

It Is Only Money

and It Grows on Trees!



Cara MacMillan MBA

It Is Only Money

Workbook

Introduction

It was noon on a Sunday, and I was volunteering at our local homeless shelter with friends. We were preparing and serving lunch. My job was to serve in the chapel—the room was reserved for those who needed extra help. It had been a busy day, and just as we were about to close down, two young people walked in. I went over to ask if they would like some water to drink, and there sat two of my college students. Our eyes locked, and they quickly looked away. I brought them both glasses of water and asked if I could join them.

We spoke and laughed about life. They complained about the homework and the readings. We shared a cup of tea, and then they left, saying, “See you tomorrow, Miss.”

That evening, I sat down and began to write this book and workbook. I was so inspired that two of my students were working so hard to get ahead and get an education while living on the streets. I wondered how they submitted their assignments, where they studied, and how they managed to always be so cheerful in class. I wanted to teach them so much more...

...and that is how *It Is Only Money, and It Grows on Trees* began.

This book is for anyone who is sacrificing to build a better future. When we learn to break free of our patterns and choose to recognize that money is just a resource, we too can become rich and truly enjoy today.

As you journey, check out ItIsOnlyMoney.com for ideas, suggestions, and other tools, such as this workbook, to help you achieve your goals.

Enjoy today,

Cara MacMillan, MBA

Chapter 1

1. Who do you connect with—Frank or Mary?
2. Are you afraid of not having enough money? Explain.
3. Do you know people that are happy?
4. How do they act?
5. What words do they use when they talk about their lives?
6. How do they talk about money?

7. Describe an action that the happy person takes with regards to money?

8. Describe an action that you have taken with money? Is it positive or uncomfortable?

9. If it was uncomfortable, rewrite the script.

Chapter 2

1. What is your first memory of money? Share the details.
2. What did your parent(s)/guardian(s) say about money? Share the details.
3. Did you get an allowance?
4. Did you earn it by doing chores? Give details.
5. Was your allowance ever withheld as a punishment? Give details.

Now read your answers to the first ten questions.

- Do you see a pattern emerging?
- Do you say the same things about money that you heard as a child?
- Are you comfortable that the words and actions that you have in regards to money reflect who you are and your values?

Now that we have you thinking, let's go on to the next step.

11. What is your talent?

12. What can you share?

13. We haven't looked at budgeting yet, but are there ways that you can do something that you love, and can you share it so as to decrease your expenses? Brainstorm.

14. What are your values?

First, check all that are important, and then prioritize your top ten.

Ability
Abundance
Acceptance
Accomplishment
Achievement
Acknowledgement
Adaptability
Adventure
Affection
Affluence
Ambition
Appreciation
Attractiveness
Balance
Beauty
Belongingness
Benevolence
Bravery
Brilliance
Calmness
Capability
Care
Challenge
Charity
Commitment
Compassion
Competence
Confidence
Connection
Contribution
Control
Cooperation
Courage
Courtesy
Creativity
Credibility
Curiosity
Decisiveness
Dependability
Determination
Devotion
Dignity
Diligence
Discernment
Discipline
Discovery
Discretion

Diversity
Economy
Education
Effectiveness
Efficiency
Empathy
Encouragement
Endurance
Energy
Enjoyment
Enlightenment
Excellence
Experience
Expertise
Facilitating
Fairness
Faith
Fashion
Fidelity
Focus
Fortitude
Freedom
Friendliness
Frugality
Fun
Generosity
Giving
Grace
Gratitude
Growth
Guidance
Happiness
Harmony
Health
Heart
Honesty
Honor
Independence
Inspiration
Integrity
Intelligence
Intimacy
Intuition
Joy
Justice
Kindness
Leadership

Learning
Liberty
Logic
Love
Loyalty
Make a difference
Mastery
Maturity
Mindfulness
Moderation
Modesty
Motivation
Neatness
Obedience
Open-mindedness
Optimism
Order
Organization
Originality
Outrageousness
Passion
Peacefulness
Perceptiveness
Perfection
Perseverance
Persistence
Philanthropy
Pleasure
Popularity
Pragmatism
Presence
Privacy
Proficiency
Professionalism
Prosperity
Prudence
Punctuality
Realism
Readiness
Reason
Relaxation
Reliability
Resilience
Resourcefulness
Respect
Reverence

Richness
Sacrifice
Satisfaction
Security
Self-control
Selflessness
Self-realization
Self-reliance
Sensitivity
Serenity
Service
Sharing
Significance
Silence
Simplicity
Sincerity
Skillfulness
Solidarity
Solitude
Sophistication
Soundness
Spirituality
Spontaneity
Stability
Stewardship
Strength
Structure
Success
Support
Sympathy
Synergy
Teamwork
Thrifty
Traditionalism
Tranquility
Transcendence
Trust
Truth
Understanding
Unity
Utility
Virtue
Vision
Wealth
Wisdom

What are your top ten values?

Chapter 3

1. What investment(s) do you own right now?
2. What types of investments would you like to own?
3. Are you a glass half-full or half-empty person?

If you are a glass half-empty person, then you may be more comfortable with bonds or preferred shares. If you are a glass half-full person, you may be more comfortable with common stocks, for either capital gain or dividend payment, or a combination of both.

4. Write down passive income products in which you would like to invest.

Now, to invest in stocks, you need to invest in what you know.

9. Now do the same for the other staples in your life—food, shelter, transportation, and the luxury items like other hobbies, fashion, entertainment, and vacations.

Now you have a list of investments from various sectors:

- Energy (heating, fuel, power)
- Manufacturing (transportation, home appliances, fashion)
- Services (vacation, travel)
- Finance (banking, insurance)
- Real estate (your home builder, or a family member's nursing home provider)
- Agriculture (types of food)
- Consumer staples (your food store)
- Consumer discretionary (your luxury items)

Now, take \$5,000, or an amount with which you are comfortable, and pretend to buy the stocks. This is important before you spend actual money; you need to practise to build your confidence. Create a portfolio, and keep track for three to six months. When you are confident with your decision-making process, then you can start investing.

If you are already investing, have a look at your investments. Are they aligned with your values? Your goals? Take the time to look at your portfolio and see if you are on track.

Chapter 4

1. How much are you spending in interest?
 - Check your credit card(s).
 - Check your overdraft protection.
 - Check your car/student/personal loan(s).
 - Check your mortgage.

Now add these up. This is money that you lose every month.

2. What is your total debt?
 - Check your credit card(s).
 - Check your overdraft protection.
 - Check your car/student/personal loan(s).
 - Check your mortgage(s).

Now add these up.

3. How can you start paying down the principle?

Start with the ones with the highest interest payment. First the credit card(s), then the overdraft protection, then your loan(s), and finally the mortgage(s). “But how?” you may want to scream...or ask nicely? Well, one way is to get some extra money and promise to put it on debt.

- Use any overtime pay or bonus pay for debt repayment. No exceptions.
- Skip one restaurant meal a week and put it toward debt.
- Pick up casual work—babysit, dog walk, tutor, work festivals or events, and put all the money earned toward debt repayment.
- Pick through garbage and recycling bins, and bring back the bottles for deposit.

Any of these simple steps will bring you closer to having more money and wasting less money on interest. Choose one and start. It doesn't matter if it is the right one; overcoming the inertia and moving toward an interest-free life will put your goals in motion.

4. Brainstorm your own ideas.

Chapter 5

1. Is your work useful?
2. Name three positive things about your work.
3. Go back to your top ten values. Which values are aligned with your work?

At this point, if there is little alignment, you need to think about where you are in your professional life. In my experience, if you have one value aligned with your current work, see if next week, there is a way to align two more...

Here are a few examples:

- If you chose balance, is there a way to have more balance? Commit to make one change.
- If you chose fitness, is there a way that you can integrate fitness into your routine?
- If you chose wealth, security, etcetera, do the work to find a link or an opportunity to align your values with your day job.

The Six Jars

1. Tithe or Taxes Jar

Many of us pay income taxes, and this is often greater than 10 percent. There are ways to decrease your tax burden. Many tax systems are designed to encourage people to grow the economy. Find out ways that you can decrease your personal income tax payable. Discuss this with an accountant, or research the information online. Always double check with the government, and perhaps a lawyer, to ensure that you are following the laws of your country and province/state.

You need to also include any services or sales taxes. Are there ways that you can decrease the amount paid without increasing costs in other ways?

Current tax paid

Income taxes:

Municipal taxes:

Sales or services taxes:

Subtotal:

Percentage of income:

Plans to decrease taxes (if required):

2. Offering Jar

In some countries, taxes are used to take care of others through healthcare, subsidized housing, and other social programs. This is a good thing. However, we also need to focus outside of ourselves and realize how fortunate we are to be able to live a wealthy mindset. We need to offer part of what we have to others. Remember Mary in chapter one?

Charity offering of 10 percent

Current offering:

Now, if you cannot financially add more money, you can add more to your charity offering in other ways. Here is an excerpt from SimplySustainableYou.com:

Giving to receive seems rather a selfish philanthropist. But the truth is, you do receive when you give. But what can I give? There are many things that we can give that are not money. Here are some things that we can do without really impacting our budget or increasing our workload.

1. Search websites of your favourite community centre, school, church, or association. They usually post a “things needed” page. As you do your spring cleaning, those old gardening tools may be the perfect thing for a community garden!
2. Pass the cup. A friend of mine passes a jar for loose change on girls’ night out. Most evenings she collects about fifty dollars. Her passion is garage sale shopping. She checks out the lists of items needed by various charities or communities and heads shopping with a goal in mind. We all get to be a part of making a difference, while we enjoy our friendship and a glass of chardonnay!
3. Have your own food bank. An inspirational host that I know always asks that rather than a hostess gift, please bring her donations for the food bank. She has an antique wagon in her foyer that her guests fill, and then she takes the food to a drop-off point.
4. Bake healthy snacks. Yes, you probably do this already, but here is what one friend does. Each week, he used to make two dozen muffins. But now he doubles the recipe and bakes four dozen muffins. He purchased an extra rack for the oven so that all the muffins bake together. The extra two-dozen muffins are donated to a drop-in centre for single moms.

You could adapt this idea as your own. Is there a centre near you?

5. Get up and go to a fundraiser. People work long volunteer hours to put on an event to create awareness and raise funds for worthy causes. Sometimes, just by attending, you can show the volunteers that all their hours and sacrifice do make a difference.

You must have some great ideas to give within your budget and your time. The important part of Jar 2 is that you give to receive. Have fun!

3. Savings Jar

If you have no high-interest debt (credit card, overdraft, or personal loans), you can begin saving 10 percent per month in something safe like a savings account or even a piggy bank. But if you still carry debt, it would be better to pay down the principle. The principle is the amount that you borrowed. You see, by paying back the principle, you will be saving on two fronts: the debt and the monthly interest payment.

Once you have paid off your personal or consumer debt, then it is time to save.

If you are already a homeowner, you can also start to make an extra payment. For example, pay 10 percent of the balance owing on your mortgage on the anniversary date of the loan.

The most important first goal for savings is to be debt-free. If you already are debt-free, then you can save for those luxury items like a vacation, new car, or backup income in case you change jobs.

4. Investment Jar

The next 10 percent has a purpose as well. It is for future financial independence. Financial independence occurs when your passive or investment income pays all your expenses. So you need to start investing now. Do an automatic investment plan from your pay or a direct deduction from your bank account. Since you have already started to think about the investment vehicles with which your values are aligned, now put your money where your values are!

5. The You! Jar

The You! Jar is an investment jar, but this time you are investing in you. You will be investing in your education and professional career. We have discussed this already. Professionals must stay on top of the learning curve to be in high demand. We must focus on learning new skills, understanding and anticipating trends, and building networks and life balance. This jar is the 10 percent that you will require to be able to always make money and live abundantly. Commit to lifelong learning, and invest in yourself.

6. Living Expenses Jar

Yes, you saw that right; you get to live on the 50 percent that is left of your income. So, what would this include?

- Rent or mortgage
- Water, gas and/or electricity
- Car, license, insurance, maintenance, gas, and parking
- Bus pass, taxis
- Cell phone
- Internet, cable television
- Groceries
- Clothing and shoes
- Fitness
- Entertainment: movies, restaurants, coffees, alcohol, concerts, etcetera
- Vacation

“You are kidding, right?” you may ask. Well, no. We need to put things in perspective here. Many people live off 50 percent of their income. Many do not, but they also live in debt. Now, I do not just mean financial debt; I also mean debt to future generations. If you are addicted to consuming luxury items, you are using more carbon than our world can manage. If we do not collectively reduce our carbon footprint (e.g., reduce waste and our impact on climate change), then we are stealing from our own future. This is similar to usury, which we talked about in chapter four.

So, if you want to live a sustainable life, you must decrease your expenses.

This is the first step. Check out SimplySustainableYou.com for many ideas on how to live within your means and to live within the earth's means.

Chapter 6

1. List your unhealthy habits.

2. What other expenses do you have as a result of these bad habits?

For example:

- If you smoke, do you spend money on cough medicine?
- If you impulse fashion shop to make yourself feel better, how else could you spend your time so that you are building your self-worth and your finances?
- If you enjoy alcohol, do you need to buy headache medicine to offset the consequences?

Please understand, this is to say, never indulge! Marketing messages have told us that consuming more of everything makes us happy...but are you happy? So, if you want to be happier with your financial situation, you need to be honest with yourself and commit to change.

Make a commitment to change here:

Chapter 7

A home-based business has three benefits:

1. You can still do your day job, or you can continue full-time studies.
2. You learn new skills and have a more powerful résumé.
3. You make money.

There are many ways to have a home-based business:

1. Become a distributor for a company. These can be cooking, jewellery, health food, green energy, or any type of distributorships. Google “distributorships”; there are many. You will need upfront costs, so make certain that the business is something in which you believe.

2. Provide a service:

- Walk dogs
- Babysit
- Clean houses
- Shovel snow, cut lawns, weed gardens, wash windows
- Bookkeeping, preparing taxes, personal coaching
- Writing, blogging, web designing, proofreading, editing, ghostwriting, tutoring
- Sell on eBay or Kijiji

These are just some ideas. Many will provide income. You will also potentially be lowering your taxes, since if you run this as a sole proprietorship, you can deduct the expenses.

List your ideas for a home-based business:

Commit to start one today.

Chapter 8

Commit to one of the following today:

1. Review all your electronic bills. Any surprises?
2. Put the credit card away.
3. Research your next purchases.
4. Ask the salesperson if that is his or her best price?

Chapter 9

Let's explore our needs versus wants.

1. Review your spending for the past month.

How much did you spend on needs?

How much did you spend on wants?

If you commit to only spending 50 percent of your income, what percentage covers your needs?

2. Commit to spending only on needs for the next month.

Thank you for journeying with us as we work to refresh our relationship and understanding of money. *It Is Only Money* is about understanding why we do what we do, focusing our financial choices on what is important to us, and enjoying the journey.

Find out more at ItIsOnlyMoney.com.