

# Money, happiness linked

Carolyn Flynn / SAGE Editor

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Financial planner Donna Skeels Cygan says that psychology and finances are “a fabulous combination.”

Cygan, who blogs for Sage magazine’s Ask the Experts panel, started out in life with a degree in psychology from Indiana University, but when she came to Albuquerque, she opted to get a master’s in business administration from the University of New Mexico and go into finance. She runs a financial advising firm, Sage Future Financial in Albuquerque.

“My clients hire me to get their finances in good order,” she says.

What she found, though, is that about a year into getting the numbers in line, many clients wanted to go beyond that and look at ways to fund their dreams and use their money in a way that is aligned with their values.

## This week at Sage magazine

On the Sage magazine website at [abqjournalsage.com](http://abqjournalsage.com) this week, readers will find:

- Estate planning attorney James P. Plitz writes “What We Can Learn from Tony Soprano.”
- Professional organizer Elizabeth Tawney Gross writes “Organizing a Linen Closet.”
- Financial planner Donna Skeels Cygan writes “What Your Brain Says to Your Money.”
- Accion New Mexico describes an upcoming workshop, “Preparing Your Business for the Affordable Care Act.”

Out of that came “The Joy of Financial Security,” her book that will be published this month.

Sage readers at [abqjournalsage.com](http://abqjournalsage.com) have been getting a taste of this book in her blog entries for the past year, but the thrust of it is that “by having a healthy relationship with money, you can be happier,” Cygan says.

The book is grounded in financial principles but draws upon psychology and neuroscience, the study of the brain and nervous system.

Cygan specifically draws from the body of work of Dr. Richard Davidson of the University of Wisconsin. Davidson is known for neuroscience research that shows the physiological benefits of meditation.

Meditation came into the picture because Cygan believes that mindfulness – paying attention to your thoughts – helps people become more adept at identifying the happiness – or unhappiness – behind the thought about money.

To have more happiness about your money, Cygan advises an approach that focuses on gratitude and folds in ideas that build a good foundation for a positive relationship with money. That includes some things beyond balancing your checkbook, some things you wouldn’t think of – such as nurturing your creativity, controlling the controllables, cultivating solitude and maintaining a healthy lifestyle.

The book features personal stories – her own successes with money and those of her clients.

“Do you think money and happiness go in the same sentence?” she asks. “Money has a huge impact on whether we are happy. I wanted to unravel that relationship and that led to the book.”

*Carolyn Flynn is the editor of Sage magazine, published quarterly in print and daily online at [abqjournal.sage.com](http://abqjournal.sage.com). Find Sage on Facebook by typing in “[Sage the Albuquerque Journal’s magazine for today’s woman](#)” and “like” the page to get it in your newsfeed. You may reach the editor at 505-823-3870, [sage@abqjournal.com](mailto:sage@abqjournal.com) or through Facebook.*