

Finance and Life Skills Training

MY BEST LIFE™

CREATING THE BEST VERSION OF YOU

Paul Bryant



My Best Life™ – *Creating the best version of You*

Financial Scenario Planning Game

INTRODUCTION

What if you could live multiple lives retaining the hindsight and life lessons you learned along the way? Do you think you could come up with a “BEST” model of your life?

How many times have you heard someone say, “if I knew then what I know now, I would have....gone to a different school, chosen a different job, traveled more, saved my money, married later, had kids earlier, taken a chance, not taken a chance?” The fact is that most people make decisions emotionally, often irrationally, and with little or no consideration for the complexities of the situation. What we fail to see is how a small decision today, combined with hundreds of small decisions over days, months, and years, impact where we end up in life.

While hindsight is 20/20, without a time machine you cannot replay life. This means that the past is unchangeable, the future is unknowable, and you only begin to understand the impacts of your decisions AFTER you have made them – often months or years later.

What if you could try multiple lives? Test careers, spend or save money differently, go back and change a decision or two that you made somewhere along the way? What if you could have lived these multiple lives when you were only fourteen, sixteen, or even twenty years old?

That’s the power of My Best Life™! Students get the opportunity to live out life scenarios and see what happens. Along the way, they learn the things most of us didn’t learn until we were thrust out into the world. We made those tough decisions with little insight or experience – trial by fire with no do-overs.

With the internet and today’s interconnected world, youth have unprecedented access to information. However, knowing how to use that wealth of information requires **wisdom**. Wisdom is only gained through experience and My Best Life™ builds experience via a life simulation. Playing the simulation multiple times allows students to investigate different careers, try varying financial decisions, and correct missteps made in prior scenarios.

No student should graduate high school and not understand the multitude of jobs and careers available, budgeting, compound interest, insurance, or how to evaluate a career decision. Additionally, students should not be lulled into a false sense of security either. Life is full of bumps in the road, often due to nothing but random, dumb luck. That doesn’t mean we shouldn’t plan. Wisdom teaches that despite the best efforts of planning and decision making, sometimes life does not quite turn out according to a master plan. A full, satisfying life includes planning, bumps, making adjustments, and maintaining perspective – important life lessons for soon to be adults.

As you run the simulation, I would love to get your feedback so I can continuously improve the game. Any suggestions that are adopted will be acknowledged in the resources section of each module. I will name you, your class, or a student’s name (first name, last initial for students + school) or as desired.

Thank you, Paul Bryant

My Best Life™

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Lesson 2

"Life isn't about waiting for the storm to pass; it's about learning to dance in the rain."

- Vivian Greene

Lesson 2: Visioning

Materials needed: pen and paper, Lesson 2 Worksheet, (optional: magazines, newspapers, advertisements for homes, cars, etc.)

Homework review (10 minutes): Ask students to give a short oral presentation of their interviews comparing their interviewee's ideas about their life and the outcomes. Ask about any events or decisions that changed the youthful expectation and the outcome.

Definition: Visions are the first step in a planning process. Visions provide a sense of direction for the long term – the means to the future.

Leaders of all types, from corporations to governments to individuals, need a guiding vision to help them keep in mind where they want to go and what they want to achieve. While you might not ever get to be a leader of a big company, you will always be the leader of yourself. Call it **YOU, Inc.** if you want.

Presentation to help with mental visioning (15 minutes): Show a presentation of people working various jobs in construction, mechanic, factory line worker, doctor, lawyer, computer tech, athlete, etc. Show apartments, houses small, medium, large, plain utilitarian interior, and lavish interior. Show the city, the country, a foreign country, or suburbs. Show individuals, families, group of friends. Show various cars from Ferrari to used domestic cars. Show a few hobbies mentioning that these could also be jobs in many cases.

Activity: Have students create and record their lifestyle vision. How would they like to live twenty plus years after graduation? Describe their dwelling. Describe their furniture. Is it larger, smaller, about the same as where they reside now? How about the furniture and house style – minimalist and utilitarian, shabby chic, country, lavish? Do they want granite counter tops, how about stainless appliances, do they want an industrial oven and refrigerator? Do they live in the city, country, or suburbs? What city, state, country? What kind of car(s) do they drive? Do they have other cars, boats, motorcycles, toys? Do they travel for vacations, where, how often? Are they single or married with no, two, or ten kids? What kind of job do they have? Do they work for a big company, small firm, your own firm - Where do they work?

Homework or class activity: Try to be as specific as possible to create the most vivid image. Create a picture collage from magazines or the internet that represents their future lifestyle (vision board). How much money annually do they think they need to live this future lifestyle?

Resources: <http://www.oprah.com/spirit/How-to-Make-a-Vision-Board-Find-Your-Life-Ambition-Martha-Beck>

Lesson 8 – Year 2

Utility is when you have one telephone, luxury is when you have two, opulence is when you have three - and paradise is when you have none. – Doug Larson, Columnist

Lesson 8: Basic Bills Utilities

Materials needed: power, gas, cable, garbage, water/sewer, internet, phone, “utilities” bills

Presentation: This is a relatively simple review of reading and interpreting utilities bills. From the straightforward to typical cell phone bills with all their myriad taxes and fees that are meaningless to the average person. Discuss that without a credit history, they will have to put down deposits on many utilities.

Activity: Students should choose which utilities they are going to have and how much to budget for them. Complete year two budget sheet with updated utility costs to reflect reality. Run the simulation with the minor activities and budget rolls. Make adjustments to balance the budget after the events.

Homework: Students should review their budgets and prepare for the next year. Research and be able to explain how interest compounds.

Resources:

<http://cgi.money.cnn.com/tools/networth/networth.html>

<http://www.kiplinger.com/article/saving/T064-C000-S001-calculate-your-net-worth.html>

<http://personalfinance.byu.edu/?q=node/272>

Lesson 2 Worksheet

| | | | |
|---|--|--|--|
| | | | |
| Answer the following questions about how you want your life to be in TWENTY years. | | | |
| 1 | I will be living in (city, state, country) | | |
| 2 | I will be (single, married, etc.) | | |
| 3 | My family will consist of X number of (kids, pets, parents, etc.) | | |
| 4 | I will live in a (house, apartment, condo, etc.) | | |
| 5 | The style of furnishings & appliances in my home will be | | |
| 6 | I will have a (car, motorcycle, boat, made by Ford, Chery, Maserati) | | |
| 7 | I will take public transit, share a car, live on a boat | | |
| 8 | I take vacations to.... How often..... | | |
| 9 | I work from (home, an office, in a factory, etc.) | | |
| 10 | The company I work for (is mine, is a small firm, is a giant firm).... | | |
| 11 | Describe your home in more detail | | |
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| 12 | Describe your family in more detail | | |
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| | | | |
| 13 | Describe your work surroundings in detail | | |
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| | | | Year 2 Budget | | | Year 2 Actual | | | |
|----|---|----------|---------------|-------------|-----------|---------------|-----------------------|-----------|--|
| | Income | | | | | | | | |
| 1 | Borrowing | (=24a) | 22000 | | | 400 | Additional Borrowing | | |
| 2 | Job | | 0 | | | 0 | Savings Used (-added) | | |
| 3 | Income Total | | | 22000 | (1+2) | | 22400 | (3+1+2) | |
| | Major Education Expense | | | | | | | | |
| 4 | Tuition, Fees | | 10000 | | | | | | |
| 5 | Education Total | | | 10000 | (=4) | -----> | 10000 | | |
| 6 | Remainder for Living | | | 12000 | (3-5) | | 12400 | (3-5) | |
| | Savings | | | | | | | | |
| 7 | Savings | 10% | 1200 | -----> | | 1200 | | | |
| | (- means spending savings, + means adding to savings) | | | | | | | | |
| | Expenses | | | | | | | | |
| 8 | Housing | 30% | 3600 | -----> | | 3600 | | | |
| 9 | Utilities | 10-30% | 1200 | (a to i) | -----> | 1200 | | | |
| | a | Phone | 400 | | | | | | |
| | b | Cable | 200 | | | | | | |
| | c | Internet | 0 | | | | | | |
| | d | Power | 500 | | | | | | |
| | e | Gas | 0 | | | | | | |
| | f | Water | 100 | | | | | | |
| | g | Sewer | 0 | | | | | | |
| | h | Trash | 0 | | | | | | |
| | i | Radio | 0 | | | | | | |
| 10 | Food | 5-10% | 1200 | -----> | | 1200 | | | |
| 11 | Transport | 5-25% | 3000 | -----> | | 3000 | | | |
| 12 | Clothing | 5% | 600 | -----> | | 600 | | | |
| 13 | Entertainment | 10% | 1200 | -----> | | 1200 | | | |
| 14 | Debt pmt | | | -----> | | | Write-in Event | | |
| 15 | | | | Minor Event | | 400 | House/apt repairs | | |
| 16 | | | | Major Event | | 0 | | | |
| 17 | | | | | | | | | |
| 18 | | | | | | | | | |
| 19 | | | | | | | | | |
| 20 | | | | Budget +/- | | 0 | (8 to 13 x %) | | |
| 21 | Expenses Total | 100% | | 12000 | (7 to 14) | | 12400 | (7 to 20) | |
| | | | Balanced? | 0 | (21=6) | Balanced? | 0 | (21=6) | |

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|-----|-------------------|---------|--------------|------------|--------------------|-----------|--------------|--|--|
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| | DEBTS | Last Yr | New(+) | nterest(+) | Add'l(+) | Pmts(=14) | Year End (=) | | |
| 22 | School Loan (5%) | 23100 | 22000 | 2255 | | 0 | 47355 | | |
| 23 | Other Loan (10%) | 0 | | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | | |
| 24 | Credit Card (15%) | | | 0 | 400 | | 400 | | |
| 24a | | | <u>22000</u> | | Total Debts | | <u>47755</u> | | |
| | | | | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | | | | |
| | SAVINGS | Last Yr | New (=7) | Interest | | Used (=2) | Year End | | |
| 25 | Savings | 363 | 1200 | 4 | | 0 | 1567 | | |
| | | | | | | | | | |
| | | | | | Total Cash | | <u>1567</u> | | |
| | | | | | | | | | |