

Title:

How to Become Motivated to be Frugal

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Summary:

You might really want to save money and be frugal, but just can't seem to get started. How do you jump start yourself into a frugal life?

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Article Body:

You might really want to save money and be frugal, but just can't seem to get started. How do you jump start yourself into a frugal life?

Whether you are just starting to be frugal or need a little motivation to keep on saving, sometimes it is hard to keep in focus why you choose to live frugally. I am a firm believer in writing things down. I believe that once you see things in writing, they are a little more concrete in your mind.

Make yourself a frugal living notebook. This is a record of your goals, plans and actions. In the future, you can look back and see how your frugal living has benefited you over time. For example, I can flip back through my notebook right now and see how our financial goals have been met over the last year. It helps motivate me to keep going.

So gather a notebook, a pen and your budget. Your budget will help you choose your goals. If you don't have a budget, then now is a great time to start one. It can be as simple as a list of the bills that come out of each paycheck. I list each payday on a separate page. Each bill that comes out of that check is written down. When non-monthly bills come in they are placed on the appropriate page. When I pay bills, I cross them off the list. This way, I am sure that every bill is paid each month. Anyone can pick up my book and see what has and hasn't been paid. I subtract the total bill amount from each paycheck and allot the left over money towards savings and spending money. It's a paycheck by paycheck budget. Since I know approximately how much each paycheck will be, I am able to plan ahead.

In your notebook, make a list of every debt you owe. List what it is, the

interest rate, the total amount left and the monthly payment. Every once in a while, you will update this so that you can visually see how your debts are going down over time. It is a good feeling to see how much you are paying off.

Now, define and list your goals. Goals change over time, so be sure to update your list. You will be checking off things you accomplish and adding new goals. Be realistic and honest with yourself. Start small. At one time, my list included "pay off highest interest rate credit card." Now all my cards are paid off, so my new top goal is to devote 10% of each paycheck to savings.

When you look at your finances, you have to wear blinders. Don't compare yourself to anyone else. Every financial situation is unique. Just because your friends are driving new cars, you don't need to go into higher debt to have a new car. You don't know or want anyone else's financial situation. Only look at your goals when you are planning how to spend your money.

Be realistic and reasonable. For example, my husband wants a new car so bad he can taste it. But we only owe eleven more payments on our vehicle. It runs perfect and is in great shape. We could go and trade it in and have a car payment of about the same amount on a new vehicle. Or we could wait eleven months, pay it off and then buy another vehicle. Then we would have two nice vehicles with one car payment. It is worth the wait, as most things are financially.

Being frugal doesn't mean starving yourself. It doesn't even mean living within your means. It means living life to the fullest while spending only what is necessary. We all are allowed niceties. You may be saying, why would someone who preaches frugal living be talking about a new car? That's our perk for living frugally -- bought sensibly and reasonably. Living frugally gives us the option of having a new vehicle if we choose. It's about choices. Many of us live frugally when we don't have choices, so that later in life we will. You have to treat yourself. It may just be a bubble bath or a free walk in the park. It's about spending life to the fullest. You can't do that burdened by money.

Don't fret and worry about money. Thinking about it will not change anything. Taking action will. Make a plan, refer to it often and take back your financial freedom.