

Simply Sticking to the Fundamentals Changed Their Lives

Erica and Shawn were one of the first couples I ever coached around their money. They weren't in misery, but they weren't thriving either, and it bothered them. As with many couples, their money habits were different from each other, and they didn't know how to make decisions that honored both of them. They had two healthy incomes and they even had some reserves, but not enough. They both had dreams of not working full time, one wanted to work part time and the other to become a consultant.

They were in a constant cycle of having enough and then a big home repair would hit. Then they'd save, have enough again, and one of their grown children would need money. Then they needed a new car and they didn't have enough. Even though they knew they should have enough to afford a reasonable car, they would have to borrow the money. They were frustrated.

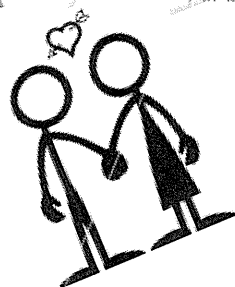
Everything changed when they started implementing the fundamentals: Earn more. Spend less. Save. Don't debt. They tracked their spending so that they could understand where their money was going; turns out they were spending more than they thought. They set up not just an emergency reserve, but a savings account for their next car and a savings account for major home repairs. They finally addressed their disagreement over how much should be in their emergency reserves: the conservative wanted 6 months and the other thought 3 months was more than enough – they found a compromise where they were both comfortable.

The frustration lessened with each passing month. They called me excitedly when they bought their first car with all cash. What a great feeling!

Even more important than getting out of the cycle of frustration is seeing what they have been able to do in their lives as a result of having stability with their finances: they've both been able to take time off from their careers without being in financial fear; they purchased a wonderful home and kept their other home as a rental property; and they're able to financially help a family of teenage foster kids, changing all of their lives for the better.

All because they were mindful about their money and did the work to earn more, spend less, save and not debt.

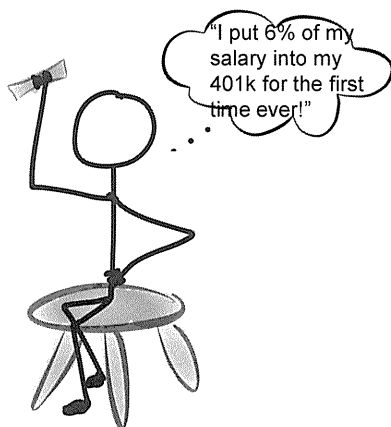
Erica & Shawn





A Starting Point: Your Five Truths

The best place to begin any journey is to lift your head up, look around and see where you are. Not so much with exact numbers, that will come later. But where do you think you are on this journey of you and your money? Looking back over the past year, what is your honest assessment about what you earned, what you spent, how much you save (or not) and how much you reduced your debt (or not)?



■ OVERALL



Your money? What's the first thing that comes to mind?

■ EARNED



Are you earning enough?

■ SPENT



Spend too much?
On an emergency?
Or dining out too much?

■ SAVED

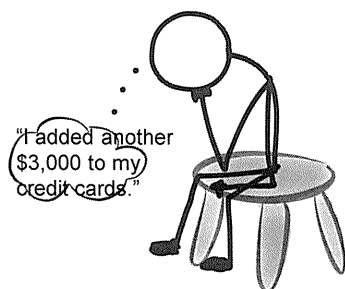


What did you save for? Did you meet your goals? Did you have them?

■ DEBTED



What did you go in to debt for? Was it worth it?





10 Things I Really Want

Take a moment to tune into what it is you really want in life? More money isn't always the answer. Some want to work less and spend more time with their kids. What's important to you? What are your dreams? What would make you feel like you were sailing smoothly through your life?

No limits!
(well, within
reason)



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2

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6

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8

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10

10 Things I'm Grateful For

It's easy to focus on what we don't have, what we want and what is just out of our reach. Many of us imagine what it must be like for the people that earn more than us. But how people look at their finances rarely changes as their income level increases. Some people focus on what they don't have and others focus on what they do have. What would your life look like if you were simply grateful for all you have right now? What if you wanted for nothing?

- 1 _____
- 2 _____
- 3 _____
- 4 _____
- 5 _____
- 6 _____
- 7 _____
- 8 _____
- 9 _____
- 10 _____

Come back to
this list when
you find
yourself
focusing on
what is out of
your reach.
Remind
yourself that
you have
enough.

