

Getting Control of Your Money and Your Happiness



Donna Skeels Cygan takes a very pragmatic approach to managing money. She says it has only one truly important purpose – happiness. All else is secondary.

“Money can’t buy you love, but it can make you happy,” she says. Her new book, *The Joys of Financial Security*, is dedicated to helping people learn what they need to do get their finances in control so that they can really enjoy what life has to offer.

Taking control of your finances is not rocket science. With a few simple steps, everyone can improve how they feel about their finances. The most important single step you can take is this to simply more money.

Research shows that happiness is rarely a matter of how much money you spend or what you spend your money on, but rather it is how you spend your time and with whom. You have the power to choose what you do with your money. Having a healthy relationship with money increases our happiness. Your attitude towards money colors the way you look at the world. Here are just some of the simple straightforward actions you can take to get control of your financial security and adjust your attitude towards money in a major way:

Step 1: Determine Your Net Worth Today: You’ll feel better right away if you first make a list of all your worldly possessions. Simply list all of your assets. Then do the same with all of your liabilities (another word for debts), and then subtract the liabilities from the assets. Write it down.

Step 2: Determine How Much You Can Save. Set a goal. Are you putting away a certain amount of money? The more you save, the happier you will be. If you don’t save anything, start with your next paycheck. Commit to saving 2% this next month. Commit to raising it steadily and gradually to 10%. Ultimately increase what you save to 15% and even 20%. Once you get started, you will find it is much easier than you expect. Do it.

Step 3: Control the Controllables. Focus on deploying simple, breakthrough saving strategies. To create money, stop spending it. Reduce your expenses in every area of your life. You can control what you spend, whether you live within your means, and whether you pay off your credit card every month. You can control what you eat, where and how you go, and who you spend time with, and how you spend that time. You can control how much you contribute to your retirement plan. You can control how many shoes you own, and how much you spend on restaurants, movies, travel, vacations, the cars you drive and the home you live in. Just do it.

The more you save, the happier you will be. The simple steps you take will drastically improve your finances.

Recognize that money does not buy happiness, but it definitely impacts happiness. Focus on more than just the money: choose experiences with family and friends rather than buying more “stuff”, learn how to “control the controllables,” and focus on gratitude. Stop keeping up with the Jones’s, step off the rat race treadmill and watch your happiness grow.

The Joy of Financial Security by Donna Skeels Cygan explains how to determine human capital (ability to earn money); track net worth; monitor savings and spending; and the basics of estate planning. This engaging, easy-to-use book contains numerous tools that make it easy for people to understand where they are, and how to move to where they want to be. Some of the memorable and distinctive strategies include: Control the Controllables, Weeding Your Garden, Good Debt vs Bad Debt, Track your Net Worth, and have a Roth IRA.

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