

Creating a Meaningful Life *and* Financial Success

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Perhaps you are one of a growing number of people who are realizing that your money should be managed to support your life, rather than the other way around. If you are, you know the most important question to ponder is how you really want to live your life, and how to make sure your money is set up to support your choices. Many of us have learned just the opposite; that we have to make the money first, and then decide how we should spend it later.

The reality of our economic circumstances is contributing to a worldwide re-assessment of what it means to live a meaningful life. Many find our anxiety about the future difficult to handle. As a result we are changing our spending and saving habits to reduce our anxiety. What can we do now, to secure our financial future? Is there a different way of viewing our finances that will reassure our families that financial security is still possible?

It's true that most of us want at least some level of financial security in our lives, even if our lifestyle choice is to live with a low level of materialism. We are incredibly fortunate in this country to have the ability to not only create security, but a life of meaning and fulfillment. Whatever your ambitions, dreams, goals or hopes for the future, if you become clear about your choices, your money decisions can be crafted to not only support, but enhance your personal vision of a fulfilling and meaningful life.

As we experience the complexities, opportunities, and challenges of life, we realize that almost every decision we make has a financial component. We all have a variety of experiences with money, differing beliefs, attitudes, behaviors and priorities. By carefully assessing our life objectives, such as our career goals, educational needs, family desires, potential major purchases, or heartfelt charitable wishes, we realize that all require different timing and resources to attain. It takes careful analysis to understand the context of each goal, and to understand the emotional and psychological factors at play that contribute to our desire to attain each goal. Once we gain an understanding of how our goals are interrelated and where each goal fits within the framework of our current life, then we can design a financial strategy that links our life and our money with the attainment of our goals.

It's been proven that happiness cannot be attained by getting something we want. We all know that the immediate thrill that we feel from purchasing a new car or finally affording that beautiful new couch is fleeting, and that true happiness is not realized from just buying things. However, dreaming, planning, saving and eventually enjoying a vacation in Hawaii with family members we love produces a feeling of happy satisfaction that enriches one's life beyond financial value. When we realize our life's most significant objectives, those that make us smile when we dream about them and feel proud when we achieve them, that's what creates real meaning in our lives. That's what

we have to be in touch with in order to create the financial success we dream of, and also deserve.

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