

Navigating the Human Heart

Lessons from our childhood

We are here to reveal our deepest beliefs about money and abundance. There are no right or wrong answers. There is no score. There are no categories to define us. There is only recognition that we are completely, utterly unique in our approach to financial well being. Patterns emerge—our patterns.

As children, long before we had the power of discernment, we learned about money. In most cases, we didn't think about it much, and we weren't actively taught much.

But we felt it. We perceived attitudes, beliefs, 'truths' about money on an unconscious level, through the behaviour of the people around us.

We need, therefore, to go back there. Let's return to our childhood. (If you have a tape recorder, it helps to record the next seven paragraphs in your own voice, and let your voice guide you into this meditation. If you don't, no problem. Just read the material through first and then repeat it back to yourself.)

Just for a few moments, close your eyes. Relax. Relax your toes, and then your feet, your ankles...work slowly upward, right up to those little frown muscles between your eyebrows. You are far more than this body that carries you around. Let your body rest.

Be aware of the thoughts meandering through your mind. Where do these thoughts come from? Are they really yours? Where do they go? If these thoughts are yours, and you are your thoughts, who is this watching your thoughts? You are more than your thoughts—let them cease, for the moment. As they stray into your awareness, gently let them pass. Be aware—be the point of awareness that watches your thoughts move across your consciousness.

How do you feel? Yes, you have feelings. Our feelings feel like 'us'—but where do they come from? We are more than our feelings—we are the point of consciousness that is aware of our feelings.

Be in that point of awareness.

Think about the bedroom that you slept in as a child. You're lying in your bed, trying to go to sleep. You can hear the adults in your life speaking.

Now, see yourself getting up. Go out in the hallway. You are an invisible witness. Wander through your house. See the wallpaper, or those awful drapes that hung in the living room. Sit at the kitchen table, beside your mom and dad or guardians. Can you remember what it smelled like? They're talking about money. Listen.

Now, go back to your room. Take your pen and paper, and write.

Exercise One

Did you have an allowance? Yes No

If so, or if you received money as gifts or earned money, did you:

save it? spend it? spend some, and save some?

If you spent more than you saved, what were your favourite things to buy?

- Treats (food and candies)
- Entertainment (movies, magazines, comic books)
- Toys Clothes
- Whatever your friends were into that week
- Varied from week to week – no pattern
- Things for other people Other (describe below)

If you saved more than you spent, what was your chief pleasure in doing so?

- Accumulation of money ... you loved watching the balance go up in your passbook.
- Anticipation of the big buy ... thinking and dreaming about the day you would get that bike, or go to the PNE with a big wad of cash, or turn sixteen and buy that car.
- The actual pleasure of ownership ... not the anticipation of waiting to buy the bike, but actually having the bike, riding it ... taking pride in having saved for it.
- Other (describe below)

Was your allowance tied to performing household chores?

Yes No

Did you often lose your allowance for bad behaviour, or for forgetting to do your chores?

Yes No

Could you increase your allowance or earn money by doing extra chores?

Yes No

What was your most creative way of earning money, or of getting something that you wanted that your parents wouldn't buy you?

Did you:

Baby sit Collect pop or beer bottles Sell your unwanted stuff to friends

Other (list everything that you ever did to get money prior to becoming an adult.)

Did you feel that you had the power to earn money to buy the things you wanted as a child?

Yes No

If not, what did you do? Did you:

Tell yourself it was OK—you didn't want it that badly anyway?

Keep on asking, perhaps until you got in trouble?

- Beg, borrow or steal?
- Hope that it would arrive on Christmas or your birthday?
- Dream?

Is there anything that you really wanted as a child that you never got?

- Yes No

Would you ever buy that item or experience for your child, if you had/have one?

- Yes No

If you had extra money, would you buy it for yourself now?

- Yes No

What lessons do you think you learned, as a child, from the experience of not getting what you really, really wanted?

Let's explore the larger, emotional money myths that permeated our childhood.

Do you remember your parents peering over chequebooks, counting pennies, adding up bills?

- Yes No

Was there a sense of lack ... did you know that "money does not grow on trees," "your father is not made of money"?

- Yes No

Did you sense anxiety about “something bad that might happen” in regard to money?

Yes No

Did your parents fight about money? Yes No

If so, was there a common theme to their arguments (mom spent too much money, mom spoiled kids, dad did not earn enough, dad spent too much, dad was cheap, dad was extravagant, there were too many kids, etc.)? Write down whatever you remember.

Were you ever made to feel shame because you were expensive to raise?

Yes No

Were you ever made to feel shame because you asked for too much?

Yes No

Were you ever rewarded for not asking for too much?

Yes No

Were you ever embarrassed because your parents didn't seem to make enough money?

Yes No

Were you ever embarrassed because your parents had more money than other people did?

Yes No

Who handled the finances in the family?

Mom Dad Both Other

Did your mother have a 'household allowance'? Yes No

Did she have to ask your dad for money when she wanted to buy something?

Yes No

If your mother controlled the finances, did your dad receive a spending allowance?

Yes No

Who made the major buying decisions (the house, the car, the furniture, the vacations, etc.)?

Mom Dad Both The whole family

Who bought the gifts?

Mom Dad Both The whole family

If your Mom was not in charge, or equally in charge, of the family finances, did you ever think about why that was? How did you feel about it then? Now?

Do you think you handle money more like your father, or more like your mother? How, and why?

Were you:

- poorer than most of your friends and neighbours,
- about the same, or
- better off than most of your friends and neighbours?

Did your parents talk to you about money?

- Yes No

To each other?

- Yes No

To other people?

- Yes No

If, and when, money was discussed, was it usually

- a calm discussion,
- a tense discussion, or
- an angry discussion?

As a child, did you think of money as something that was:

- controlled by adults? (That is, they could control how much they earned and how much they spent.), or
- uncontrollable? (It seemed to arrive by accident and disappear just as mysteriously).

What is your worst memory of childhood in which money played a role?

What is your best, sweetest memory of childhood in which money played a role?

Yes No

Did you save for big purchases or a trip away?

Yes No

How old were you when you got your first credit card? _____

Would you say that used it responsibly, knowing what you know now?

Yes No

Did you balance your chequebook regularly?

Yes No

At what moment did you really feel, for the first time, completely independent?

Did you ever end up borrowing money from your parents?

Yes No

Moving back home?

Yes No

If so, what did that feel like? How did your parents handle it?

Did your parents continue to support you for a time (while you were in university, when you needed a co-signer on your first mortgage, when you ran into a bit of trouble with the rent after that big vacation)?

Yes No

If so, do you believe that

they were happy to do it, or

they did it grudgingly?

Would you do the same with your children, if you had/have any?

Yes No

How would you feel about asking your parents (or another relative) for money now if you ran into problems or if a big opportunity came your way?

Did you have any financial disasters? Did any of the following ever happen?

I had to move because I couldn't pay the rent on my apartment,

I bounced a cheque,

I bounced cheques regularly,

I didn't pay my bills (telephone, hydro, cable, etc.) on time,

My phone/electricity/cable was disconnected because of late payment,

I had to rely on social assistance/food stamps, etc., to get by at some point,

I developed a bad credit rating,

I defaulted on a loan, and left my co-signer responsible for payment,

My car/TV/furniture was repossessed because I couldn't make the payments,

I made a bad investment and lost my money.

Other (describe below).

If you did suffer financial disasters of one sort or another (and believe me, most of us have), what was the turning point? Did you get things together on your own? Were you able to ask for help?

How did this experience make you feel at the time? How did you feel about yourself as a person?

How do you feel thinking about it right now? If you still feel ashamed, or embarrassed, is there anything about the way you handled the situation that makes you feel proud?

Did early marriage and/or a live-in relationship hinder you in exploring financial independence on your own? Or, perhaps you found yourself in a situation where you were responsible for both your own financial well being and your partner's. If you could go back and do it again, is there anything you would do differently?

Now, let's explore the present.

Of the following statements, please check off 'absolutely true', 'somewhat true', or 'not true at all'.

People will care about me more about me if I have lots of money.

Absolutely true Somewhat true Not true

People will not care about me as much if I am too successful.

Absolutely true Somewhat true Not true

My friends and/or family will be uncomfortable if I have too much money.

Absolutely true Somewhat true Not true

My spouse or partner will feel threatened if I have too much money.

Absolutely true Somewhat true Not true

My spouse or partner will feel threatened if I have or want too much control over our money.

Absolutely true Somewhat true Not true

People will rely on me too much if I'm economically successful.

Absolutely true Somewhat true Not true

To be financially successful, you have to be: (mark any that you feel apply)

- | | |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> very smart | <input type="checkbox"/> well educated |
| <input type="checkbox"/> a man | <input type="checkbox"/> lucky |
| <input type="checkbox"/> aggressive | <input type="checkbox"/> greedy |
| <input type="checkbox"/> materialistic | |

I don't deserve to be financially successful.

Absolutely true Somewhat true Not true

I do deserve to be successful, but I just don't get any of the breaks.

Absolutely true Somewhat true Not true

I am too old to become financially successful.

Absolutely true Somewhat true Not true

I am too young to be financially successful.

Absolutely true Somewhat true Not true

If I put my relationships and family first in my life, I'm not going to be financially successful.

Absolutely true Somewhat true Not true

I'm not willing to make the sacrifices necessary to be financially successful.

Absolutely true Somewhat true Not true

Wanting wealth is greedy.

Absolutely true Somewhat true Not true

If I have everything I want, someone else will have to suffer.

Absolutely true Somewhat true Not true

There is not enough to go around – look at all the starvation and poverty.

Absolutely true Somewhat true Not true

Life is hard – we have to count our blessings and not wish for too much.

Absolutely true Somewhat true Not true

It isn't spiritual to want beautiful things.

Absolutely true Somewhat true Not true

