

Team in Training

I had a client once who I'd been working with for about a year. Her finances were in a bit of a shambles when she showed up. She wasn't earning enough, was overspending, had no reserves and a lot of debt. She made incremental progress, but not enough. No where near enough.

About half way through the year she decided to train for a marathon, even though she had never even ran a 5k. It was with great interest that I watched her jump in. She had fear and trepidation, but she jumped in nonetheless. She put her running shoes on and stepped out the door. She announced it to all her friends on Facebook. She declared she was doing it. She asked for money. She tracked her progress. She inspired everyone around her. Within less than a year she went from not being a runner at all to running a marathon.

Meanwhile, she was making progress, small progress, slow progress, on her finances. When I asked her why she was so successful in one seemingly insurmountable goal, and making only margin success in the other, she responded with great thought: "I love how the marathon training makes me feel; I made a commitment and that anchored me; and I'm excited (and scared) about the marathon."

What would it take to feel that way about your finances? How could you get to a place that you loved the way working on your finances made you feel? What if you made a commitment right out there on Facebook to "run a marathon" (e.g. achieve 3 months reserves, pay off all of your debt, etc.) What if it wasn't a secret but instead, you inspired those around you to do something bold by saying "I'm showing up differently to my finances." What if you were excited about your money? What if you said out loud to someone "I'm a little scared too."

What is missing with our financial lives is that sense of community. When we jump into a group effort to raise money for a great cause and shout it out to everyone we know, we are inspiring those around us and providing ourselves with the anchored commitment that "we're going to do this thing." A sense of community is how farmers' barns were built and how enough money is raised to build our great cultural institutions. But we have no sense of community with our personal finances. It's our little secret. For many of us, it's our dirty little secret. We'd rather share details about our sex lives before details about our money.

And why? What would happen if you shared how much debt you had? Would you someone's lose respect? Lose a friend? Or would you inspire others to do something about their credit card debt.

What would happen if you were on a Team in Training for your financial life?

