She holds a PhD in Communication Studies from North West University and has previously worked as a financial journalist for some of South Africa's leading daily newspapers.

Elvira

Editor

Elvira Wood

MUTUALS AND COOPERATIVES AROUND THE WORLD

Mutual and cooperative insurance companies hold a significant position in the global insurance sector. According to the latest statistics from the International Cooperative and Mutual Insurance Federation (ICMIF)*, their influence continues to grow and shape the industry.

ICMIF MEMBERS* IN 2023

$228 billion
IN PREMIUM INCOME
(2022: $221 billion)

$99 billion
IN LIFE BUSINESS
(2022: $98 billion)

$129 billion
IN NON-LIFE BUSINESS
(2022: $123 billion)

$1.63 trillion
IN TOTAL ASSETS
(2022: $1.61 trillion)

$1.34 trillion
IN INVESTMENTS
(2022: $1.33 trillion)

219 481
STAFF EMPLOYED
(2022: 214 060)

316 313 388
MEMBERS/ POLICYHOLDERS SERVED
(2022: 321 000 000)

$1.02 billion
ALIGNED TO SUSTAINABLE INVESTMENT FRAMEWORKS

58%
RESPONDENTS INVESTED IN GREEN, SOCIAL OR RESILIENCE BONDS
($22.5 billion)

* PPS is a member of ICMIF.
Source: www.icmif.org

FROM THE CEO'S DESK

Dear reader,

As you read this, the 14th edition of *The Professional,* you will soon also have the opportunity to browse through our financial results for 2024. It was yet **another good year** for PPS and hence for our members. After good investment market returns in 2023, 2024 proved to be another good one, making it the second year in a row that we can declare above-average investment returns. On the operating side, underwriting profitability is now much closer to our long-term actuarial assumptions, a welcome development after the COVID-19 years. The PPS subsidiaries, assisting our members with investment and short-term insurance solutions, are also growing strong and added to the returns earned. In short, we expect that our members will be pleased with our overall results.

As important as the financial results, is the recent announcement that PPS has started a division that offers products to other, non-professional market segments in South Africa. It is called **glu.** For the first time since the big demutualisations of the 90s, millions of South Africans will again be able to have their financial needs, such as insurance cover and investments, taken care of by an organisation where mutuality stands central.

Organisations like ours often start small – whether from penny-premiums collected door to door or farmers pooling resources. In our case, it was a few dentists securing their families' futures during a world war. From these humble beginnings, mutuals have grown. Despite a wave of demutualisations, mutual and cooperative insurers wrote US$1.41 trillion in premiums globally in 2022, holding a 26.3% market share. Together, mutuals share a powerful purpose: creating a safer, more resilient world.

Despite being so strong in other areas of the world, the mutual insurance model is small in Africa. This strikes me as an anomaly: Africa is after all a place where communities often stand together and pool resources. Think of stokvels and the spirit of **ubuntu.**

One of the reasons might be **regulatory.** Over the past few decades, regulators have done little to encourage mutuals to develop. But this is about to change! The United Nations (UN) has declared 2025 as the year of the cooperatives (mutuals), noting that the mutual model is a crucial solution for addressing various global challenges and advancing the implementation of many UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). In its resolution, the UN General Assembly encourages regulatory regimes to "review existing laws and regulations in order to make the national legal and regulatory environment more conductive to the creation and growth of cooperatives by improving existing laws and regulations or enacting new ones".

So, the founding of glu is in tune with these global developments. In years to come, we expect it to become a major financial services brand in the South African landscape.

I want to emphasise that our business operating under the PPS brand will retain its relentless **focus** on graduate professionals. If anything, the launch of glu will allow us to be even more focused. Strong walls exist between the two brands: different corporate identifies, different management teams, different operating platforms, different solutions appropriate for the different segments, even different values.

As we look ahead, PPS remains committed to serving graduate professionals with unwavering focus, while glu marks the beginning of a new chapter – one that aligns with global trends and brings the benefits of mutuality to more South Africans than ever before.

Regards,

Izak

PPS Group Executive

Izak Smit

Empowering our futures with discipline

Izak Smit, PPS Group Chief Executive Officer

Nobody knows whether it really happened, and if it did, where and when. We hear of it in Greek mythology and Socrates wrote about it. The moment is captured in some beautiful Renaissance art. It almost became the image on the official seal of the United States of America in 1776. It is the moment when Hercules came to the crossroads.

There, at a quiet intersection in the hills of Greece, the great hero had to decide, a decision that would determine his future, his destiny.

At the point where the road diverged lay a beautiful goddess. She offered him every temptation. She promised him a life of ease and pleasure. He would never taste want or pain. Follow her, she said, and his every desire would be fulfilled. It would be a life of leisure!

But on the other path stood a sterner goddess in a pure white robe. Her call was a different one. She promised no rewards except those that come from **living a disciplined life of hard work.** It would be a long and hard journey, she said. There would be a sacrifice. There would be suffering. But ... it would be a journey fit for a god. It would make him the person he was meant to be.

It was, of course, **the choice between vice and virtue,** the easy and hard way, the well-trodden path that most follow, or the narrow road less travelled. Hesitating only briefly, Hercules chose the one that made all the difference. He chose virtue. If it is only a legend, does this story matter? To us? Today?

Yes! Very much so. This is the story for all of us. About our dilemmas, our crossroads. Which we face every day. From the moment the alarm wakes us in the mornings. For Hercules, the crossroads was not a singular event. It is a daily challenge, one we face not once, but constantly, repeatedly, every day.

Will we sleep in or go exercise? Will we be strong or weak? Brave or afraid? Wise or stupid? Lazy or active? Selfish or selfless? Will we read that self-development book or watch more TV? Will we cultivate a good or a bad habit? Will we stay the same or grow? The easy way or the right way?

Virtue is something **we also must choose.** Not once, but many times.

As graduate professionals, we know the sacrifices and discipline required to obtain our professional qualifications. Can we apply that discipline to other areas and phases of our lives?

There are many temptations to choose the easy path. In these times that we live in, with all the challenges in our country and worldwide, we might think that it is very tough. But if we look at history over a longer timeframe, we realise that we actually live in times of plenty! Only two centuries ago, life expectancy at birth was only around 30. In South Africa today it is more than double that, around 65 years. The freedom and ability to do the things that we can do today would have been unthinkable to our ancestors. The luxuries and opportunities we can enjoy, that even our domestic helpers and gardeners at our homes have, are things that all-powerful kings were once unable to acquire. We are warm in winter, cool in summer and stuffed full far more than hungry. We can go where we want and do what we want. Crave it? Have it! We believe it is our human right.

> **"Only through discipline can we empower ourselves to achieve great goals – as individuals and as businesses."**

And yet, what do many of us, and sadly so many professionals, show for it? Unhappiness. Depression is the sickness of our time. If we have it so good, why are so many of us so unhappy?

One explanation could be that we make the wrong decisions when we come to those crossroads where we must decide. We mistake liberty for licence.

As Eisenhower once famously said, freedom is only the **opportunity for self-discipline.** We must keep ourselves in check or risk ruin, imbalance, dysfunction or dependency. Whether we want to know it or not, only we, not an employer, not a government, not even a spouse, are responsible for our own destiny.

Of course, wealth is not evenly spread, we come from different backgrounds. And bad things can happen. **Life is not fair.** Some must work harder and have less room for error. But all of us can benefit from self-discipline and self-control. To empower our futures. In this sense, we are all in the same boat. The fortunate and the less privileged must figure out how to manage their wants and emotions, what to abstain from, what good habits to vest and what bad habits to kick.

So, it boils down to self-discipline. The ability and willingness to work hard, say no, set boundaries, practice good habits, train and prepare, ignore temptations and endure painful difficulties at times. It is about temperance. In PPS language, it is about doing the right thing (one of our three core values). To **demand the best of ourselves,** even when no one is looking. It takes courage to live this way. And not only because it is hard. Also because it is different. Remember, it is not the wide, well-trodden path. It is the harder, narrower, lonelier one. The crowd is not there.

We all know that a part of us envies and even celebrates those who choose the easy path and those who hold themselves to lower standards. It seems like more fun. More pleasure. But it is a trap! Under closer inspection, the lazy ultimately have a harder time. Few experience more pain than those who have thrown their health away. Failing to realise your full potential can be a punishment. Greed moves the goalposts, robbing you from enjoying what you have, today. Even if the outside world might celebrate them, perhaps for a while, inside there is often a low self-image and dependence.

Only through discipline **can we empower ourselves** to achieve great goals – as individuals and as businesses. Name someone truly great without self-discipline. It is impossible! More than talent, life is about temperance and discipline. Freedom requires discipline and discipline gives us freedom.

> ***"If we have it so good, why are so many of us so unhappy?"***

It starts with the body, of course. We need to conquer our bodies before they conquer us. If greatness is our aim, if we want to be creative and productive and make the world a better place through our professional endeavours, we need to take care of our bodies. If we run on empty physically, the brain struggles to do its job properly.

It might seem that we say "no" to pleasure and "yes" to punishment. But the pleasure of excess is always fleeting. Self-discipline – to eat healthily, exercise and sleep enough – is not a rejection of pleasure; it is, in fact, the opposite; pleasure will be the **long-term reward.**

Because the body keeps score. The decisions we make daily influence, silently, what we become, how we look and how we feel. By sometimes choosing short-term discomfort, we toughen ourselves up. Someday, most likely, life might have serious discomfort in store for us. Will we be ready? Discipline is not punishment, it is the way to avoid ultimate punishment.

Ah, Hercules at the crossroads: Getting up earlier to exercise! It is tough. Our bodies might initially rebel against it, but over time, we will make two remarkable discoveries. First, we will wake up one morning and realise that we are actually starting to enjoy it. The second discovery is even more remarkable. We realise that it is not about the body after all, the real benefit of leading a healthy physical life is mental. Because temperance in the body affects the mind.

This brings me to self-discipline and the mind, our mental development.

As humans, we are wired to grow. When welcoming new employees to PPS, I often ask what they want from PPS – what will make them stay. Almost always, the answer includes personal growth. "Develop me!" We can always improve no matter who we are or what we have accomplished. Few beliefs are as powerful – or as dangerous – as this: If you think you have room to grow and put in the effort, you will. But if you believe you have peaked, you are right – you will not improve. To err is human. But to err less each day is to move closer to the divine.

Millions of years of evolution – and, many believe, the guidance of a Creator – have shaped our bodies, minds and hearts into a remarkable system. But will we continue to grow physically,

mentally and spiritually? Will we refine these gifts or let them stagnate?

In my 2023 year-end message to our staff, after a few avoidable missteps in serving our members, I reminded them that discipline is in the details. Greatness lies in sweating the small stuff – even when no one notices.

An old proverb warns: The kingdom was lost for want of a nail. Small oversights can lead to great failures. So, what details can we improve? As individuals, professionals and businesses, the little things – getting better daily – add to the big things.

Discipline shapes our destiny. We have a choice. Between self-control and ill-discipline, virtue and vice. We face this choice daily, sometimes many times a day, thousands of times in our lives. We stand at that crossroad like Hercules. Are we making good decisions? Physically, mentally, spiritually?

I wish our professional members much wisdom in making these decisions!

** Some of the ideas in this article were inspired by* Discipline is Destiny *by Ryan Holiday. Interested readers may find this book – and his other works – highly insightful.*

Izak Smit

THE BIG THINK

2025: Balancing risks, opportunities and evolving strategies

By David Crosoer, PPS Investments Chief Investment Officer

As the first quarter of 2025 unfolds, investors face a significantly different landscape than expected at the start of 2024. Predictions of aggressive interest rate cuts, particularly in the US, were replaced with a more cautious approach, with the first rate reduction only occurring in September 2024 and the total cut for the year staying below 1%.

According to the Bank for International Settlements, this shift has allowed economies like South Africa to ease their monetary policies, with more than 75% of central banks adjusting rates in the past six months.

At the same time, the second Trump presidency has shifted focus from interest rates to deregulation and corporate tax cuts, fuelling optimism for US equities. In response, PPS Multi-Managers closed its global equity underweight and cautiously increased exposure to South African equities, following the formation of the Government of National Unity.

The impact of US president Donald Trump's policies remains uncertain. While they may benefit the US economy in the short term, the rollback of climate regulations and potential import tariffs could disrupt global trade. As always, balancing risk and opportunity in this evolving market remains essential.

CLIMATE REGULATION: THE COST OF INACTION

According to the Network for Greening the Financial System (NGFS), the avoidable costs of climate change could amount to 9% of cumulative gross domestic product by 2050, compared to the 2% cumulative cost of mitigating it. Consequently, withdrawing from climate regulations could make catastrophic climate change much more likely and more expensive in the long run.

Similarly, while it is equally hard to gauge the eventual impact of Trump's planned tariffs on the global economy and how they will be implemented, global growth could be 0.8% lower in 2025 and 1.3% lower in 2026, based on modelling by the International Monetary Fund. This could potentially hurt US consumers as well.

However, markets have largely ignored any potential long-term consequences and quickly rated Trump's victory as positive for the US equity market and negative for US debt and non-US equities. While this trade might still have legs, the US equity market is already trading at elevated valuations and unexpected negative news from the US (or positive news elsewhere) might upset the status quo.

In its portfolios, PPS Multi-Managers has not increased its allocation to global equities from a neutral position following the US election. However, the team did rebalance its global small-cap exposure back to target after a period of significant underperformance. Heading into 2025, PPS Multi-Managers will likely maintain this neutral stance, relying on its active international equity managers, particularly US ones, to identify and capitalise on available opportunities.

PPS Multi-Managers have also implemented selective exclusions in its largest global equity portfolio and will target a weighted carbon intensity somewhat less than the benchmark. These changes, of course, are insufficient to prevent climate change but will help better manage the risk and add a new dimension to how certain managers can be mandated going forward (exclusions have not been implemented exclusions before).

Since May 2024, PPS Multi-Managers has maintained its tactical overweight in South African equities relative to its strategic asset allocation. This approach favours potential local economic recovery through equities rather than bonds, where the stance remains neutral. Given the valuation advantage of South African equities over global equities and the strong performance of appointed managers in 2024, this position is expected to continue through much of 2025.

With US equity valuations appearing less attractive over a ten-year period than global bonds, PPS Multi-Managers has been shifting towards an overweight global bond position. If economic conditions

underperform market expectations, this asset class could serve as a key diversifier.

A DIVERSIFIED VIEW

In the PPS Profit-Share Account™, nearly 10% is now allocated to South African hedge funds, with selective additions to private equity, particularly in education-focused investments. These alternative assets offer diverse return sources and provide some protection during equity market downturns.

PPS Multi-Managers is enhancing its manager research with new partnership strategies in 2025, focusing on specialised mandates. Some will feature in post-retirement solutions launching in early 2025, tailored for graduate professionals and longevity risk.

The team is also engaging asset managers, especially in South Africa, on inclusion, transformation and climate risk to align with member preferences, particularly younger cohorts.

PPS Multi-Managers continues to refine its approach to meet member needs in an unpredictable market. Our

skilled active managers capitalise on opportunities and shifts, balancing risk and reward to stay approximately right rather than precisely wrong

Click here to find out more about PPS Investments.

** Kindly note that this does not constitute financial advice the information provided is purely informational. In terms of the Financial Advisory and Intermediary Services Act, an FSP should not provide advice to investors without an appropriate risk analysis and thorough examination of a client's particular financial situation. The information, opinions and communication from the PPS Group or any of its subsidiaries, whether written, oral or implied, are expressed in good faith and not intended as investment advice, nor do they constitute an offer or solicitation in any manner. PPS Ltd is a licensed insurer conducting life insurance business, a licensed controlling company and an authorised FSP.*

David Crosoer

Money talks, futures listen

By Wimpie Mouton, PPS Executive: Life Solutions

In a world where financial decisions are often made with an eye on the present, it is essential to understand that our choices today echo through the future. How we invest, save and manage our wealth impacts our current financial status and shapes the future of the next generation. The phrase "money talks, futures listen" serves as a reminder that money is not just a tool for today – it is an investment in the possibilities of tomorrow.

THE POWER OF VISIONARY FINANCIAL DECISIONS

Financial decisions go beyond numbers; they shape your future, your loved ones' and society's. Each choice, whether saving for retirement, making ethical investments or supporting philanthropy, has an impact. For example, investing in sustainable companies diversifies your portfolio and signals a commitment to building a future that values social and environmental responsibility. This approach creates financial returns while **aligning personal growth** with the larger goal of shaping a sustainable, responsible economy.

PLANNING FOR LONG-TERM FINANCIAL GROWTH

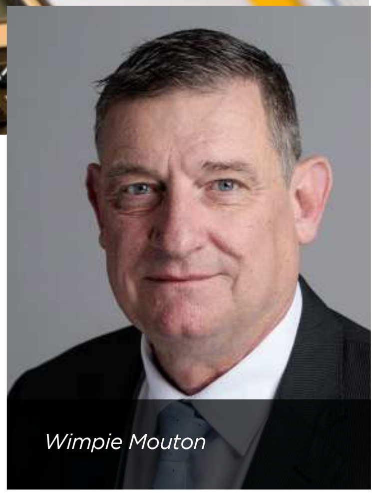
When we think about finances, our focus often centres on immediate needs. However, thoughtful financial planning is a powerful tool for building personal stability and influencing the future. A comprehensive plan with long-term goals – like funding education, supporting sustainable initiatives or ensuring healthcare – benefits both individuals and society.

Long-term planning is not just about growing wealth; it **aligns financial decisions with your values and vision.** For example, saving for education or investing in sustainable home improvements secures your family's future and benefits the community.

A successful financial plan balances present needs with future goals. Regularly assessing your situation and adjusting your strategy helps navigate uncertainties and build a future that reflects your dreams and values. Patience and consistency are key, as financial growth takes time but rewards future generations.

FINANCIAL LITERACY: A TOOL FOR TOMORROW

Financial literacy is essential for securing the future. The more we understand about money management, the better equipped we are to make informed decisions. Understanding concepts like


Wimpie Mouton

compound interest, inflation and asset diversification not only helps us make smarter choices but also enables us to teach these skills to the next generation.

Promoting financial literacy ensures future generations know how to make their money work for them, not just now but long term. This empowerment helps them to build wealth, pursue their dreams and contribute positively to society (read more about this on p. 26).

> ***"The more we understand about managing money, the better equipped we are to make decisions that positively impact the future."***

THE ROLE OF FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS

PPS Life Solutions stands out by embodying the principle of "money talks, futures listen" in meeting the needs of graduate professionals. With more than 80 years of expertise, PPS understands that today's financial choices shape tomorrow's outcomes. This is evident in innovative offerings like the PPS Sickness and Permanent Incapacity benefit, tailored to the unique challenges of professional life.

The PPS Sickness and Permanent Incapacity benefit is distinctive because of its comprehensive nature. Unlike traditional benefits that focus solely on major illnesses or long-term disabilities, this solution also **provides support for everyday setbacks** that can affect earning potential. For example, if a graduate professional running their own practice is booked off work by a doctor for seven days or longer due to something as common as a cold or flu, this benefit steps in. It offers financial support during periods of temporary incapacity, ensuring that income disruptions are minimised.

This is just one example of the innovative benefits offered by PPS Life Solutions. Beyond this, PPS provides a range of tailored solutions that reflect its understanding of the unique challenges faced by graduate professionals.

PPS's commitment extends far beyond providing financial protection during graduate professionals' careers. At the heart of its operations lies the ethos of mutuality – a **commitment to acknowledging** its policyholders as members of a unique community of graduate professionals. This mutuality nurtures a sense of shared purpose, where members collectively work to safeguard one another's financial well-being.

A hallmark of this ethos is PPS's Profit-Share model, allocating returns to members' notional PPS Profit-Share Accounts™*. Members with qualifying life-risk benefits, such as the PPS Sickness and Permanent Incapacity benefit, share in these annual returns. Over time, allocations accumulate into a substantial amount, accessible upon retirement.

This approach reflects PPS's belief that "money talks, futures listen", reinforcing its dedication to long-term financial security. By sharing success and reinvesting in members' futures, PPS builds a foundation for lasting prosperity. This community-driven model sets PPS Life Solutions apart.

Disclaimer: Kindly note that this does not constitute financial advice the information provided is purely informational. The information, opinions and communication from the PPS Group or any of its subsidiaries, whether written, oral or implied, are expressed in good faith and not intended as financial or investment advice, nor do they constitute an offer or solicitation in any manner.

** Members holding qualifying life-risk products share in the profit and the loss of PPS through the notional PPS Profit-Share Account™ and past performance is not necessarily indicative of future performance.*

Beyond algorithms: Nurturing human potential in the age of automation

By Masenyane Molefe, PPS Executive: Human Resources

New technologies like artificial intelligence (AI) are transforming the world of work globally. This raises the question of how much companies should invest in these technologies and the impact on their workforce. While algorithms promise efficiency, the future of work depends on humanity's ability to adapt, innovate, create and thrive alongside them.

These new technologies are sparking both excitement and apprehension. The fear that AI will render certain jobs obsolete is undeniable. While it was initially expected to affect sectors like manufacturing, customer service, communication and finance the most, it is now widely acknowledged that AI will have an impact across all industries and professions.

History has shown that, while technological revolutions disrupt the status quo, they also open doors to innovation and growth. It is all about perspective and training. Do employers see what new opportunities are created and do they and their employees then embrace these and adapt to change.

WHEN HORSES AND CANDLEMAKERS LOST THEIR JOBS

In today's world, living without electricity and cars is unimaginable. These two industries not only offer users convenience but also create millions of jobs.

The International Energy Agency reports that in 2023, the energy sector employed around 67 million workers worldwide while the International Organisation of Motor Vehicle Manufacturers reports that more than 50 million people were employed in vehicle manufacturing or related jobs generated by this sector.

However, when these technologies were introduced during the Industrial Revolution, thousands of workers lost their jobs.

When electricity was introduced in the early 1800s, many industries were at a crossroads. Just think of weavers, candle makers and streetlamp lighters (yes, there were people employed to light streetlamps every evening).

Similarly, when Carl Benz introduced his first "vehicle powered by a gas engine" in January 1886, another industry saw a major turnaround. One that would create millions of jobs but leave thousands of humans – and horses – out of jobs.

Brad Smith, vice chair and president of Microsoft Corporation, wrote in a LinkedIn post in 2017 that in 1890, there were around 13 800 companies in the US alone that were in the business of building carriages pulled by horses.

However, this scenario changed drastically thanks to Henry Ford and the introduction of his Model T car in 1908. According to Smit, by 1920 only around 90 companies making horse carriages were left in the US, while Ford alone already sold millions of vehicles annually in that country.

JOBS COME AND GO

It was not only during the Industrial Revolution at the turn of the previous century that jobs came and went. This is a constant phenomenon.

Many might recall the milk trucks delivering milk to homes during the 1970s and 1980s. Those who remember that will probably remember seeing them while on their bicycles delivering newspapers to those same houses early in the morning.

The milk delivery service disappeared but interestingly enough – many people again get their milk delivered at home... thanks to online shopping and home delivery.

Not only are newspapers not delivered at home anymore, but they are also not sold on street corners. Media24 recently halted the physical publication of stalwart newspapers such as *City Press, Beeld* and *Rapport* in December 2024. But readers still get their news delivered wherever they are – even if they are not at home – thanks to technology and the media house's online platforms.

A NEW CHALLENGE

AI's ability to automate repetitive tasks puts millions of jobs at risk but it also creates opportunities, as machines still rely on human input to operate optimally. According to the World Economic Forum's *Future of Jobs Report 2024,* critical and analytical thinking will be among the most in-demand skills, a trend supported by Statista, which found that more than 70% of surveyed companies prioritise these abilities.

IBM Chairman Arvind Krishna echoed this at the 2024 World Economic Forum, stating that as generative AI takes over lower-level cognitive tasks, critical thinking becomes indispensable across all fields. His solution? Continuous learning – beyond school – to adapt and thrive in an AI-driven world.

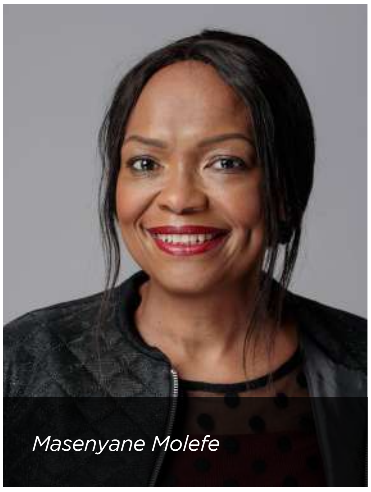
INVESTING IN PEOPLE FOR A FUTURE-PROOF WORKFORCE

As we embrace the automation era, investing in AI and similar technologies is crucial but not at the expense of investing in people. At PPS, we recognise the transformative power of education in preparing individuals to thrive in an AI-driven world.

As South Africa's only financial services provider exclusively for graduate professionals, PPS is uniquely positioned to lead this digital transformation. Through our PPS Academy, we offer specialised training in digital skills, equipping employees, advisers and members to excel in their current and future jobs.

Our vision goes further – empowering graduate professionals to share their expertise with the next generation, ensuring they develop the critical and creative thinking needed to adapt and innovate. Together, we can prevent tomorrow's professionals from becoming obsolete, like carriage builders and even horses during the automotive revolution.

PPS remains committed to lifelong learning, creating a future where human ingenuity and technology work hand in hand. Success, after all, is better, shared.



Masenyane Molefe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Driving change for a sustainable tomorrow

By David Crosoer, PPS Investments: Chief Investment Officer

Sustainability has become an essential pillar of corporate responsibility, with companies around the world recognising the critical role they play in shaping a more sustainable future. As stewards of the resources and communities they impact, corporations are increasingly expected to integrate sustainability into their strategies, not as a mere checkbox but as a core driving force behind their operations. At PPS, we understand that sustainability is not a solo pursuit; it is a joint effort, a prime example of **mutuality in action.** The responsibility to create long-lasting positive change is shared – between businesses, employees, members and the communities we serve.

In 2024, the PPS Group approved the commitment to spend up to 1.5% of Group investment profit to support broader mutuality initiatives including an explicit focus on education initiatives which grow the professional membership base and build existing members' resilience. From a **sustainability perspective,** we are broadening our student support programmes at both tertiary and secondary levels. The PPS Foundation provides more than 50 bursaries annually to students pursuing postgraduate degrees in the science, technology, engineering and mathematics fields. At the secondary level, we support several initiatives, including those benefiting the children of our own staff, all aimed at growing the professional membership base.

In 2024, PPS Investments increased its corporate social investment (CSI) spend, supporting various educational initiatives at local schools, hosting staff functions at these schools and welcoming scholars to our offices. We also included education and gender CSI spend, along with other gender metrics, in our annual Sustainability Survey. The asset managers we have appointed across our solutions and fund range are now explicitly being tracked in terms of their CSI spend and other metrics. We are holding ourselves accountable for these efforts. Staff across the Group continue to contribute their time outside of working hours, hosting events at PPS for the Cultivating Tomorrow's Professionals initiative, where they teach mathematics and science to school students on weekends.

Several of our staff, including members from the investment team, raised money for Calling Cape Town by participating in a gruelling triathlon during the Cape Town Cycle Tour weekend, which took place on 9 March 2024. The triathlon featured a 1.9 km swim, 90 km cycle and 21.1 km run in support of the initiative. Calling Cape Town focuses on providing quality education for low-income students, helping to ensure better access to educational opportunities and

resources. The funds raised will go towards empowering learners in underprivileged communities.

Last year, PPS made **a significant investment** in a private equity fund dedicated to **building schools in South Africa.** We are actively collaborating with the asset manager to explore ways to scale the impact of this initiative, further building on their existing efforts. Over the lifetime of the investment, we expect to positively impact more than 30 000 students. Encouragingly, the PPS Group has the capacity to make regular allocations to private equity managers in South Africa, driving meaningful impact while generating superior returns for the PPS Profit-Share Account™ portfolio.

The PPS Group has also committed to at least maintaining its level 3 B-BBEE score and subsidiaries like PPS Investments (currently at level 4 B-BBEE) plan to reach at least level 2 in the next three years. In addition, we track all our appointed South African asset managers on their transformation plans and our asset manager Sustainability Survey looks in detail at race and gender representation across key decision-makers in the asset manager. The PPS Group has also agreed to use 2023 to benchmark its carbon scope emissions. While we have not yet set carbon reduction targets, this is a necessary first step on this journey. It **places us in a solid position** to respond to any targets or carbon budgets set at a sectoral level following the signing of the Climate Act into law last year. An important objective for 2025 is to embed our scope emissions tracking into the monthly routines of business, rather than aggregating them at the end of the reporting period, as well as improve the quality of the data we are capturing.

In our investment portfolios, which contribute significantly to scope 3 emissions, we track emissions on a solution level. In our global equity partnership, which makes up nearly 20% of our investments, we have set a target to reduce emissions by 30% compared to the market benchmark. We are also engaging with local asset managers on the feasibility of bringing a more sustainable local solution to the market for our members.

This is an exciting time to be part of an organisation where mutuality is at the core, empowering graduate professionals and playing a key role in shaping the future of our country. We are proud of the positive impact we are making and look forward to raising greater awareness of our efforts. The success of PPS depends on its ability to support the current generation of graduate professionals and grow the next. Our sustainability efforts are deliberately aimed at making this a reality.

Click here to learn more about PPS Investments.

** PPS Investments is an authorised FSP.*

David Crosoer

In conversation with...

Dr Tevin Naidu

Dr Tevin Naidu, MBChB, PGDip(GP), MPhil(PEMH), is a medical doctor with a passion for medicine, media and the mind-body connection. He is the creator and host of the *Mind-Body Solution* podcast, where he explores topics like consciousness and meaning through conversations with experts. With a background in TV hosting and a deep commitment to science, philosophy and the arts, Dr Naidu's journey has been shaped by curiosity, resilience and a belief in the power of meaningful connection.

TELL US ABOUT YOUR EARLY CHILDHOOD.

I was born in Vereeniging, Gauteng, but my roots truly grew in Sydenham, KwaZulu-Natal. It was a vibrant, close-knit community that shaped me, exposing me to diverse cultures and perspectives. At Sydenham Primary and later Burnwood Secondary, my curiosity about people and the world deepened. I loved exploring big questions about life, purpose and happiness – whether in class or casual chats. The challenges of growing up in Sydenham taught me resilience and empathy, values that continue to guide me today.

WHAT INSPIRED YOU TO PURSUE MEDICINE AND WHAT HAVE BEEN THE HIGHLIGHTS OF YOUR CAREER?

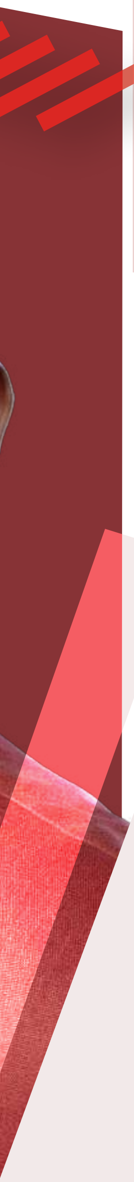
My fascination with medicine began with a deep curiosity about the human condition. Growing up, I was drawn to the idea of using science to improve lives, but I must admit the television series *House, M.D.* played a big role in sparking my passion. What matters most to me are the moments of genuine impact – whether easing pain, offering support or helping patients navigate their health. Those connections are the heart of my work and why I chose this path.

TELL US ABOUT YOUR PODCAST AND ONLINE PRESENCE – HOW YOU STARTED, KEY LESSONS AND ITS IMPACT?

Hosting Mind-Body Solution has been transformative. The podcast explores consciousness, meaning and the mind-body connection through conversations with world-renowned experts. It stemmed from my desire to make complex topics more accessible.

With my TV hosting background, podcasting felt natural but came with challenges. I learned that authenticity is more important than perfection and consistency, vulnerability and active listening vin

Naidu



build trust. Staying adaptable is essential in the evolving online world. The podcast's global reach and sense of community have pushed me to keep learning. For me, it is about sparking curiosity and contributing to meaningful conversations about the human experience.

WHAT HAVE BEEN THE BIGGEST OBSTACLES IN YOUR LIFE AND HOW DID YOU OVERCOME THEM?

Life's challenges have shaped me. Balancing the expectations of a traditional Indian community with my passions for medicine, philosophy and the arts was tough but I learned to embrace them as complementary parts of my identity.

Medicine tested me but support and small acts of self-care, like meditation and playing tabla, helped. Public life brought struggles, especially criticism, but I learned to focus on constructive feedback and stay true to my values.

Resilience is about learning from setbacks and moving forward with purpose. Life's challenges shape who we are meant to be.

WHAT HAVE BEEN THE BIGGEST OPPORTUNITIES IN YOUR LIFE AND WHAT DID THEY ALLOW YOU TO DO?

Opportunities have been key to my journey. Becoming a doctor allowed me to connect with people and make a real difference while studying philosophy and mental health deepened my perspective.

Hosting shows like *Eastern Mosaic* and *Mela* opened doors to reach and inspire audiences across South Africa, celebrating culture and connection. Competing on *Survivor South Africa* taught me resilience, strategy and teamwork.

Starting my podcast, has been a highlight. These experiences have fuelled my passion for education and meaningful dialogue and I am always open to the possibilities ahead.

WHAT IS YOUR LIFE PHILOSOPHY?

My life philosophy is rooted in curiosity, balance, and connection. My tattoo, "Nullius in Verba" ("take nobody's word for it"), reflects my belief in asking questions and listening deeply.

I embrace life's complexity and find meaning in the messiness. Balance is essential – knowing when to focus and when to step back. I strive to live intentionally, making choices aligned with my values.

WHAT IS THE BEST ADVICE YOU WERE EVER GIVEN AND WHO GAVE IT?

One piece of advice from my mother has stayed with me: "Don't be afraid to be different. Be afraid of being the same as everyone else".

As a teenager, torn between medicine and the arts, I felt pressured to choose one path. My mom encouraged me to embrace both, showing me that life does not have to be linear. Medicine, media and my podcast all enrich each other.

The real danger is not standing out – it is blending in. True growth happens when you challenge the status quo and stay authentic. This lesson guides me every day, reminding me that the road less travelled often leads to the most meaningful experiences.

Shaping tomorrow together
Celebrating 2025:

The UN’s Year of the Cooperative

By Elvira Wood, PPS Positioning Manager

The concept of cooperation and mutual support has existed for centuries and its power to transform communities and industries is undeniable.

In South Africa, for example, one of the most popular cooperative models is the stokvel. A community-based savings and investment practice, stokvels are often led by women who gather resources into a shared pool. Each member contributes a set amount regularly and the collective funds are then used to benefit all members – whether by providing financial support for emergencies, funding business ventures or contributing to community projects. The strength of the stokvel lies in the principles of Ubuntu – “I am because we are” – highlighting the interconnectedness of individuals within a community.

Similarly, in South Africa’s agricultural heartland, farmers rely on cooperatives, often called “the Co-op”. These cooperatives were formed in the early 20th century to address challenges such as accessing markets, securing supplies and negotiating better prices. Farmers could benefit from bulk discounts on vital supplies like fertilisers, seeds and equipment by pooling their resources and gaining greater bargaining power. Over time, these cooperatives have evolved into crucial institutions for agricultural communities, ensuring access to resources, supporting productivity and fostering economic stability. Today, these cooperatives continue to empower farmers and support sustainable agricultural businesses, making them integral to the sector’s resilience.

The power of cooperation, however, is not confined to informal sectors or specific industries. The principles of mutual aid and shared resources have found relevance across a wide range of fields, including the financial services sector. Mutual insurance companies, for example, embody the spirit of cooperation. Much like stokvels and agricultural cooperatives, mutual insurers pool resources to provide financial protection and share risk among their members. They are built on the premise that members are both policyholders and stakeholders, contributing to a common fund and benefiting from the group’s collective strength. This cooperative model ensures that the focus remains on member interests rather than shareholder profit, creating a more community-driven approach to insurance.

A GLOBAL LEGACY

Pooling resources for mutual benefit is a global practice. Cooperatives and mutuals drive resilience and economic growth worldwide. The Cebu CFI Community Cooperative in the Philippines provides financial services and supports local businesses. In Europe, FrieslandCampina showcases how farmers collaborate to build global food brands, while Spain’s Mondragón Corporation demonstrates the power of worker-owned enterprises. These models embody a shared commitment to community development and the relevance of mutual and coperative principles.

Globally, mutuals and cooperatives contribute trillions of dollars to the economy. For example, the International

Cooperative and Mutual Insurance Federation (ICMIF) represents mutual insurers that collectively manage more than $10 trillion in assets, underscoring their financial significance and societal impact. ICMIF's mission is to promote, support and unite mutual and cooperative insurers globally, driving innovation and sustainability in the sector.

> "Around the world, cooperatives and mutuals have been pivotal in addressing collective needs and nurturing resilience."

It has achieved remarkable milestones, including providing technical assistance to emerging markets, facilitating knowledge exchange among members and advocating for mutual principles on international platforms. Looking ahead, ICMIF aims to enhance financial inclusion, mitigate climate risks and drive progress toward the United Nations (UN) Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), further solidifying its role as a catalyst for mutual success worldwide.

2025: THE UN'S YEAR OF COOPERATIVES

Recognising the power of cooperatives and mutuals, the UN has declared 2025 the Year of Cooperatives. This global initiative aims to spotlight the role of cooperatives in achieving SDGs, particularly those related to poverty alleviation, gender equality and decent work.

Interestingly, the UN itself operates in many ways like a global cooperative. By pooling financial and human resources from member states, it undertakes initiatives that range from environmental conservation and humanitarian aid to education and public health, embodying the principles of collective action and shared responsibility.

The UN envisions a world where cooperative models empower communities, foster economic equity and drive sustainable growth. By emphasising the importance of democratic governance, transparency and shared prosperity, the Year of Cooperatives seeks to inspire governments, businesses and individuals to embrace cooperative principles. This focus is especially relevant in a world grappling with economic disparities, climate change and the need for inclusive financial systems.

THE POTENTIAL IMPACT OF A COOPERATIVE FUTURE

The emphasis on cooperatives in 2025 could usher in a global renaissance of mutuality. Greater awareness and adoption of cooperative models could enhance financial inclusion for underserved populations, promote sustainable business practices and strengthen community resilience. The UN's cooperative approach parallels this vision, pooling global resources to address pressing issues such as poverty and inequality. This is particularly relevant for South Africa, a country grappling with stark economic disparities. Here, cooperative models like stokvels have proven instrumental in encouraging financial stability and community support among marginalised groups. Scaling such models into formalised institutions could bridge the significant gap between informal savings mechanisms and the broader economy, offering a pathway to greater equity and inclusion.

REGULATORY CHALLENGES

Developing effective regulatory frameworks remains a critical challenge for cooperatives and mutuals. In South Africa, cooperatives are governed by the Cooperative Act No. 14 of 2005, designed to promote their development as economic and social empowerment vehicles. However, no specific regulatory provisions are tailored to mutuals.

Today, only a handful of companies operate as in South Africa. Among them, PPS stands out as the largest and most comprehensive. While other mutuals may serve niche markets, PPS uniquely offers a holistic financial services solution.

PPS embraces mutuality as more than shared finances. It's about building a supportive community. By providing tools and knowledge, PPS helps members grow wealth, secure their futures and equip their children for success. This collective support creates shared prosperity, because success is better, shared.

What does money mean to you?

By Johan Gouws, Head of PPS Wealth Advisory

Our money behaviours are shaped by the meaning we attach to money, which varies based on our early life experiences. Understanding what money means to you can help you become more aware of your financial behaviour. In his book *You and Your Money*, Alvin Hall explains that the meaning we assign to money can have both positive and negative aspects. Our personality, relationships and worldview influence these meanings and align with the famous American psychologist Abraham Maslow's hierarchy of needs. Here are six common meanings people place on money, which significantly impact how they manage it.

SECURITY

Maslow's hierarchy places the need for safety and security right after basic needs like food and water. When it comes to money, this need can either cause stress or offer peace of mind. Constant worry about money can drain your energy, cloud your judgement and lead to poor decisions. However, if you find comfort in having your needs met – even if not your wants – it can free up mental space, giving you clarity and energy to make better decisions for your financial future.

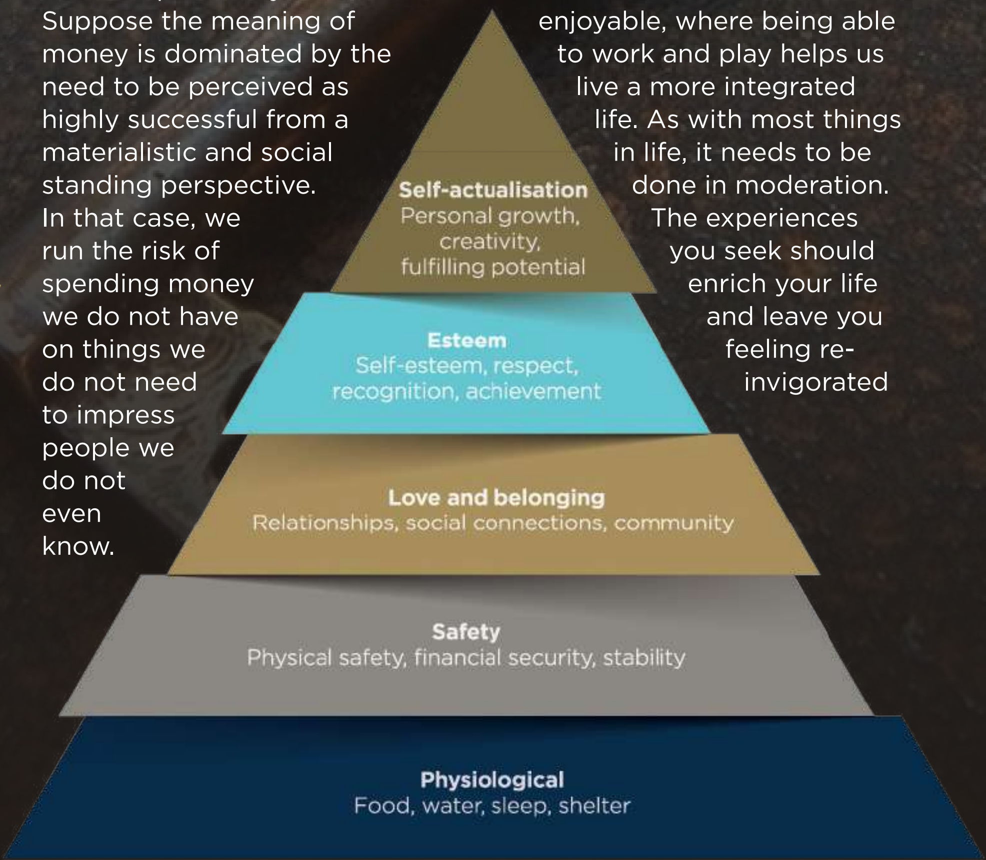
STATUS

As a meaning of money, status ranks higher up the value chain and is positioned just below the self-actualisation level of human needs. It speaks to our ego's demands for recognition and acceptance by others. Suppose the meaning of money is dominated by the need to be perceived as highly successful from a materialistic and social standing perspective. In that case, we run the risk of spending money we do not have on things we do not need to impress people we do not even know.

As an alternative, you could see the responsible management of your financial affairs as an example to others that achieving your financial goals is within reach of anyone who truly puts their mind and heart into it.

ACCESS TO OPPORTUNITIES

Life is filled with many beautiful experiences that make our time on earth richer and more enjoyable, where being able to work and play helps us live a more integrated life. As with most things in life, it needs to be done in moderation. The experiences you seek should enrich your life and leave you feeling re-invigorated



and motivated. If not, the experiences you seek can become a mindless form of drug that you chase from one adrenalin high to the next. Trying to fill a bottomless emotional void with experiences ultimately leaves you emotionally and financially empty.

THE KEY TO LIFE

As we move further up Maslow's hierarchy of needs, we move into the area of self-development to improve our skill set, career prospects and financial future. This could come in the form of finding a new job, furthering our studies or entering into a business venture. The darker side of money as the key to life is revealed when we start using money to manipulate others and "buy" our way to the top. While this strategy may work in the short term, the eventual lack of substance and artificial relationships based on money favours usually get exposed, resulting in the permanent loss of trust, career opportunities and earnings potential.

SOURCE OF SELF-ACTUALISATION

We have now reached the pinnacle of the hierarchy of needs. The place where it is about seeking to become your best self and to live an integrated life that is true to your purpose. It is a place where you desire to express your gifts and strengths, do meaningful work, grow your area of influence and pay it forward by contributing to society. This contrasts with living a life focused on promoting and meeting your limited and self-centred interests, desires and ego needs. Egos are fragile and create a false sense of self-worth and security. When the bubble bursts and it all comes crashing down, you will be left with a landscape of personal destruction from which it is usually tough to rise again.

MEANINGLESS

While it does not appear on Maslow's hierarchy of needs, money may have one other meaning for you. It is a contradiction as it speaks to money having no specific meaning to you. If you have achieved a place of contentment around money, regardless of how much you have, then money means no more to you than it should and cannot control your behaviour.

Having an approach to money that sees it as something that comes and goes, and where you spend it when it is there but where you do not miss it if it is not there could be less than ideal. Money can be a powerful source of power for the good if dealt with intentionally and for the benefit of society through the creation of jobs, security, welfare and stability.

When engaging with our graduate professional members around financial planning, our PPS Wealth Managers seek to understand the main motivation behind each member's financial priorities and needs. This ensures that the member's expectations are aligned with what is required to meet the long-term financial planning objectives. Having members that are in touch with their own financial preferences are more resilient during challenging times on their financial journey and results in better advice outcomes.

Johan Gouws

Closing the knowledge gap:

Why financial literacy is non-negotiable

By Mzwandile Mtshali, PPS Group Executive: Advice and Distribution

Let us be honest: managing money is not always easy. Whether making ends meet, saving for a dream vacation or planning for the future, finances can often feel like one big puzzle. The stakes for graduate professionals – no matter where they work or live – are even higher. With inflation, high living costs and a constantly shifting global market, having a degree or career expertise will not automatically make one's financial journey smoother. To really succeed, one needs more than just "book smarts". One needs the right financial know-how and, most importantly, the support of someone who can help.

FINANCIAL LITERACY AS A LIFELONG SKILL

Financial literacy forms the bedrock of sound financial decision-making. Globally recognised as critical to economic empowerment, it encompasses essential skills such as budgeting, investing, debt management, tax strategies and retirement planning. Yet, many new and experienced graduate professionals lack these skills.

Despite their advanced education and problem-solving abilities, graduate professionals could find that financial literacy is **a distinct and specialised skill set** that requires dedicated effort to master.

THE ROOTS OF FINANCIAL LITERACY GAPS

There are many reasons why graduate professionals might not be as financially literate as they should be. Financial management is rarely a core part of formal education, even at the postgraduate level. Doctors, engineers, lawyers and other professionals spend years mastering their fields but are seldom taught the fundamentals of budgeting, investing or tax planning.

Without a deliberate effort to acquire this knowledge, financial literacy can remain a blind spot.

Additionally, regardless of their qualifications, individuals inevitably face financial challenges as they **transition through various life stages.** Newly graduated professionals, for example, often confront significant financial transitions such as managing student loans, navigating their first salaries or purchasing homes. On the other hand, experienced graduate professionals may deal with increasingly complex financial issues as their careers advance, including managing investments, planning for children's education or preparing for retirement. These advanced financial needs often demand expertise that may not be readily available even to seasoned individuals.

WHY IT IS "OKAY" TO ADMIT A LACK OF FINANCIAL LITERACY

Acknowledging a lack of financial literacy is not a weakness; it is a step toward empowerment. Financial management is a nuanced and ever-evolving field. The skills needed to manage a modest income in one's 20s vastly differ from the expertise required to oversee a diverse portfolio or plan for **intergenerational wealth transfer** in one's 40s or 50s.

Just as graduate professionals turn to legal experts for contracts, medical specialists for health concerns or business consultants for operational challenges, seeking financial advice is a practical and necessary decision. The most successful individuals understand that they cannot excel in every domain and instead surround themselves with trusted advisers who bring expertise to the table.

THE FIVE PILLARS OF FINANCIAL LITERACY

Graduate professionals can strengthen their financial foundation by focusing on these internationally recognised pillars:

Budgeting and saving: Dave Ramsey, a leading personal finance expert, emphasises that **budgeting** is the first step to financial stability. Setting clear allocations for essentials, savings and discretionary spending creates a roadmap to success.

Investing: Warren Buffett advocates for **long-term investment strategies,** demonstrating how patience and consistency lead to significant returns.

Tax planning: Suze Orman highlights the importance of **tax efficiency.** Maximising deductions, leveraging tax-free investment accounts and planning for deferred taxes can have a substantial impact on net wealth.

By Mzwandile Mtshali

> **“Without a deliberate effort to acquire this knowledge, financial literacy can remain a blind spot.”**

Emergency funds: Richard Maponya, a South African entrepreneurial icon, understood the value of **planning for risks.** Emergency funds provide a safety net for life's uncertainties, from unexpected medical bills to economic downturns.

Retirement planning: John Bogle, founder of Vanguard, championed **early retirement planning.** Leveraging compound interest through consistent contributions ensures a secure financial future.

THE RIPPLE EFFECT OF FINANCIAL GUIDANCE

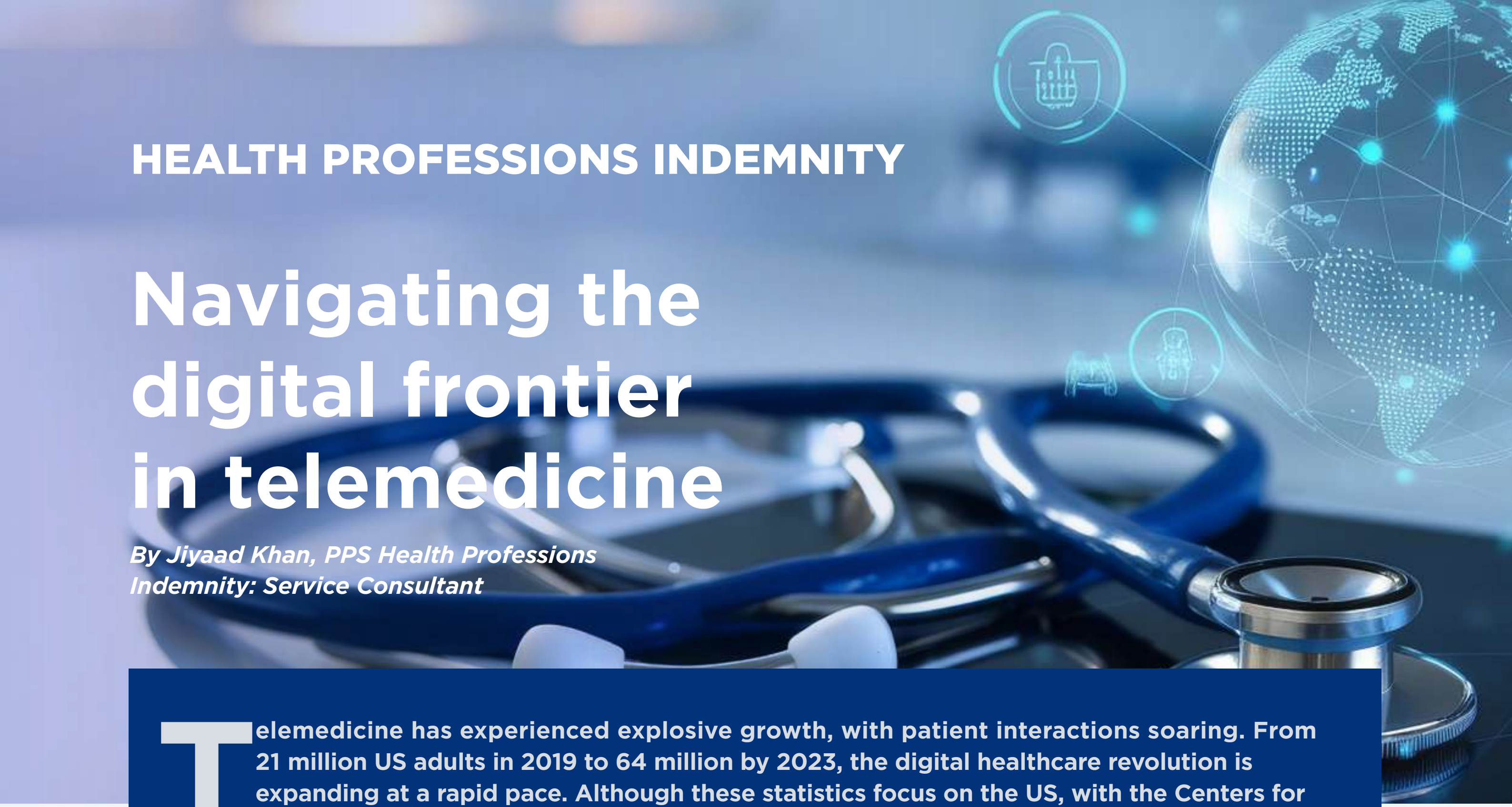
Financial literacy and sound advice benefit individuals, their families and communities. In South Africa, where intergenerational wealth disparities persist, financial advisers are pivotal in **bridging these gaps.** Advisers might, for instance, help a young professional establish a family Trust, ensuring assets are preserved and grow over time.

THE ROLE OF WELL-INFORMED ADVISERS

For advisers, continuous learning and ethical practices are non-negotiable. In South Africa, advisers must navigate unique challenges, from volatile markets to systemic inequality. Yet, these challenges offer opportunities to drive transformative change.

At PPS, we understand that graduate professionals have **unique financial needs and aspirations.** Our team of dedicated financial advisers is committed to providing personalised guidance tailored to each individual's circumstances. By leveraging our deep expertise and ethical practices, we help graduate professionals navigate the complexities of budgeting, investing, tax and retirement planning.

Ultimately, PPS aims to empower graduate professionals to achieve their financial goals and contribute positively to their communities. With our support, graduate professionals can confidently embark on their financial journeys, knowing they have a trusted partner dedicated to their success.



Navigating the digital frontier in telemedicine

By Jiyaad Khan, PPS Health Professions Indemnity: Service Consultant

Telemedicine has experienced explosive growth, with patient interactions soaring. From 21 million US adults in 2019 to 64 million by 2023, the digital healthcare revolution is expanding at a rapid pace. Although these statistics focus on the US, with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention in that country reporting a surge in telemedicine use from 15.4% to 86.5% between 2019 and 2021, this growth is a global reality. The global digital health market is projected to reach US$660 billion by 2025, according to Statista, reflecting the worldwide trend in digital healthcare adoption.

Medical graduates in South Africa stand at the forefront of an exciting healthcare evolution. Telehealth solutions have redefined traditional healthcare delivery methods. Recent studies by hospital groups such as Netcare and Mediclinic show that 92% of patients report better satisfaction with digital technologies. Healthcare experts have also embraced this change, with 88% making digitalisation and patient-centric approaches their investment priority. In South Africa, electronic consultations have been adopted. For example, Netcare has provided telemedicine platforms allowing remote consultations, making healthcare more accessible.

The digital transformation presents unique opportunities and challenges. Technologies like artificial intelligence, robotics and blockchain have revolutionised healthcare delivery. These advancements create promising career paths for South African medical professionals.

THE DIGITAL HEALTH LANDSCAPE IN SOUTH AFRICA

South Africa launched its telemedicine programme in 1991, achieving its first teleradiology breakthrough through the Department of Health (DOH) in 1998. The healthcare system follows a mixed model, with the government-funded public sector providing services to three-quarters of the population. Since then, the digital landscape has evolved significantly and during the COVID-19 pandemic, the DOH approved expanded telemedicine use. Today, the HIV Clinicians Expert Telemedicine Platform is the country's largest provider.

While infrastructure has made strides, challenges remain, including high mobile data costs, limited digital literacy, restricted healthcare budgets, unreliable power supply and connectivity issues. The Health Professions Council of South Africa (HPCSA) has established guidelines for telehealth practice, focusing on patient privacy, professional relationships and quality care standards. At the same time, the Protection of Personal Information Act (POPIA) ensures data security. The National Digital Health Strategy (2019-2024) aims to improve health for all South Africans through digital health, expanding access, particularly in underserved areas.

South African universities now offer digital health courses and postgraduate research opportunities. However, telehealth still faces challenges such as legal and regulatory scrutiny, malpractice risks and the need for comprehensive insurance cover. To mitigate these risks, healthcare providers must adopt best practices, secure data transmission and maintain patient trust through proper documentation and training.

ESSENTIAL DIGITAL SKILLS FOR MEDICAL GRADUATES

Medical graduates entering telemedicine must master digital skills that are essential for success. The Association of American Medical Colleges outlines six key competencies that shape digital healthcare: patient safety and appropriate use of telehealth, access and equity, communication via digital platforms, data collection and assessment, technology proficiency, and ethical practices.

Effective communication is foundational to telemedicine, requiring healthcare professionals to adapt traditional skills to virtual environments. This includes conveying empathy through screens, maintaining eye contact, speaking at a proper pace and giving clear instructions.

Technical expertise goes beyond basic computer literacy; professionals must understand telehealth platforms, troubleshoot common issues and stay updated on emerging technologies. Mastery of electronic health records, patient management systems and clinical decision support tools is crucial.

Patient safety and privacy are top priorities, so professionals must be familiar with data security protocols and privacy regulations to ensure secure consultations and protect confidentiality. Additionally, **digital documentation skills,** such as structured data entry and proper electronic record-keeping, are critical for improving patient care and supporting quality initiatives.

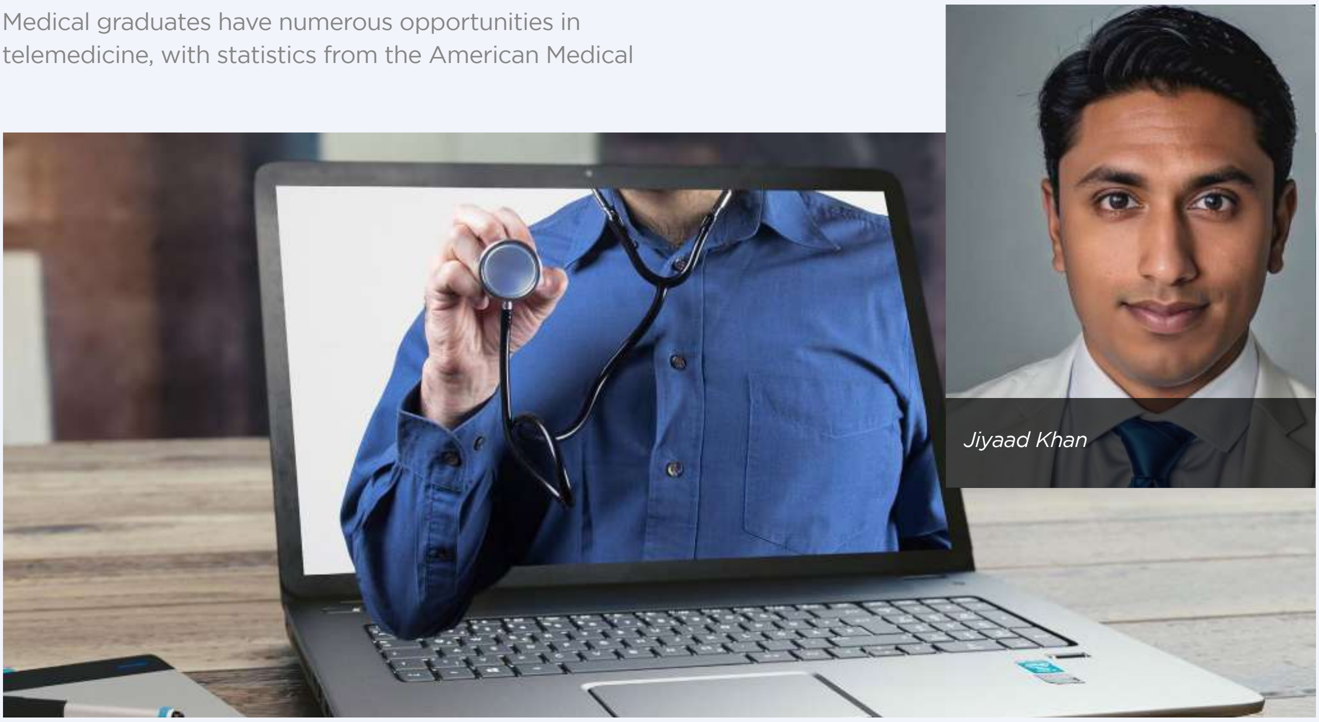
BUILDING A CAREER IN TELEMEDICINE

Medical graduates have numerous opportunities in telemedicine, with statistics from the American Medical Association showing that worldwide radiologists, psychiatrists and cardiologists lead the way in adoption, with usage rates of 39.5%, 27.8% and 24.1%, respectively. Emerging roles such as **telehealth coordinators** and **virtual health assistants** are key to connecting technology with healthcare delivery. Popular specialities in telehealth include mental health services, chronic disease management, remote patient monitoring, paediatric care and dermatology consultations.

Mentorship is essential for career growth, with organisations like the American Telemedicine Association offering structured programmes that connect newcomers with experienced professionals. Expertise in telehealth software, cloud computing and health data analytics can enhance career prospects, while non-technical skills like empathy, ethical awareness and cultural competence are vital for success. This shift is acknowledged by the Accreditation Council for Graduate Medical Education, which includes digital health as one of the key competencies in patient care milestones.

THE FUTURE

Telemedicine is revolutionising healthcare in South Africa, creating valuable opportunities for recent medical graduates. While challenges like legal regulations exist, the rewards are significant. Success requires proficiency in digital tools and strong virtual communication skills, particularly in high-demand areas like mental health and chronic disease management. Aspiring professionals who focus on continuous learning can thrive in this evolving field as the country embraces digital health solutions.



Jiyaad Khan

Home security:

Are we protecting our homes or our minds?

By Werner Bosman, PPS Short-Term Insurance CEO

Security is no longer just about locks and alarms; it is about how we perceive risk and respond to fear. In South Africa, where crime is a daily reality, homeowners make security decisions that are as much about psychological comfort as they are about actual protection. Understanding this balance is key to making smarter, more effective choices.

THE INFLUENCE OF FEAR ON SECURITY DECISIONS

The way we respond to crime is deeply influenced by psychology. Fear, amplified by relentless crime reports and social media discussions, often drives people to invest heavily in security measures. While some precautions are necessary, others may be driven more by emotion than by actual risk.

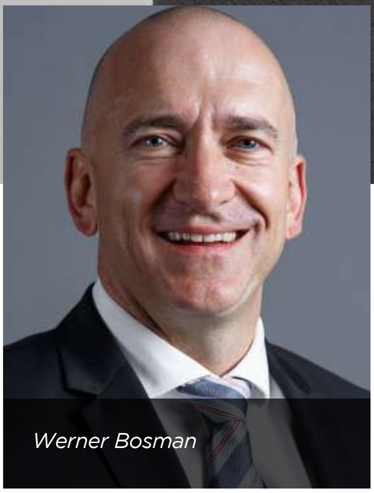
Perception of danger is shaped by what is seen and heard. Constant exposure to crime statistics and high-profile incidents can create a sense of imminent threat, leading homeowners to overestimate their personal risk. This phenomenon is known as the *availability heuristic*, a concept introduced by psychologists Amos Tversky and Daniel Kahneman in their 1973 paper *Availability: A Heuristic for Judging Frequency and Probability.* It describes how people assess the likelihood of events based on how easily examples come to mind, often leading to an exaggerated sense of risk.

The media plays a powerful role in shaping perceptions of safety. While staying informed is important, overexposure to crime reports can lead to security decisions that may not always align with actual risk. Crime statistics further contribute to these heightened fears. According to the South African Police Service, there were 19 279 murders in South Africa in 2024, averaging 70 murders per day. Additionally, between April 2023 and March 2024, Statista reports that 5 578 women and 1 656 children were murdered. These alarming figures intensify a sense of insecurity, prompting homeowners to take precautionary measures that may be more about emotional reassurance than actual risk mitigation.

BEHAVIOURAL ECONOMICS AND SECURITY CHOICES

The field of behavioural economics offers useful insights into why certain security choices are made. One of the strongest influences is social proof. Others feel compelled to follow suit if neighbours install electric fences or CCTV cameras. The fear of being the only vulnerable household can drive people to invest in costly security measures, even when a more measured approach would suffice.

Another factor is loss aversion – the psychological tendency to fear losses more than value gains. Even if statistically unlikely, the idea of a break-in feels like a personal violation,



Werner Bosman

pushing homeowners to take extensive (and sometimes expensive) precautions.

A careful balance between perception and reality is essential when making security and insurance decisions. Encouraging an informed approach ensures that security measures align with actual needs rather than fear-driven impulses.

ACHIEVING SECURITY WITHOUT OVERSPENDING

Enhancing home security does not always require high-tech solutions or costly upgrades. Sometimes, psychological security – feeling safe – can be just as important. Engaging with the community, participating in neighbourhood watch programmes and developing strong relationships with neighbours can create a sense of collective security that no alarm system can replicate.

Moreover, understanding one's true risk profile through data and expert insights can prevent unnecessary spending. Smart security is not about fortifying homes like fortresses – it is about making well-calculated choices based on real risks.

RETHINKING SECURITY: A SMARTER APPROACH

Security should not be about reacting to fear but about making proactive, informed choices. By balancing psychological reassurance with real-world data, homeowners can create a safer environment without unnecessary financial strain.

Empowering homeowners with the right information enables rational, data-driven decisions. Reflecting on security choices and questioning whether actions are necessary or simply easing the mind leads to better outcomes.

In an environment where fear can cloud judgement, the best security investment is knowledge. Understanding the difference between perception and reality allows for a more balanced, effective approach to home security.

One of the most practical ways to ensure peace of mind is to have an informed discussion about one's short-term insurance needs, including cover for home contents. PPS Short-Term Insurance specialises in providing tailored solutions designed specifically for graduate professionals, helping them secure what matters most.

Taking care of your home and possessions is important, but it should not come at the cost of unnecessary worry. The key is to take care but not take strain.

Click here to learn more about PPS Short-Term Insurance

Mental health and professional support:

A winning combo

By Elvira Wood, PPS Positioning Manager

Many people set ambitious resolutions around health, fitness and work-life balance every January. Whether committing to a healthier lifestyle, tackling fitness goals or striving to improve personal and professional life balance, the energy and optimism at the beginning of the year can be powerful. But now, as March rolls around, many resolutions faded weeks ago, overtaken by the demands of daily life, work pressures and other commitments. What is often forgotten in this rush is the importance of mental health – a vital component that often gets sidelined in the pursuit of physical and financial goals.

IS IT TOO LATE TO START NEW GOALS?

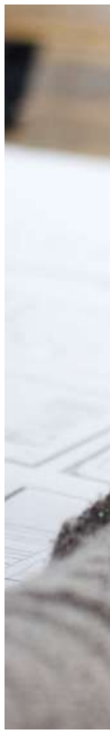
It is never too late to reassess your goals. Whether you are finding it hard to keep up with your New Year's resolutions or feeling that your life has become a whirlwind of obligations, it is important to remember that goals are not fixed. They evolve as life changes. The beginning of the year might not be the only time to focus on your health and well-being – March, or any other time of the year, can be an opportunity to reevaluate and reset.

As someone who has competed at an elite level in sports for many years and now works in the corporate world as a graduate professional, I understand the demands and pressures of balancing career aspirations, family responsibilities and personal life. I have seen firsthand how important it is to continually reassess my own goals, both in my sporting endeavours and in the corporate environment. For one, I no longer compete in "senior" events but as a veteran athlete I still compete internationally. To keep up with the demands of this level, I have had to adjust my training and expectations to fit the changes in my life. The pressures of work, having a family and maintaining my competitive edge have made it clear that re-evaluation is a necessary process – not just for performance but for mental and emotional well-being. It is about finding a balance, recalibrating when needed and understanding that flexibility is key to sustaining long-term success in all areas of life.

WHY RE-EVALUATION IS KEY

Re-evaluating your goals is not just about checking in on your physical health. It is about assessing your overall well-being – mental, emotional and physical. As a graduate professional balancing a demanding career, it is easy to let stress take over. But true success comes from achieving balance and maintaining strong mental health.

Having the same coach for more than 25 years has taught



me that physical training is just one part of the equation. My coach has been instrumental in helping me manage stress, stay focused and build the mental resilience needed for both sport and life. I have learned that professional insight into emotional and mental health is invaluable – not just for athletes but for anyone under pressure.

Re-evaluation is essential for maintaining balance. Just as athletes continually assess their training, we need to check in with ourselves regularly. It is not just about reaching the finish line – it is about staying healthy, feeling fulfilled and being content along the way. Regular check-ins allow us to recalibrate and adapt when necessary.

MENTAL HEALTH FORMS PART OF THE PACKAGE

While physical health is often the main focus when setting New Year's resolutions, mental health is just as important. Mental well-being impacts managing stress, balancing work and life, and pursuing our goals. For graduate professionals, the pressures of daily life can be overwhelming. This is where support becomes essential.

Reflecting on my journey as an athlete, I realise how valuable it is to have professional support, whether from a coach, therapist or financial expert. As an athlete, I know the importance of having a coach – someone to guide, push and offer insight to pursue excellence. This approach applies to all aspects of life, from financial planning to maintaining a healthy work-life balance. Everyone, no matter their stage in life, needs support.

For graduate professionals facing multiple life pressures, seeking professional guidance can make a significant difference. While financial security is important, nurturing mental and emotional health is just as vital.

PPS AND REALITY WELLNESS

This is why PPS offers access to Reality Wellness's services, prioritising a holistic approach to well-being. Through the Reality Wellness Programme, members have access to 24/7 counselling services to address stress, trauma and mental health challenges. These services provide essential emotional support, allowing members to navigate tough times with confidence.

In addition to emotional support, Reality Wellness offers resources to manage physical health, from chronic illness management to lifestyle education. By addressing both mental and physical aspects of well-being, Reality Wellness helps reduce health risks and enhances overall quality of life.

So, if the demands of the year are weighing you down or your resolutions have already slipped, remember: it is never too late to reassess and set new goals. Reflect, reevaluate and adjust your approach to health and happiness – and do not hesitate to seek professional help along the way.

** Members can contact Reality Wellness at 080 11 22 550 or send an email. Please provide your ID number and/or PPS Member number when reaching out.*

*** Please note: This article is for information purposes only and is not medical or dietary advice. Before starting any new diet and exercise programme please check with your doctor and clear any exercise and/or diet changes with them before beginning.*

**** Elvira Wood, OLY, represented South Africa in fencing at the 2008 Olympic Games in Beijing.*

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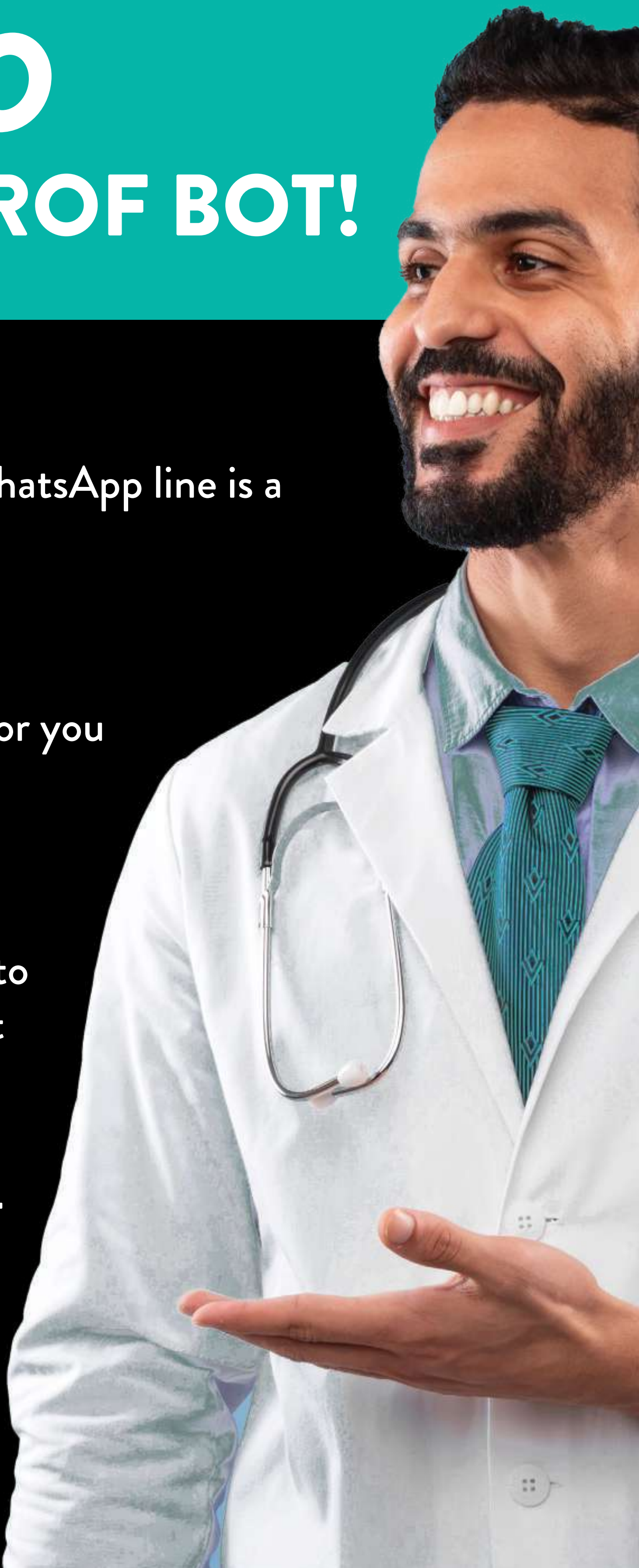

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Thriving Together

By Jaynashree Ellary, PPS Communication Lead

Empowerment is more than just personal ambition. It is about creating a ripple effect that strengthens entire communities. Every decision we make, every skill we develop and every effort we invest in ourselves has the power to uplift not only our own lives but also those around us. True success is not measured in isolation – it is reflected in the growth and well-being of the communities we belong to.

From the neighbourhoods we call home to the workplaces where we contribute our skills and the professional networks we build, we are constantly connected to others. By embracing continuous learning, encouraging collaboration and actively supporting those around us, we can drive meaningful change that extends beyond individual achievement.

In today's fast-paced world, success is not just about keeping up; it is about continuously learning, adapting and nurturing well-being in ourselves and those around us. Empowering futures means equipping individuals and the communities they belong to with the knowledge, resources and tools to thrive.

Here are some ways to embark on a journey of personal and collective empowerment:

Continuous or lifelong learning: The world is dynamic and evolving, and therefore, one should stay curious and abreast of industry trends, technological advancements and leadership philosophies. Engaging in continuous learning through workshops, conferences and educational programmes allows individuals to stay informed, develop new skills and help adapt to a changing environment. When individuals invest in their knowledge, they contribute to the intellectual and economic growth of their professional and social communities.

Effective communication: Developing effective communication skills, such as active listening, clear articulation and the ability to inspire and motivate, is essential for fostering positive and collaborative environments in both personal and professional settings. Strong communicators contribute to healthier workplaces, more engaged neighbourhoods and stronger social networks.

> “**Today is the opportunity to build the tomorrow you want.** – *Ken Poirot*”

Networking and collaboration: Building a strong network of contacts and collaborating with others can open doors to new opportunities, provide support and further innovation through diverse perspectives. One can create a ripple effect of empowerment by sharing knowledge and resources within various communities – whether professional associations, social circles or online groups.

Emotional intelligence: Understanding and connecting with people is a critical component of empowerment. Emotional intelligence involves recognising, understanding and managing one's own emotions while empathising with the emotions of others. A community that values emotional intelligence fosters healthier relationships, improved teamwork and a culture of mutual support.

Goal setting and planning: Personal and professional development require clear goals and a well-thought-out plan. Setting both short- and long-term objectives and outlining the necessary steps to achieve them creates structure and direction. As individuals set and achieve goals, they contribute to stronger families, businesses and social groups, inspiring others to do the same.

Mentorship and support: Guiding and supporting others – especially those who may not have access to the same opportunities – can change lives. Mentorship helps individuals navigate challenges and achieve their goals. Interactions between generations lead to mutual understanding and collaboration, where wisdom and experience are passed down while fresh ideas and perspectives flow in the opposite direction. This exchange strengthens both individuals and the broader communities they are part of.

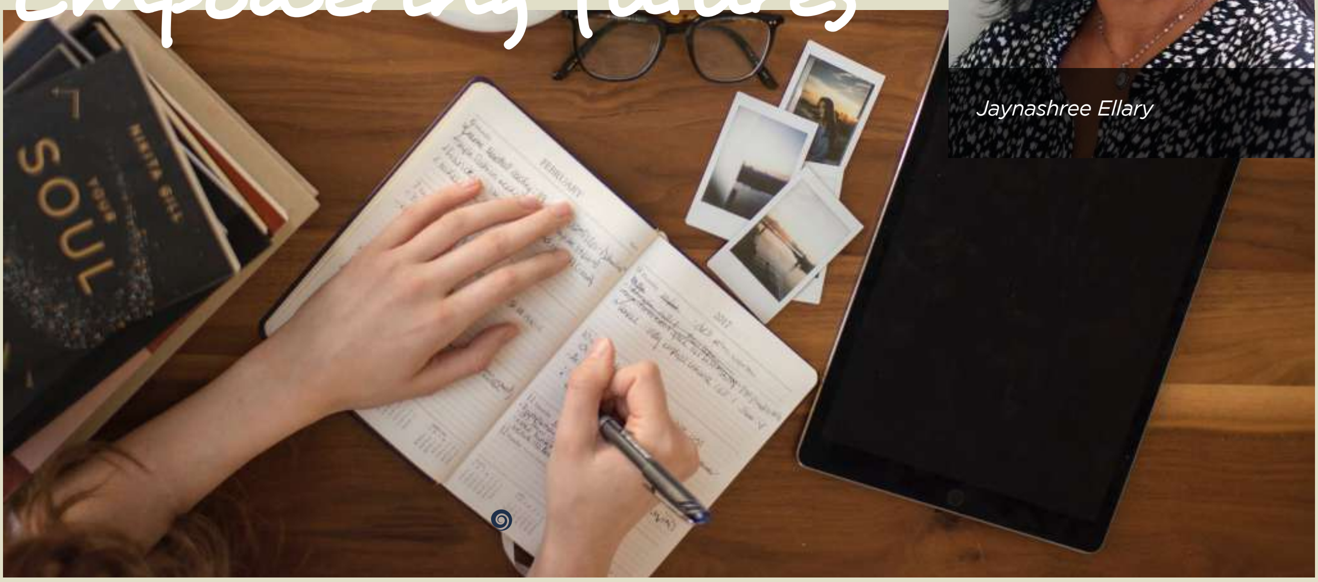
Community engagement: Active participation in the community – whether through volunteering, supporting local initiatives or attending neighbourhood events – raises a sense of belonging and collective progress. Strong communities are built when individuals invest their time and skills to uplift those around them.

Mental health and well-being: Prioritising mental health and well-being is crucial. Practising self-care, mindfulness and stress management techniques helps maintain a healthy balance in life. A strong mental state not only benefits personal and professional growth but also creates more resilient families, workplaces and social groups. Recognising and addressing mental health challenges within communities leads to stronger support systems for all. (See the article *Mental health and professional support: A winning combo* on page 34 for more on this topic.)

Empowering futures is not just about individual success – it is about creating environments where everyone can thrive. Poirot's words remind us that the choices we make today shape the communities of tomorrow. By committing to learning, supporting and uplifting those around us, we lay the foundation for a stronger, more connected future. As the months progress, let us make the most of each day this year – not just for ourselves but for the various communities we belong to. Then, at the end of the year, when we look back, we will be proud of all that we have done to empower both ourselves and those around us.

Jaynashree Ellary

Empowering futures



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Join us in advancing your skills. For more information and registration, contact:
Esmelda Kok (ekok@pps.co.za) or
Yashantha Nayager (ynayager@pps.co.za) or
theppsacademy@pps.co.za

RECIPES

Future-fit delights:

A taste of South Africa with a healthy twist

In a world where tradition and innovation intersect, food becomes a powerful tool for empowerment. These two recipes – Bobotie with quinoa and sweet potato mash and Rooibos and honey malva pudding – bring together the rich heritage of South African cuisine with healthier, sustainable ingredients. Fusing timeless flavours with modern-day choices reflects the spirit of building a future where both health and tradition are honoured.

FUTURE-FIT BOBOTIE WITH QUINOA AND SWEET POTATO MASH

Bobotie is a classic South African dish but this version modernises it with a healthier, protein-rich quinoa base and a sweet potato mash, making it more sustainable and future-conscious.

INGREDIENTS

- 500g lean beef or ostrich (or plant-based) mince
- 1 onion, finely chopped
- 2 garlic cloves, minced
- 1 tsp curry powder
- 1 tsp turmeric
- 1 tsp ground coriander
- 1 tbsp chutney
- ½ cup cooked quinoa
- 1 slice whole-wheat bread, soaked in ½ cup milk
- 2 eggs
- ½ cup raisins (optional)
- 2 tbsp vinegar
- 3 bay leaves

For the mash:

- 2 large sweet potatoes, peeled and cubed
- 1 tbsp butter or olive oil
- Salt and pepper to taste

METHOD

Preheat the oven to 180°C. Sauté the onion and garlic in a pan until soft. Add the mince and brown. Stir in the curry powder, turmeric, coriander and vinegar. Add the chutney, raisins and quinoa. Mix well. Squeeze excess milk from the bread and add it to the mixture. Spoon the mixture into a greased oven dish. Beat the eggs with the remaining milk and pour over the top. Place bay leaves on top. Bake for 30 to 40 minutes until golden. For the mash: Boil the sweet potatoes until tender, then mash them with butter, salt and pepper. Serve the bobotie with the sweet potato mash and a side salad.

ROOIBOS AND HONEY MALVA PUDDING WITH A CARAMEL FUTURE TWIST

Malva pudding is a South African favourite but this version infuses Rooibos tea for antioxidants and uses honey instead of refined sugar – keeping it delicious yet mindful of well-being.

INGREDIENT

- 1 cup flour
- 1 tsp baking soda
- 1 cup milk
- 2 tbsp strong Rooibos tea
- 1 tbsp vinegar
- ½ cup honey
- 2 tbsp apricot jam
- 1 egg
- 2 tbsp melted butter

For the sauce:

- ½ cup cream
- ½ cup honey
- 2 tbsp butter
- ½ tsp vanilla

METHOD

Preheat the oven to 180°C. Mix the flour and baking soda. In a separate bowl, mix the milk, Rooibos tea and vinegar. In another bowl, beat the egg, honey and apricot jam until light. Stir in the melted butter. Alternately add the dry ingredients and milk mixture to the egg mixture, stirring well. Pour into a greased baking dish and bake for 35 to 40 minutes. For the sauce, heat the cream, honey, butter and vanilla until melted. Pour over the warm pudding. Serve with whipped cream or custard.

Exploring hidden gems:

Off-the-beaten-track destinations in South Africa

By Elvira Wood, PPS Positioning Manager

For many, these days, going on holiday is almost more exhausting than being at work. No wonder people often comment after a break: "now I need a holiday from my holiday". It is not that they are working during their holidays, it is because the holiday is very busy. They travel long distances and visit busy venues such as beaches with thousands of other holidaymakers, leading to waiting in queues, navigating crowded spaces and often facing logistical challenges that can overshadow the joy of the holiday experience.

Staying at home for one's break is also not necessarily an option. The temptation to "just have a quick look" on a work computer might be too great for some to resist.

But going on holiday does not need to be busy. South Africa offers numerous hidden gems where visitors can connect deeply with nature, culture and local communities, far away from the bustling crowds of typical tourist hotspots.

ST. LUCIA AND CAPE VIDAL

If you are torn between visiting the "bush" and the "beach", St. Lucia, located in KwaZulu-Natal, could be an ideal destination. Although one can access the beach from St. Lucia, the easy access from there to world-renowned nature reserves allows visitors to enjoy both bush and beach. St. Lucia – about a 2.5 hour drive from Durban – is surrounded by the iSimangaliso Wetland Park, a UNESCO World Heritage Site. From there, it is about a 30 to 45-minute drive to Cape Vidal – depending on "traffic". But "traffic" in the iSimangaliso Wetland Park differs from that encountered on Gauteng's highways. Here commuters often have to wait for elephants or other wildlife to clear the road.

Cape Vidal is known for its natural beauty, with long stretches of unspoiled sand and warm waters perfect for swimming, deep-sea fishing and snorkelling. What makes Cape Vidal particularly unique is the seasonal appearance of thousands of crabs that take over the beach, creating a mesmerising and surreal sight for visitors. This phenomenon typically occurs during summer.

PATERNOSTER AND TIETIESBAAI

If travelling to the North Coast is too far, heading up the West Coast is another option. Paternoster, a picturesque fishing village is about 1.5 hours-drive from Cape Town. Its whitewashed cottages and unspoiled beaches make it perfect for those seeking peace and quiet away from more crowded tourist spots. The town is close to Tietiesbaai, another coastal town known for its serene beaches. Tietiesbaai is located within the West Coast National Park, which makes it a birdwatcher's paradise. The park is home to more than 200 bird species, including flamingos, oystercatchers and pelicans. Tietiesbaai is also an ideal spot to camp, snorkel, dive and go fishing.

WATERVAL-BOVEN AND KAAPSCHEHOOP

Located just off the N4 highway between Pretoria and Nelspruit, Waterval-Boven (Emgwenya) and Kaapschehoop in Mpumalanga offer great escapes, especially for adventure lovers. Waterval-Boven – or "Boven" as it is often referred to by locals and climbers is world-renowned for its rock climbing and mountain bike trials. It is also South Africa's first Olympic Sport Climber Mel Janse van Vuuren's home town where he grew up and learned his craft. Guides are operating in the area who can assist even beginner climbers in areas such as the "creche" (basic routes) to the "God's Window" route with a 25-grading at the Waterval-Boven Crags.

Just a short drive away, Kaapschehoop is famous for its wild horses, roaming freely along the trails, making it a unique experience for hikers. Horseback riding through the forest adds a serene touch, while the hidden stone circles offer a glimpse into the area's mysterious past.

GOLDEN GATE HIGHLANDS NATIONAL PARK AND CLARENS

Golden Gate Highlands National Park, located in the Free State, is a stunning natural destination known for its golden-hued sandstone cliffs, rugged landscapes and abundant wildlife. It is about a four-hour drive from Johannesburg and offers hiking trails and bird and wildlife watching. Due to its remote location and minimal light pollution, Golden Gate is an excellent destination for stargazing. Clear night skies provide a breathtaking view of the stars.

Clarens, about a 30-minute drive from the park, is especially known for its vibrant art scene, quaint shops and cafés. Many artists have studios in the village, allowing visitors to meet them in person and purchase unique pieces. In addition to its cultural offerings, Clarens also provides opportunities for hiking, mountain biking and trout fishing in the nearby rivers.

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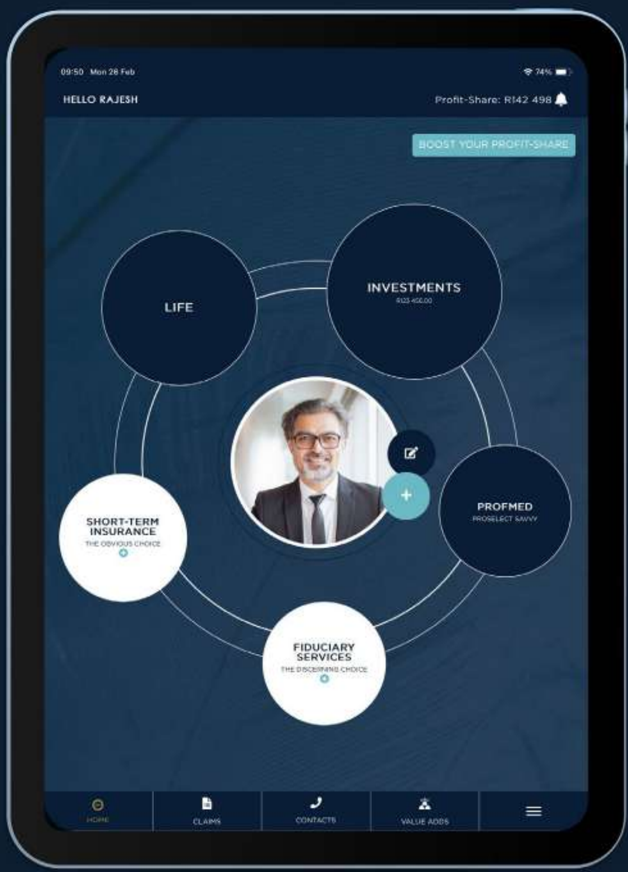

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BOOK REVIEW

You are invited… … to a courageous conversation

Book: ***Courageous Invitations***
Author: **Dr Jefferson Yu-Jen Chen and Anne Duggan**
Review by: **Elvira Wood**

Have you ever received an invitation you just could not refuse? Maybe it was an event, a holiday or a chance to meet someone you admire. We eagerly accept those conversations.

We also invite others to discussions on topics we enjoy or anticipate will be positive. But how often do we invite a friend, colleague or family member into a conversation we know will be challenging?

In *Courageous Invitations,* Dr. Jefferson Yu-Jen Chen and Anne Duggan explore how leaders can embrace meaningful, transformative conversations. They emphasise courage, vulnerability and authenticity in leadership and communication, offering practical tools to deepen connections and safe spaces for growth.

This book is not just about traditional invitations like "Could we meet?" - it is about inviting others into conversations that challenge the status quo. The authors argue that such invitations drive growth, innovation and collaboration.

Through personal stories and case studies, Chen and Duggan illustrate how leaders can build a culture of openness and trust by taking risks and showing authenticity. The book's practical approach includes actionable advice, tools and frameworks for both personal and professional growth. Though worksheets are available online, they were not accessible at the time of writing.

Each chapter's thought-provoking questions encourage readers to apply the principles in their own lives. The engaging writing blends research, insights and anecdotes, making complex concepts easy to grasp. While the book focuses on professional settings, its lessons apply to personal relationships and community-building.

> **"Will you accept our invitation to disrupt yourself?"**

Courageous Invitations is a powerful, timely read for anyone seeking deeper relationships and stronger leadership. It challenges readers to rethink communication and create spaces where others feel safe to share, learn and grow.

So, here is our invitation to you: Be courageous. Step into difficult conversations and embrace transformation. And if you are unsure where to start, *Courageous Invitations* provides the guidance and tools to help you build meaningful connections.

Days to note

MARCH

14 Pi Day
20 International Day of Happiness
21 Human Rights Day
30-31 Eid al-Fitr

APRIL

12-20 Passover
18 Good Friday
21 Family Day
25 Africa Day
27 Freedom Day
28 Freedom Day observed

MAY

1 Workers' Day
3 World Press Freedom Day
11 Mother's Day
21 International Tea Day
31 World No-Tobacco Day

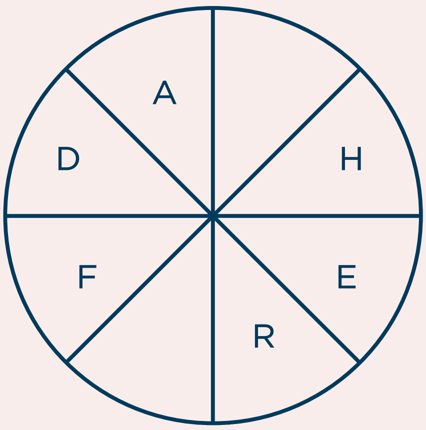
JUNE

5 World Environment Day
14 World Blood Donor Day
15 Father's Day
16 Youth Day
21 International Day of Yoga

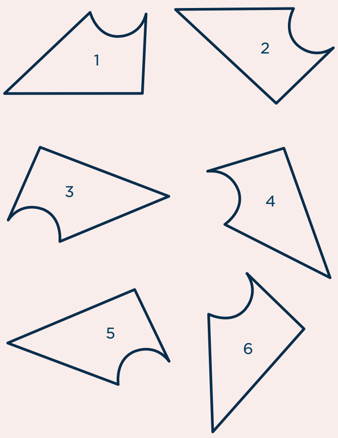
PRO-Quiz

Are you a "pro" when it comes to quizzes? Challenge your brain with these five quizzes.

1. Insert the missing letters:



2. Select the correct figure from the nine numbered ones.



3. Insert the missing number:

368 (9) 215
444 (?) 182

4. 4. Complete the "equation":

EVE – ADAM = JOAN - ?
Is it: BILL, DON, JOHN, MIKE or ART

5. Find the odd man out:

SHROPAMEE

TOGA

RHOSE

VABERE

Answers:

1. O and E. (The word reads FOREHEAD in an anti-clockwise direction.)
2. 1. (Adding the numbers on the left of the bracket and subtracting the sum of the numbers on the right of the bracket gives the number inside the bracket.)
3. 5. (All the other figures can be rotated into each other.)
4. MIKE. (The letters in the male names have their numerical value in the alphabet; those in the female names with alphabet reversed, i.e., Z=1, Y-2. EVE – ADAM = 30, JOAN – MIKE = 30)
5. SEMAPHORE. (All the others are animals: goat, horse, beaver.)

Get in touch!

We would love to get to know you better – what you liked or loathed about *The Professional*; what you would like to read more or less about. Share your jokes, recipes, story ideas, podcasts, photographs and whatever tickles your fancy with us by sending an email or tweeting and posting to our social media.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