

Millennial Money Queens

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DEDICATION

To all millennial ladies, you inspired me to write this book,
may we make history and create abundance for all.

CONTENTS

Author's Note	i
Preface	v
Part 1- Money in Your Mind	
1 The Secret Inheritance	2
2 The Rich Money Blueprint	16
3 Dissolving Money Blocks	32
4 Dream Life Design	44
Part 2 - Money in the World	
5 1-2-3, Debt-Free!	55
6 Smart and Conscious Spending	64
7 Supercharging Your Income	89
8 VPAK - Your Superpower	105
9 Lifestyle Business	119
10 Money Magic	134
References	160
About the Author	

AUTHOR'S NOTE

Hi! I'm Maria,

I want to start by congratulating you for embarking on this journey to master your finances and become a millennial money queen! As of right now, you have joined the minority of people who are money smart and on the path to building wealth. Props to you, girl!

Let me tell you who I am and why I wrote this book so that you can fully appreciate the information you are being given. I built a decade-long career in banking and finance. Over the last five years, I worked in wealth management. I became very familiar with that world, where top-notch information and high-end services to build wealth comes with a high price tag. In my job in wealth management, firms would have charged you thousands of dollars for this information. Unless you had a minimum of one million dollars, we weren't interested in doing business with you. Sounds crazy, right?

Before that, I was a simple girl with big dreams, lots of debt and no knowledge about money whatsoever. My journey over this past decade

learning how to master money has changed my life and the lives of those I have shared my knowledge with. I wanted to create this book to empower you with these tools to help you master your money and create the life you truly want. You deserve it, and it's about time you started living it.

I was born in São Paulo, Brazil, the daughter of a beach dwelling, flowers in your hair, no worries about anything mom and a pro soccer player dad. Cliché? Maybe, but that's my true story. From a young age, I saw the extremes of wealth and poverty, the almost sickening lavish luxury next door to real misery. No blame in my game, but come on, we can do better as the human race.

I also experienced it first-hand. I was blessed to be raised on the greener side of the grass. As a kid, I enjoyed lots of wealth, but that all disappeared almost overnight when my father nearly went blind from work stress. Just like that, I went from penthouses in sunny Brazil to sharing a bedroom with my two siblings who were 10 years older than me in frigid Canada. I quickly understood that I needed money, lots of it. So, I embarked on a journey to master money. I started working when I was 12 years old and was financially independent by the age of 18.

I studied psychology, economics and finance, and I became a Chartered Investment Manager. Then it hit me, I was miserable! I had no meaning, no higher purpose, I felt like a corporate zombie. The more I talked to my friends, the more I saw there was a real problem with millennials and their

money. Especially for us millennial women, who want to be lady bosses with all the freedom and wealth but who still tend to operate with unconscious and outdated societal beliefs. Millennial ladies urgently need the financial education and independence required to make all those dreams come true. It's time to change our money game, ladies!

I thought I was in the perfect place to affect real change for millennials and their money. I was with the big money wealth management firms! Except there was no real profit potential for them in working with millennials, so they couldn't care less. I decided to take it upon myself and make the millennial money problem my problem. I vowed to share everything I know about mastering the money game without a high price tag. How in the world would I do that? I couldn't meet every millennial who wanted my help and start giving consultations, I would never be able to meet the workload. The solution? This book.

This book was written to give you the knowledge you need right now to take control of your money. The same knowledge that, up until now, was offered only to high net worth individuals and is the key to your financial freedom, regardless of how much money you have. Of course, there are other finance professionals out there with a heart and on a mission, but the grand majority of individuals qualified with the knowledge you need to pay off loans, make more money, ditch your job and create your dream business are often working for big banks. Those same banks who are profiting on

your debt and student loans, what a strange system we've built.

Talking about money can be scary for a lot of millennials. It's stressful, it's loaded with all kinds of family presuppositions, judgement, beliefs, and so on. This often makes us uncomfortable, and being uncomfortable will make you keep deferring your money problems, which is a big part of the problem.

Since I speak money and finance, I'll translate along the way as I walk you through overcoming debt, increasing your income, building wealth and creating abundance in all its forms like money, adventure, purpose, freedom and whatever else you may want in your life. It all starts with taking back your power and becoming the master of your time and your money. Let's change the way we see and interact with money. Rather than being a source of stress, it'll become an ultimate and plentiful resource in your life. In the wise words of Destiny's Child...

“All the women, who are independent,
All the honeys, who making money,
All the mommas, who profit dollars,
All the ladies, who truly feel me,
Throw your hands up at me!”

Let's do this.



PREFACE

15 years old, feasting on a buffet in a private jet. “Snachary en route to Fiji @zachdell by @alexadell #dell #privatejet” was the Instagram caption. I came across this post while I was standing outside my building, waiting for my husband, then-boyfriend.

We lived in downtown Montreal, and most of our neighbours were international students, very wealthy international students, like Saudi princes and children of international conglomerate executives wealthy. The driveway of the building looked like a Formula 1 show every other day. That particular day, there was a lineup of Rolls Royces, Bentleys and Ferraris. As I stood waiting, the concierge came outside to find the fancy car motorcade parked outside.

“Do you know where they are?” he asked me, shaking his head. “Almost every day, these kids leave their cars parked outside, what if there is an emergency? How is a firetruck supposed to access the building? What if

an ambulance needs to drive in? I don't know how many times I need to tell them that. They have multiple parking places in the garage, why not follow the rules for once?!"

As he said that, his walkie-talkie rang "Hey, John, there's a leak in Penthouse 2, the kids threw a party and broke the sink again." Just as he was about to run upstairs, the infamous car owners came down, laughing their heads off. "Mr X, how many times have I asked you to move your car? What if there's an emergency? I will be forced to have your car towed next time!" John exclaimed.

What happened next is imprinted on my memory forever.

Mr X looked at John, put his hands in his pockets and pulled out a bunch of hundred-dollar bills. Without even flinching, he flicked the bills at John the concierge and laughed hysterically. John's face turned white and then, in seconds, made its way to a bad-tan scarlet red, as if he had fallen asleep under the Caribbean sun too long. Right before he could yell whatever was coming to his mind, his walkie-talkie rang again, snapping him right back to reality and saving his job, right before he could tell the kids to F*\$% off.

I was speechless, and just as I thought this couldn't get any worse, one of the fake nails and eyelash extensions groupies began bouncing like the energizer bunny, screaming "RKOI, RKOI, RKOI!!!" She pulled out her phone and began filming the scene. Mr X did what I never expected! He

spat at John the concierge's back as he was walking away! The groupies caught it all on video. They grabbed the few hundred dollars that were left on the ground and threw them up in the air. "Make it raaaain!" they kept yelling. Jaw-dropping true story.

You may wonder how people could behave like this. I sure did. I had just been introduced to this RKOI world minutes earlier. A world where a millennial, 19 years old to be exact, posted a picture of Dell Computers' heir, Zachary Dell, which went viral and created an endless feed of Lambos, Gucci bags, Louis V wallets, Rolex watches, Chanel shoes, Cartier bracelets, and "our every day is better than your best day" captions. A world where a few years later, the said 19-year-old ended up charging \$2,000 for any zillionaire millennial to be featured in the RKOI account. \$2,000, as much as rent for a full or even a few months for the rest of millennials out there. That's where the founder of RKOI began, too, by the way, sharing a bunk bed with his mom at his grandparents'.

Social media has the magic of being able to connect people worldwide, but it also has created a very insidious culture of idolizing money. Especially for a generation who is so far going down in modern history as one of the worst with money, especially us ladies. This book's mission is to change that and instead to empower our generation with the financial literacy it so urgently needs.

*“The data shows a clear need for improved personal finance education,
the lack of which women especially are paying for later in life”*

- ALYSSA SCHAEFER

Chief Marketing Officer, Laurel Road

Financial wellness today has a lot less to do with where you were born or how smart you are and a lot more with what education you receive and how you behave with money. So far, the financial education you’ve received is slim to none, and so, your money life is in shambles. That changes now.

Any of these RKOI kids can blow their money just as any millennial woman who is given proper financial skills can understand money, make it work for them and become a zillionaire, self-made, amigas. Get ready for your money makeover.

If you want to become a millionaire but think it can’t happen for you unless you win the lottery or marry rich, think again. Making money, getting out of debt and growing a fortune is based on a few simple principles you are about to learn.

Applying these principles leads to stories like the secretaries Grace Groner and Sylvia Bloom who died with massive multi-million-dollar estates. Ignoring them leads to stories of boom and bust like Kim Basinger,

who, despite living with crippling anxiety, won multiple academy awards and still had to file for bankruptcy.

The choice is yours. I'm simply paying forward all of the life-changing information I learned in my own journey in mastering money. This is not rocket science. In this book, you will learn the transformational secrets in the psychology of money, financial planning and investing fundamentals in a straightforward and easy to understand way that will literally rock your world. Yes, you'll be able to put your own rock on your finger!

While there is some serious conflict in the finance world between traditional finance being very analytical and behavioural finance being very emotional, the truth is we are both analytical and emotional beings. Financial success is best achieved by combining both forces.

This book does that by introducing you to the money in your mind, meaning your views and beliefs about money, and the money in your world, meaning how to make more, save more and create the financial freedom you've always wanted. You will learn how to develop the attitude, knowledge and actions you need to master your money and become a millennial money queen!

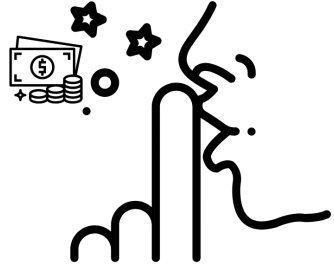
I studied advanced academic finance, and honestly, most times it was the perfect sleeping pill, not the magic pill for my bank account. Money is a big deal in our lives, and shouldn't anything to do with creating and making money leave you feeling excited and empowered? With traditional teachings,

that was certainly not the case. When I started teaching millennial women how to reach their financial goals from the perspective of combining emotion, dreams and actionable finance, true magic was made.

I'll show you everything I am sharing with real-life stories to a) entertain you, because let's be real, if a book is boring, no matter how valuable the information is, you'll never finish it, and b) to help you see that not only is this possible for you but that **becoming a millennial money queen is your destiny!**

PART 1

MONEY IN YOUR MIND



CHAPTER 1

THE SECRET INHERITANCE

"Money, like certain other essential elements in civilization, is a far more ancient institution than we were taught to believe some few years ago. Its origins are lost in the mists when the ice was melting, and may well stretch into the paradisiac intervals in human history of the inter-glacial periods, when the weather was delightful and the mind free to be fertile of new ideas - in the islands of the Hesperides or Atlantis or some Eden of Central Asia"

- JOHN MAYNARD KEYNES

Economist

MONEY MAKES YOU ANXIOUS? YOU'RE NOT ALONE

The day I started writing this book, I read a PricewaterhouseCoopers report on millennial money. The report said that “Only 24% of millennials demonstrated basic financial knowledge” and that “Millennials are unhappy but may not have the tools to change their situation.” After reading the report, I went out for a walk in Montreal’s old port to gain some perspective. Girl, did I ever!

From my walk down the boardwalk to my stop at a coffee shop, I encountered millennials everywhere, some in small groups, others talking on the phone. I could not believe my ears. I wasn’t trying to be a creepy sociopath, but I just couldn’t help but overhear their conversations! Every single one was talking about money troubles and the ensuing anxiety! I thought, “This must be a sign from God, my calling is here.” I was thinking this because it became really clear after speaking with, and accidentally overhearing, so many millennials that they all had the same problem, and wait for it... they all thought they were the only ones! Alone in the universe with a hefty debt load and parents pressuring them to buy a house. With what down payment? In their dreams. I also have a background in Psychology, so I know that, a lot of times, we actually live inside our heads. Strange? Maybe. True? Totally. I’ve spent the past decade studying all I

MILLENNIAL MONEY QUEENS

could find related to money, from the professional academics that landed me my professional designation all the way to money mindset. After a decade watching people of so many different backgrounds and personalities manage close to a billion dollars, I've come to learn a few helpful things.

If you want to pay off debt, increase savings, build financial stability and for some of us who want extra, make our way to designer bags, private jets, luxury cars and exotic vacations, your money makeover starts in your mind.

Here's something that will hopefully make you feel better. For starters, you're not alone, there are millions of millennial women in the same boat as you, maybe even worse off. What I really want to tell you is that, from my perspective, the source of your money problems is not your debt, it's not your job, it's not the economy. Those are all outward manifestations of all we've got going on in our pretty little heads. If you've got money problems, like 70% of the world, you've inherited the poor money blueprint! What in the world is that?

BACK TO THE ROOTS

Let me tell you a story, based on true facts. Thousands of years ago, at the dawn of modern society, in the cradle of civilization, a group of people and priestly appointed kings decided on the following narrative: "Humans

were created to work in the fields and the mines after certain lower gods tasked with that hard labour rebelled.” Wow, we are off to a really good and empowered start. Borrowing and the use of debt began in the ancient Sumerian civilization.

They, too, had the 1%, they were the priests, the kings and queens, and they controlled all the resources the rest of the population worked very hard to produce. “Humans”, as they put it, could only access resources through debt which often led to slavery when it wasn’t paid back. Compound interest, which you will learn about throughout this book, was extensively used. Except, because they understood that money does grow, maybe not in trees but like trees, there would be a peak point of cumulative debt. So, to keep the show running, they had periods of debt clemency, meaning the government wiped out your debt. Imagine the government would decree that your debt, which makes so many millennials suffer so much, was wiped out overnight? Wouldn't that be great? That was part of the deal with the debt system for millennia.

Now, don’t kid yourself, the rules of Sumer didn’t do this just to be nice. They adopted periodic debt clemency to ensure that the population wouldn't rebel and that they would be fit soldiers when the next conquering war was declared. Strategic, right? So, unless you were priestly or royal, you were one of the “humans made to work the fields and the mines” and pretty much destined to be in debt. Hence, the birth of the debt system so

MILLENNIAL MONEY QUEENS

many of us struggle with. That civilization gifted our world lots of amazing technology, like the wheel, the sail, the written word, irrigation and so much more. We have a lot to thank them for, the scarcity and debt money blueprint may just not be one of them. We've evolved since then, but our society has its roots in that kind of mentality, which would become present-day invisible debt enslavement.

Think I'm being harsh? What about the fact that your debt can easily double in just a few years with a practically criminal level of interest rate? What about the fact that sometimes people have to work multiple jobs to just try and meet their minimum payments? What about the fact that banks are in the business of reselling your debt? While some of us are up at night, worrying about meeting our payments, others are raking it in. It can be argued that no one forced anyone into debt. True, but were they transparent about what they were selling you?

“More than one-third of Millennials admit that they didn’t understand the basics of student debt before borrowing, and that women were nearly twice as likely as men, 37 percent vs. 20 percent, to not understand the basics of student loans before they borrowed.”

- ANNE STYCH

Contributing writer, Bizwomen

When I was sold my first credit card, I was certainly not educated enough to realize the ramifications of how carrying a high-interest rate debt balance could negatively affect my future, my disposable income, my confidence and my stress level. I distinctly remember the face of the representative when she sold me that U.S. dollar MasterCard. “You can shop anywhere in the U.S. now,” she said with a giggle, which really meant she had just earned a commission, then she tried to sell me on another card.

I maxed it out in a matter of months buying my boyfriend a new iPod for his birthday, a Gucci wallet for Christmas and a trip to Cancun for New Year’s. Sounds like typical financial practice for an 18-year-old. “My payments are just \$20 a month, this is awesome! I feel rich!” Exactly! That’s exactly how they want you to feel. When we get into the second section of this book, I’m going to teach you some financial magic and show you how you can have your money earn you more money while you sleep, just like the credit card companies are doing with your debt.

In one way or another, we are all descendants from that era when the people were split into the 1% elite priests, kings and queens and the struggling 99% mere humans. Maybe not genetic descendants but certainly social descendants, as that was the cradle of civilization, they “invented our world”. Cultures mixed and matched over time, and now millennials are the most ethnically diverse generation! Yay! Except the money blueprints didn’t mix so much. You were pretty much stuck inheriting whatever money blue-

MILLENNIAL MONEY QUEENS

print your family had. The elites married each other, and that was about it. Everyone else pretty much starved, and “poverty was a death sentence.”

As historian Prof. Kate Williams put it in the documentary “Capital in the 21st century”, “Jane Austen created a fantasy that you could get your hands on this wealth if you were just a bit fun and just a bit witty. But the reality is there’s no way a Mr Darcy would marry girls like Lizzie Bennet, who actually haven’t got a penny to their names. He would marry an heiress, possibly even a cousin, and create this sort of megalopolis estate. Money marries money. There’s nothing to do with love.” Ouch.

Thank heavens that’s changing now, and I don’t mean about marrying rich! Fast forward hundreds of years, and today, you can have a millennial become an influencer and be paid thousands of dollars for an Instagram post and quickly join the millionaire ranks. You can also have the daughter of a makeup artist turned social worker become an incredibly successful actress and then a princess. Excuse me, a duchess, she lacks royal blood apparently. Ah, the blue bloods, still trying to hold on to control of money and status.

What about the secret inheritance? Well, the descendants of the money holders learned that they didn’t have to do much for money. They inherited the rich blueprint with beliefs that money was abundantly available, that it wasn’t a product of hard work, that it was naturally occurring in their world. Thus continued the lineage of the 1% elite.

The descendants of everyone else inherited the exact opposite, the poor money blueprint. It is rooted in the belief that money is scarce, that it only comes to you as a result of hard work or from borrowing and that you are not entitled to any luxury.

FORGIVENESS IS THE FIRST STEP TO FREEDOM

I want to make one thing clear. **Let's forgive everyone, from the group who invented debt thousands of years ago to the current system we live with.** After all, debt is not always bad. Yes, there is a way to make debt work for you, and you will learn how later on in this book. Let's forgive the bank reps who sold us student loans when we were 16 years old and couldn't even drive, let alone make a decision that would impact the next 3 decades of our lives and become a nearly insurmountable mountain of interest payments. **When you forgive, you open up some much-needed space for the new awesomeness we are creating.** So, let's forgive, forget and move on, shall we?

MILLENNIAL MONEY QUEENS

MONEY IS PERSONAL

Money is an interesting thing; it is one of the most important things in our lives and yet we are not given any preparation on how to properly handle it. On top of that, the experiences we all have with money vary incredibly, because it seems money is not really as objective and absolute as I used to think. **Your experience with money is based on your beliefs, which are a combination of what you learned from your elders and your own experiences.** Where you choose to spend money, what your priorities are, what your beliefs about how to make it and where to spend it all stem from your blueprint, which is either a rich one or a poor one.

The money blueprint explains why I heard the following priorities when I was out for brunch with two girlfriends I've known for decades. One of them, Lisa, was raised in a million-dollar house in a nice neighbourhood. Her parents were successful. Her dad was the chilliest dad you ever met, and her mom was a bit of a nervous wreck, though you'd never tell meeting her for the first time. Lisa studied in a private school, then she majored in marketing and ended up working for a Fortune 500 company. "My next big purchase will be diamond earrings. I don't need anything huge, but I want something classy and timeless, like the ones my mom had. I want to be an independent woman and be able to buy myself these things."

Our other friend, Jackie, was the daughter of a single dad, and they

struggled big time. “Wow, Lisa, diamond earrings are amazing. Maybe if I find a good deal, but honestly, my student loan is eating away at everything right now.” Jackie lived on credit for mostly everything. She graduated from business school with serious debt, even though her dad was employed at a big cosmetics company. They kept trying to keep up with the Joneses, or the Kardashians, so they could never amass wealth. Jackie figured she would follow in her dad’s footsteps, except they couldn’t afford top-notch education. The answer? Student loans, of course! “I thought I’d be making all this money and that I’d be able to pay off the loan easily, but I can barely keep up with payments.” She sounded so discouraged, it broke my heart.

To Lisa, money came easily. Her experience of money was a good one, so much that it was hard for her to understand that financial struggle even exists. To Jackie, no matter how hard she tried, she just couldn’t get a handle on money.

So, what’s the deal? I recently read an article entitled “Millennials don’t stand a chance.” It started like this: “Hello, lost generation.” Wow, thanks for the positive vibes and the encouragement! Well, it’s not the end of the world, ladies. There is a silver lining! Because we do live in a world where millennials can overcome debt and become millionaires in just a few years. How? We need to give you a rich money blueprint for starters, so without further ado, let the class begin.

MONEY QUEEN MOVE

EMBODYING THE KNOWLEDGE

Welcome to your first money queen move! At the end of each chapter, you'll find this page with the moves that money queens make in their transformational journey. As interesting or as important as any information can be, it will only be valuable and true to you once you apply it, once you embody this knowledge! With journaling, reflections and actions, you will be one step closer to mastering money!

MONEY ASSOCIATION

What are the first words that come to mind when you think of money?

MARIA ALCANTARA

MONEY TALK IN YOUR CIRCLES

Is money a topic often discussed with family and friends or mostly avoided?

MONEY HISTORY

What is the first memory you have relating to money?

MONEY FORGIVENESS

In order to strengthen your relationship to money, practice forgiveness sessions daily. This simple yet incredibly powerful exercise will start the clearing process in deep levels of your mind and prepare you to receive the Rich Money Blueprint.

Start by taking deep and rhythmic breaks to calm your nervous system and your analytical mind. You practice money forgiveness simply by thinking of all the things you perceive that are wrong with money in your life. It could be that you feel money is not present enough in your life, or that there is poverty and hunger in the world, or that you didn't have the money you needed in certain moments in your life. Think about your life and about the world.

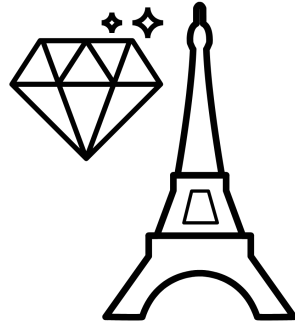
Then take another deep breath and say the following to every situation you thought of:

“Money, I forgive you”

It's not that money itself has a grudge and needs your forgiveness, it's mostly that we create grudges within. Left untreated, they become blocks as you will learn later on in this book.

We tend to think that forgiveness is for someone who has wronged us. In my experience, forgiveness is much more personal than that. When we feel we've been wronged, we end up with a wound within. This wound grows over time until healed, all our energy will be consumed by it. Therefore, when you forgive, you are healing this wound within yourself. This works like magic with money!

Clear the space in your mind and let's raise the vibes!



CHAPTER 2

THE RICH MONEY BLUEPRINT

*“You can have all the knowledge and skills in the world,
but if your money “blueprint” isn’t set for success, you’re financially doomed.”*

- T. HARV EKER

Businessman

Want to stop living paycheque to paycheque and overcome your debt? Or maybe even wake up in silky smooth pyjamas overlooking the Burj Khalifa in Dubai, then lounge around an infinity pool by the Tyrrhenian Sea with a flower crown in your hair in Positano, and end the day with a private dinner

MARIA ALCANTARA

at the Eiffel Tower? Let's get your rich money blueprint on.

Professor Maria is entering the class, let me put on my Tom Ford glasses and teach you to be rich in your mind first. Don't worry, I'll teach you to be rich in the world, too. Keep reading, boo. The rich money blueprint has 4 pillars: growth, long-term, positive and abundant.

GROWTH

Your brain is the most advanced supercomputer there is. It has no limit, it can learn anything, you are a marvel! The problem is that we don't see ourselves this way. First of all, we think education ends when we finish school. Sorry-not-sorry to tell you, that kind of mindset is called fixed mindset, and it is mental and financial death! Adopting a fixed mindset guarantees you won't be strutting around in Louboutins. Growth mindset is all about embracing learning. You don't know everything, and nowadays, the flow information is lightspeed fast, so we gotta keep up! There are always new ways of making money, which means new ways to pay down your debt and quit your great 9-5 that still keeps you in a cubicle all day.

MILLENNIAL MONEY QUEENS

“Love challenges, be intrigued by mistakes, enjoy effort and keep on learning.”

- CAROL DWECK

Psychologist

I first discovered the growth mindset when my husband was studying for the Canadian Securities Course, which is the foundation of the Canadian financial services industry. Back then, he and a friend of ours were taking the exam at the same time, while I was studying psychology in college. I looked up to both of them with awe and admiration. I used to think, “Wow, I can’t believe how smart they are, I could never do something like that. I’m not intelligent enough.” Ouch! That, my friend, is fixed mindset 101, and it will keep you fixed in your poor money blueprint for the rest of your days.

Spoiler alert, I ended up passing that same exam along with multiple others that followed, becoming eligible to be a certified investment advisor and earning my designation in portfolio management. All because I trained my mind to shift from fixed to growth. So, moral of the story, every time you think of yourself as small, incapable, not good enough, stop, ok? Just stop! That is a lie you are telling yourself because you’re maybe a little scared. And that’s ok! But you won’t know until you try, and the truth is most of us suck at things when we start, and then we get better!

LONG-TERM

I have a love-hate relationship with blue bloods. Remember who they are? Self-appointed royals from thousands of years ago, back when the public could not elect their government. I'm not a fan of some of their tactics, but also, I'll be honest, there's a lot to learn (remember, growth mindset!). One of their tactics is to think long-term, like really long-term. They tend to think in terms of generations. That's why hundreds of years ago, a family member bought some land, and generations later, all the descendants live off the interest that asset keeps generating. Yep, they wouldn't even consider the need to work for money!

As a generation, we've been heavily conditioned to think short-term, "to worship productivity and efficiency". Everything is on-demand, here and now. We UberEats our meals, we Netflix entire seasons of a show in one weekend, pretty much anything we want, we can get on Amazon and have it at our doorstep before we even get home. Ah, what a life! Is it, though?

In the 70s, at Stanford University, psychologist and professor Walter Mischel led an experiment involving marshmallows and kids. I'll keep it short: the kids were offered either one marshmallow now or two if they waited a period of time. They followed those kids and noted how those who were able to wait did better in life later on. Why? Because they got the meaning of delayed gratification instead of instant gratification.

MILLENNIAL MONEY QUEENS

What does that have to do with you? Well, you can either spend \$8 on a Grande Almond Honey Flat White with Starbucks Blonde® Espresso Chestnut Praline Latte twice a week, every single week, which means you are spending \$800 a year on coffee, sugar, milk, very clever marketing and very expensive rent for that Starbucks store, or you can invest that \$800 and grow it into a down payment for a house in 10 years. Does a decade sound too long? Think about it like this: If you had done this 10 years ago, you'd be buying a house right now! Listen, there's no point in dwelling on the past, there's shifting your mindset from short-term instant gratification to long-term fortune building delayed gratification. Maybe you don't spend money on Starbucks, but I promise you, there are better ways to spend your money than you are right now, ways that will help you on your path to becoming a millionaire. Worth it, no?

I'll end this section with this: I'm not telling you to choose between your lattes (or whatever other little pleasure you have) and buying a property, I'm telling you that there's a time and place for everything. Maybe you are passionate about those lattes and absolutely need them, that's cool, the point here is to be smart about your money, not frugal till you die! You will learn all about smart and conscious spending later on, so making these decisions will be easy-peasy.

If you want to get to a point where you are the master of your money and be financially independent of everyone and everything, whether it's

your family, the bank or your job, you need to prioritize and learn these life-changing money skills, darling. I want you to have all those lattes and whatever else you want, that's why I took the time to write this book; I've got your back. A long-term mindset is an absolute key pillar to creating wealth and mastering money. If lattes are what you want, be smart now and secure lifelong lattes! It's time to think in decades, project where you want to be in ten years! Every professional and financial move you make will be so much more impactful.

POSITIVITY

Life may not always be rainbows and unicorns, but there is something to be said about the power of positive thinking. Positivity anchored on gratitude, forgiveness and meditation promises personal transformation. Is this what we need?

I recently watched an interview where the guest was discussing the millennial question. He said, among other things, that we are a product of some questionable parenting practices. As a generation, we were rewarded for just showing up, not necessarily for doing well, like getting a participation medal even though you arrived last in the race.

MILLENNIAL MONEY QUEENS

It's funny how there is so much criticism and judgement in the world; meanwhile, no one really has all the answers. When you think about it, it sounds almost silly to judge, forget the fact that judging puts you in a really bad mood!

Apparently, part of the reason why millennials are so screwed up is that we are the product of parents and institutions who embarked on the positive psychology bandwagon in the 90s, which means that now we are called ballsy and entitled.

But is positive psychology all bad? And how does it relate to our money problems? Very simply, being negative about life is no fun and financially detrimental! It kills your creativity and, when adopted chronically, will lead to changes in behaviour involving anxiety and depression. Oh ya, let me not forget, according to research, we have the highest rate of depression than other generations. Good luck getting out of debt when it's hard enough getting out of bed.

Do we have a tough hand to play? For most millennials, I'd say for sure. So many of us entered the job market with heavy debt and lived through a historic recession. Then, just as we were starting to get some footing, a freaking pandemic hit! Is this a sci-fi movie? Nope! In fact, we may be the group most financially hit by the pandemic. In other words, our terrible financial situation just got worse.

Need more? According to research, millennials feel like “jobs have an

outsized role in their overall mental health. Because of longer work hours and stagnant wages, millennials suffer from higher rates of burnout than other generations. Many of them have even quit their jobs for mental-health reasons.” Is that why they call us spoiled and entitled? I don’t know about you, but when I worked the typical 40-hour week in an office, I often felt like I had no higher purpose or fulfillment, only to have \$100 left to show for it after all my living expenses were paid.

Stuff’s getting real. If we want to make it out of this financially and physically alive and well, we need to be positive, otherwise, what’s the point?! Unless we proactively and voluntarily develop a positive mindset, the odds of us enjoying our life, getting out of debt and growing our wealth are looking pretty slim.

I’m an eternal optimist, and I love it. My high vibes have been the consistent feedback I’ve gotten everywhere I worked and from pretty much everyone who knows me. Do you know why I choose to be like that? Because life is just more exciting that way. I didn’t come here to suffer, and neither did you. I want to have my cake and eat it too, otherwise, why even bother? Being positive is one of the pillars of a rich money mindset because without it, you simply cannot be creative and inspired enough to take the action you need to turn your ship around. We are headed towards a major wreck, and I don’t want you to declare bankruptcy. I want you to become a millionaire, and positivity is the mindset that all millennials need

MILLENNIAL MONEY QUEENS

right now. In the words of Queen Bey(once)...

“We're smart enough to make these millions,
strong enough to bear the children,
then get back to business.”

ABUNDANCE

In the early 2000s, a very strong marketing campaign was created for a movie and a book called “The Secret”. It aimed to popularize the law of attraction and that your thoughts shape your reality. Well, this isn't new, and it isn't a secret. This knowledge has been around for thousands of years. Modern society has discredited most of it as hocus pocus, but science and research led by incredible people like neuroscientist Dr Joe Dispenza are now on the path to proving that we are the creators of our lives instead of the hopeless victims we thought we were. Quantum science seems to agree that we are essentially made of energy and so is everything else, and energy by its very nature is abundant and infinite since it can morph into anything and everything!

Manifesting money seems to be a huge thing online with millennials these days. Manifestation coaches are popping up everywhere, promising to

teach you how to change your thoughts and your beliefs, and money will just spontaneously manifest in your life. While I am a huge fan of the power of human beings, and I certainly have seen enough research showing how powerful we are and how blocked we are in our minds when it comes to money, you still need to have a plan and take action. That's why my teaching and my philosophy are a blend of money in your mind and money in your world!

The winning team you need to master money is a combination of psychology, personal finance and the pure magic of abundance in life that we honestly cannot fully explain but we can certainly observe and experience.

There's an invisible coherent energy in everything in our world. In 1202, Italian mathematician Leonardo Bonacci published a book called Liber Abaci where he introduced the Hindu-Arabic numeral system to Europe at a time where Roman numerals were still mainly used. This revolutionized banking and accounting. The magic in his work goes far beyond that, Fibonacci describes a naturally occurring sequence of numbers that seem to mathematically describe parts of our world. He found this sequence when trying to figure out the population growth of rabbits. That same sequence has been described in ancient Sanskrit texts and spans across all kinds of things in our world. It is found in the shape of a flower, in fluctuations in the stock market, in a nautilus shell and even in pineapples! The Fibonacci sequence is everywhere in our universe, from how a foetus forms to how

MILLENNIAL MONEY QUEENS

galaxies spin. It is the proof of coherent abundance occurring naturally in our world. It is pure expansion. Money grows the same way, whether it is an investment or debt.

I've seen too many people with enough money to theoretically make anyone happy, and yet they were miserable. Why? Because money itself will not buy you happiness, but the lack of it will certainly send anyone into a panic attack. So, let's talk about the concept of true wealth. It is not just money, although it includes money. It is the combination of an abundance of money, health, love, joy, purpose and all other good things in life that bring you up. It is abundance manifested in many forms, which are all inter-linked together. It is your birthright to be a part of this universe of true wealth, and it is time for you to accept your divine inheritance!

Make the most of this natural flow that is all around you. The final pillar of the rich money blueprint is abundance. It is feeling and experiencing in your mind, your body and your heart the vibrant, joyful, flowing nature of abundance. Gratitude is the open door to this force. When you are grateful, you welcome the riches and opulence of the universe into your life! No matter how much or how little anyone has, gratitude is the key to experiencing abundance in all its forms and attracting all that you need and desire.

“When you are grateful, fear disappears and abundance appears”

- TONY ROBBINS

Entrepreneur

Your brain cannot see lack and abundance simultaneously. When you live in lack, you experience strain financially, emotionally, physically and spiritually. Conversely, when you spend the first few moments of your waking hours in gratitude for being exactly where you are, for all that has brought you here, you position yourself for creativity, joy, inspiration, freedom and abundance, all the ingredients required for financial freedom!

The four mindset pillars of growth, long-term, positivity and abundance are the secret sauce to creating wealth. Without them, no matter what fancy financial tools and techniques you have, you simply cannot experience true wealth. Everything in our world stems first from thought. Repeated thoughts become patterns, and grow into beliefs and blueprints. You now have the most important cornerstone to building your wealthy life, the rich money blueprint.

MONEY QUEEN MOVE

EMBODYING THE KNOWLEDGE

The Rich Money Blueprint is the cornerstone of your financial transformation. No matter what winning lotto ticket or stock tip you get, until you embody this knowledge, your unconscious money blocks will continuously play out in your life.

GROWTH

What is a financial mistake you believe you made and is responsible for your current condition?

MARIA ALCANTARA

Reformulate this to show yourself that your story doesn't end here, this is just a chapter in your life. Whatever mistake you believe you have made serves the higher purpose of helping you become a millennial money queen. Learn from it and continue growing your wealth!

LONG-TERM

Where do you see yourself in the next 10, 20 and 30 years? What financial, professional and life goals do you want to accomplish?

MILLENNIAL MONEY QUEENS

POSITIVITY

What is the most uplifting thing in your life right now? What makes you feel your best?

ABUNDANCE

What are you most grateful for in your life? What do you wish to have more of in your life?

Daily Gratitude and Abundance Practice

Every morning, before you get out of bed, begin your day with gratitude for being here, for waking up, for that day you are about to live. Continue listing all the things you are grateful for like the bed you slept in, the house that shelters you, the shower that will cleanse, warm and comfort you, the breakfast that will energize you.

Keep going and list all the people, situations, events and things you are grateful for.

Everything in your life has the purpose of serving you to reach your highest level. Those challenges we so easily condemn are actually great opportunities for transformation and growth.

So yes, be grateful even for the hardship, because one day you will see what an important role it played in your journey towards greatness, mastery and abundance!



CHAPTER 3

DISSOLVING MONEY BLOCKS

“You must begin to understand, therefore, that the present state of your bank account, your sales, your health, your social life, your position at work, etc, is nothing more than the physical manifestation of your previous thinking.”

- BOB PROCTOR

Author

So, now you know all about the rich money blueprint. It’s based on growth, positivity, long-term thinking, and abundance. Sounds easy, right? Except you’ve still got voices in your head telling you it’s not that easy, or asking whether you can really do this. Ah, dear old money blocks, let’s blast right

through them and free you from the shackles of financial victimhood.

I came across the notion of money blocks when I first embarked on my epic quest to master money. Have you ever felt frustrated about money? It's kind of like doing your best and following the plan laid out by society, only to find that you're not really getting ahead in life. You can't afford the things you want. It's not that you're lazy and entitled, you work for it! Yet somehow, big scores just never really pan out. I watched many family members and friends work unbelievably hard and have nothing to show for it. "Do they have money blocks too?" I kept wondering.

I've seen a lot of people follow sound financial advice but never accumulate money and wealth. I mean true wealth, money in the bank and an ecstatic state of mind, living their best life. Let's be real, if you've got millions but are miserable, there's still something quite wrong. Somehow, a lot of people who play by typical financial rules aren't always lucky. While others can drop out of school, seem like an outcast for years while working on their own projects and then make millions unconventionally like singing about alcohol, girls and cars. What a freaking conundrum that is.

THE OTHER SIDE OF MONEY

This led me to examine the esoteric side of money. Money blocks kept

MILLENNIAL MONEY QUEENS

coming up in my research! You see, I followed the plan. I went to school and got the promised land job yet I was not able to live the lifestyle I desired, with freedom to control my time and a level of income that met my desires. Then it hit me like a ton of bricks! “Money is the root of all evil”. Have you ever heard that saying? It is the source code money block for humanity. The moment I started paying attention to all the judgement, fear, guilt and shame teachings most of us absorb as young children, it became crystal clear that I indeed was filled with money blocks.

Whether we like it or not, most of us have been exposed to these money blocks. Messages like “rich people are greedy, money is difficult to earn, there’s not enough money for everyone” have been present in our communities, our media and even our dinner table and have been influencing our personal relationship with money.

What did you hear as a child that is still buried deep inside of you and keeping wealth from you? What emotions do you associate with money? Emotions are simply energy in motion, some energies attract while others repel. How you feel about money is important because emotions and their associated habitual thought patterns are the building blocks of limiting beliefs. Those limiting beliefs make up a poor money blueprint and keep you trapped in financial hardship. Essentially, they all mean one thing, you don’t think you can have enough money to fully relax. No matter how much you save, budget or attempt to increase your income, money doesn’t easily flow

into your hands.

The uncomfortable reality is that, up until recently, people never even questioned limiting beliefs about money and ensuing blocks. That's why we have generational money block baggage. Generation after generation, children kept learning that there wasn't enough money and that money was really hard to come by. With all due respect to our collective ancestors, we understand that their struggle was real, but this is our time to shine! Unless you actively banish those money blocks and replace them with the empowering rich money blueprint, you will continue to struggle with money.

HERE'S ANOTHER MONEY SECRET

Spending excessive time and energy on money blocks becomes counter-productive, neuroscientifically speaking. "Neurons that fire together, wire together", so too much focus on blocks may just end up reinforcing them, and it easily ends up turning into a victim party and a blame game. We don't have time for that anymore; we need to get our act together if we want to change our situation. Our time is better spent on overcoming them. Realize they are there, realize you inherited them, and then move on to installing your rich blueprint.

Most beliefs about money you've accepted come from your family story.

MILLENNIAL MONEY QUEENS

It starts off with first-hand experiences as you watched how your parents handled money when you were a kid. Did they talk about money positively or was it a source of arguing and stress? That was your introduction to money. Now, remember, beliefs are passed down. So your parents also learned from their parents and so on. That's exactly how the blueprints get stuck in families and how they become inheritances. Every once in a while, a rebel comes up! They decide to try something different than what their parents taught them and lo and behold, they alter the blueprint! This is you now! It's your turn to alter your blueprint and change the destiny of your lineage! How exciting!

So, let's bust this simply and clearly: you are not anyone's minion. It's time to grow up and take responsibility for our money and our lives. If you want to make a decent income and live comfortably, it's up to you to do that, not your parents, not your spouse, not your employer. It's all on you, baby, and that's a good thing! You are not a worker drone, you are entirely capable of creating independent income while travelling the world, if that's what you want. You just don't know how yet, and that is exactly what you are learning in this book. You are learning the life-changing mindset and financial tools to break free from a suffocating lifestyle of meaningless work and an uninspiring amount of income and instead to create a life of joy, freedom and abundance. About time, right?

Remove these blocks in your head by understanding that in whatever

form they come to you, this is simply an inheritance. It's not who you are. It's time to say, "Thanks, but no, thanks!" Create the vision for what you want, dismiss the constant "not enough" thought loops and then get to work! Your debt won't pay itself off, and your millions won't appear overnight because you thought about it. Sure, thinking about it is part of the process, but bringing something into our reality takes focus and dedicated action. Not just thought or just hard work, but a harmonious blend of both.

THE MIRAGE

These blocks feel very real for two reasons. Firstly, because they are actual neurological patterns in your brain. Secondly, because they are way below your level of awareness, deep in your subconscious. So, are we doomed? Not at all, it's all a matter of learning how to shift this, and here's how.

Neuroscientifically speaking, affirmations rewire your brain, so this is something we all need to be doing daily! Your subconscious mind also speaks in images, so when you visualize, you are actively overriding the blocks and replacing them with what you actually want to experience.

The only problem is that when we use affirmations and visualizations,

MILLENNIAL MONEY QUEENS

we tend to not believe them, which drains away all your power in using these life-changing tools! Why do we not believe? Because we don't understand them. Our conscious mind is saying, "This is B.S., no matter how many times I repeat 'I am a millionaire', it doesn't make it any more true". Makes sense, it's not by lying to yourself that you will create the life of your dreams. Yet, there is another perspective which is far more helpful.

HERE'S THE DEAL

Affirmations and visualizations are projections for what you want to bring into your life, not a narration of the past! But that's not the way most people see it, so that's why it doesn't work for most people. Then you hear stories of big names like Will Smith, Jim Carey, Oprah Winfrey, Tony Robbins, Jay-Z, Lady Gaga, Arnold Schwarzenegger, Denzel Washington, Kanye West, LMFAO, Russel Brand, Conor McGregor, need more? Beyonce, Katy Perry, Idris Elba and many others all support that imagining their success was key to achieving it. Good enough for them should be good enough for all of us, no? Meek Mill says it best:

"Laws of attraction, you just think I'm rappin',
I'm just puttin' out the energy so I can grab it,

MARIA ALCANTARA

Everything that's in my memory that I imagined,
It's finally here, hundred million in a year”

Cheers to hundred-million-dollar years for all of us!

Each and every one of us has the power to make our dreams our reality. It all depends on you believing you can do it and then taking the necessary action. “I AM” are the most powerful words you can say to yourself. They go right into the core of your being and your perception of your identity. They signal to your brain to hardcode whatever follows, because to you, that is who you are.

Speaking of identity, that’s also why change can be so hard sometimes. The mind makes interesting associations between our beliefs and our perception of ourselves. We unconsciously hang so tight to these perceptions that our mind fears losing something of value when change comes up. It even fears losing itself! All this is happening deep in your mind, way below your awareness.

You now know that affirmations actively wire your brain. Their correct use is as projections for what you want to experience. There are parts of your brain dedicated to listening to your wishes and then to help you achieve it! Your reticular activating system (RAS) will either filter out unimportant things or highlight very important things. This is like noticing your new car everywhere on the road, or seeing pregnant women everywhere

MILLENNIAL MONEY QUEENS

when you are also pregnant. Things that were almost invisible before because the RAS was filtering it out suddenly seem to be everywhere once it becomes important to you because the RAS is highlighting it instead. Pretty amazing, right?

You can control that with the simple command “I AM”. Whenever you say, “I am”, follow it only with something that is very important to you and that you want to experience, like, “I am wealthy, I am financially free, I am a millennial money queen!” Use these words wisely, darling, they are very powerful! Your RAS will be programmed to highlight things to you that relate to being financially free, like a new business opportunity. It truly works like magic!

The truth is that opportunities are always all around us. When we live our lives with our inherited money blocks, we filter out these life-changing possibilities. We have thoughts like “I’m not smart enough to start my dream business, I’m not good with money, I’ll never get out of debt”. These thoughts only feed the limiting beliefs and strengthen the money blocks. When you allow yourself to suspend these limiting beliefs and try living another way, you’ll be amazed at the results! Millennial money queens are not always born confident, money-smart and business-savvy, they become like that after a single moment’s choice, a decision to let go of what they believed so far and allow life to surprise them.

“We need to get women to the point where they aren’t apologizing.

It’s time to take ownership in our success”

- TORY BURCH

Designer and Businesswoman

Limiting beliefs about yourself and money act like bricks on a wall. That wall blocks all the natural flow of abundance that is always all around, hence the term money blocks. You’ll get to practice this in today’s money queen move with a guided meditation that has changed the game for me. Beware, for miracles may occur! You will be speaking directly to your subconscious mind and giving it an alternate reality of your relationship to money.

MONEY QUEEN MOVE

EMBODYING THE KNOWLEDGE

Removing Money Blocks Guided Meditation

Picture a brick wall.

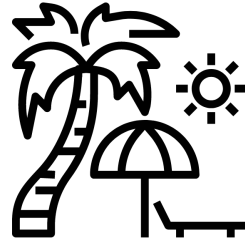
Every brick has an inscribed limiting belief you hold about money. Start by telling yourself that you are simply exploring, you still have the bricks. If you want to go back to how things were, you can simply put them back.

Then proceed to removing the bricks. One by one, lay them aside. Notice how there is a golden light peeking through from behind the wall. That is the light of abundance making its way to your life experience! Once all the bricks are removed, you see the happiest, wealthiest and most abundant and glowing version of yourself.

It is you living your dream life!

See how happy, relaxed and relieved you seem.

That is who you are once you allow all your money blocks to dissolve!



CHAPTER 4

DREAM LIFE DESIGN

“A girl should be two things: who and what she wants”

- COCO CHANEL

Designer and Businesswoman

When I was studying to become a portfolio manager, I often offered my friends free wealth management consultations and got to practice my finance skills. This started completely unintentionally. We’d meet up on Friday nights, and after hours of listening to their complaints about their jobs, their colleagues, their debt and need for more income, I’d say, “I totally hear you, I’d love to help!” Their answer always was, “Aren’t you in wealth management? I have no wealth”. Over time, they began to open up, and I realized a few very important things that keep millennials trapped in money

struggles:

1- We are quick to complain but slow to open up in an honest conversation about money.

I found that most of my peers were drowning in shame for their financial instability. Because of that, they postponed dealing with the situation. When it comes to money problems, postponing is never a good idea. Millennials are at a key juncture in their wealth-building journey. We have one of the most valuable commodities. Even more valuable than money, we have time! That does not mean postpone, it means start now because money needs time to grow, just like trees do. Remember, everything in our world grows by the invisible law of abundance, which means plant your money seeds now! It also means your debt will grow until you deal with it.

2- Money is a major source of stress, which means we shut off even more.

When I talked to my friends about budgeting, they all cringed. When I asked why, they told me that it felt restrictive, stressful and discouraging. They said that they worked so hard and so long that at least they could splurge here and there. Except they didn't understand the future value of

money, so they weren't fully equipped to understand the financial consequences of multiple \$16 cocktails every weekend.

You see, money is very personal. A budget that may work for one person or generation may not work for another! We are all unique, with individual perspectives and circumstances, therefore our approach to money needs to be equally tailored. When we apply a cookie-cutter approach to money and it doesn't work, we get stressed and end up reinforcing that "we are just not good with money", we shut off again and the vicious cycle continues.

3- And, my favourite, whenever we talked about money, they felt like anyone who knew anything about money was condescending and that made them feel dumb.

Not exactly empowering, is it? They said that although they'd love to have an investment portfolio, they didn't trust advisors, and that after watching *The Wolf of Wall Street*, they felt like it was all a scam. This kind of feedback got me thinking. These were my friends that I wanted to help. I was wildly motivated to find a way and had free rein, so I started experimenting.

One day, I asked my friend: "Allie, if money wasn't part of the equation, if you could achieve your biggest dream, what would it be?" Wow, this girl

lit up like the Rockefeller Christmas tree. “OMG, I would start my own business, and I would move to Tuscany!” That sent the whole group into a night-long conversation about our dreams. When we talked about money, no one wanted to even mention a dream, because they felt like it was impossible. As soon as we took money out of the equation, they all began dreaming again (remember, your imagination is key in overriding blocks and creating something new in your life).

I found that very interesting, and again, I was experimenting, so I thought, “Let’s see how far we can take this.” The next day, several of them called me saying they couldn't sleep. They were busy imagining their dream life. They were beyond excited and determined to figure out how to get there and asked me to help work through the money. So, I took note. “Ok, we have to dream to get excited, otherwise, no one wants to talk about their finances. We need to lead with dreams, not with pure money. Money is the resource to achieve those dreams and hopefully, the side effect as well!”

If you want to get anywhere in life, it’s helpful to have a plan. Parts of the reason why it’s difficult for anyone to save are that a) somehow, a lot of us don’t see the future as real or possible and b) because we, millennials, get anxious as soon as we start coming up with plans because money is a stressful subject for many of us. It’s difficult to dream up what kind of house we want to live in when we look at the numbers and realize that we can’t afford it. It can be difficult enough to buy a starter home, let alone that million-

MILLENNIAL MONEY QUEENS

dollar beach house so many of us want. So, let's take a different approach.

I'll sum up the rest of the story. I worked with those friends and taught them about the poor money blueprint they inherited. Then they dreamed up their money objectives and life goals. They adopted the rich money blueprint by developing the four mindset pillars: growth, long-term, positivity and abundance. They used life-changing tools like affirmations and visualizations, and then they set the money wheels in motion in real life as you will learn in the next section of this book. I'm proud to say that every single one of them upgraded their lives. They bought their dream homes, they quit their jobs and became independent, some of them moved away and some of them started families. It all began with their dreams. We took care of the money in their mind, and then we took care of the money in the world, and ta-da! Dream life achieved! Now it's your turn!

“The only way you can measure your success is by reflecting and seeing what you want out of the experience. And the journey is just as much a part of the success you seek out”

- JESSICA ALBA

Actor and Businesswoman

IT ALL STARTS IN YOUR MIND

Everything that we create in our world begins with a thought. So, unless you start thinking about where you want to go with your money and your life, you won't get anywhere. Typical financial plans start with where you are right now, then what your objectives are, and your financial planner will come up with a course of action to bridge the gap. Well, a lot of plans fail because people don't stick to them. We somehow think, "Yes, when I have a normal month, I'll save", but we haven't had normal months in quite a while, have we? And we are often down about our current financial situations, like my friends were, so it gets really hard to get excited about growing the money needed to make those dreams come true.

This is where things start to get exciting again. On the next page, you have a blank slate, a white canvas, an empty vision board, they really do work! I want you to throw the best you've got on it, your biggest, wildest dreams for your money and your life. Do you want adventure? Do you want a new car? A home? Multiple homes? A business? What kind of business? Joy? Health? Peace of mind? Tranquility? Loving relationships? Include your goals, your objectives and your vision, make it compelling and pretend like money is no object. Now is not the time to worry about it, it's time to get excited!

MILLENNIAL MONEY QUEENS

You are further along your money mastery journey than you've ever been! Sis, take a moment here and give yourself some serious recognition. Thank yourself for choosing to do this now. Later on, you'll be thanking yourself when your money starts pouring in. It may not seem like it yet, but you've already removed many obstacles between you and your financial success. Those invisible blocks are unsurmountable until you deal with them. Until you create a compelling vision for your life, you'll never take the necessary action. We've taken care of the money in your mind, our next step is to take care of the money in your world. Let's jump right in.

MONEY QUEEN MOVE

EMBODYING THE KNOWLEDGE

Designing your dream life is easier than we think. Our analytical mind quickly gets caught in the facts we believe will either realize or crush our dreams. The truth is that you have this one life to live. Make the most of it, live how you want to live. It is only your perceived limitations that are stopping you!

For the next few moments, put aside all the facts you think you know about what is possible for you. Pretend you are a little kid again dreaming up what you want to be when you grow up. The possibilities are endless, allow yourself to dream big!

What do you desire the most for your life?

MILLENNIAL MONEY QUEENS

What are you passionate about?

What inspires you?

What motivates you?

MARIA ALCANTARA

What kind of income do you desire?

What kind of lifestyle do you want to live?

What does your perfect day-to-day look like?

PART 2

MONEY IN THE WORLD



CHAPTER 5

1-2-3, DEBT-FREE!

“Financial peace isn’t the acquisition of stuff. It’s learning to live on less than you make, so you can give money back and have money to invest. You can’t win until you do this”

-DAVE RAMSEY

Personal Finance Advisor

It has been said that our generation is financially doomed. The reality is that no one is coming to save us. What we now need, as millennial women, is to make a dramatic change if we want to create wealth. We do that by increasing our income, decreasing our liabilities and growing our assets.

In this section, you will learn how to put your money wheels in motion, how to pluck the debt weeds out and how to plant your money seeds to

MILLENNIAL MONEY QUEENS

achieve those dreams we talked about just a few pages ago. Ultimately, it's not just about the money. It's about reaching our full potential, redefining the role of work in our lives and completely shifting the tide from a historically doomed generation to the wealthiest generation ever. So, let's dive right in. It's time to get serious and deal with the outflows, the inflows and the growth of your money.

A few years ago, I received a phone call from my friend Amanda who was smack in the middle of a panic attack. She'd received notice that her debt had gone into collections, and she felt like her life was over. This happens way too often. Debt is crippling our generation because we don't understand it. We were sold debt as a tool to help us move forward in life, and now, the institutions who sold us that debt are making money off our struggle, true story.

Is there a way out? Yes! The first step to overcoming debt is knowing exactly what you are dealing with. It turns out Amanda didn't even know what debt the collectors were calling about! She had a habit of not opening her mail, so the multiple notices she received went unnoticed. To help her out, I enlisted the help of a pro financial planner colleague with 40 years of experience. I had a long philosophical conversation with him about the state of millennial money, and by the end of our conversation, he had given me a foolproof 3-step system to help Amanda and all other debt-enslaved millennials. Here's the secret sauce:

1- FACE THE MUSIC

Find out exactly what you're dealing with so you can create a plan of action to eliminate the debt. Many millennials have multiple sources of debt, usually a combination of credit cards and student loans. This debt can be spread across different institutions, at different rates from 0.5% all the way to the borderline criminal 20%+. You can find out all of your debt by getting your credit report. Credit reporting companies are required by regulation to provide you with one free annual credit report, make sure to get yours!

2- STRATEGIZE

Develop a repayment plan prioritizing the lowest balance debt. Logically, we would want to pay off the highest rate debt first. This is because these balances grow the fastest since the majority of your payments cover the interest expense and not the principal balance, especially if you're only making minimum payments. But human beings are complex, and this doesn't always work. Paying off the lowest balance debt removes an entire account off your liability list and helps you build confidence and momentum to

tackle the bigger debt.

3- TAKE MASSIVE ACTION

Pay more than the minimum. Minimum payments are a dangerous invention. You continuously make payments every month, but you're hardly making a dent on the balance. This happens because, with minimum payments, you are often paying mostly interest charges instead of the actual principal balance, all depending on your balance and the rate. This quickly puts you on a debt treadmill. You keep making payments, but your debt hardly decreases. This means that you are stuck with monthly expenses that eat away at your income and prevent you from using that income for investing and growing your wealth.

A bonus step is to consider promo offers, balance transfers and debt consolidation. Start by calling your lender to see if they have any promo offers. Many times, if you have a good payment history, your lender may give you a promo offer with rates as low as 0% for up to a year. This will give you a major step up by ensuring that your monthly payments are going toward paying off your balance instead of interest.

Next, look into balance transfers. The goal here is to find a lender that will offer you a lower-rate credit card. Firstly, lowering your rate from the

typical 20% will make a huge difference and enable you to get rid of your debt faster. Secondly, there often are introductory offers with rates as low as 0% APR (annual percentage rate), usually for 6-12 months. This buys you time to pay off a balance quicker and sometimes with little to no interest. This also gives you time to find another low-interest rate credit card that you can transfer your balance to once the promo rate ends. With balance transfers, you must make sure to meet your minimum payments; otherwise, the promotional rate will revert to its original interest rate. There is usually a balance transfer fee on the amount you will transfer, often about 3%. For instance, on a \$1,000 balance, the fee would be \$30. Even with this fee, you could be saving hundreds or thousands in interest within the promotional period.

Lastly, consider debt consolidation, which combines multiple high-interest rate debts into a single payment, making your debt more manageable. Debt consolidation may work to your advantage because it helps pay down debt faster and more easily with a single payment at a lower rate. If you have balances on different cards and with different due dates, it can become stressful to manage. A single payment with a lower interest rate can make dealing with debt a little easier. Consolidating can decrease your overall rate from the high 20% to as low as 3%. Rates are always fluctuating; therefore, you must do your research!

MILLENNIAL MONEY QUEENS

All of these tactics can affect your credit score. If you have debt problems, the priority is to pay it down, which, in turn, will eventually improve your credit score. There also are companies dedicated to helping you manage your debt, like credit counsellors who can offer you a free financial health check-up.

“Think like a queen. A queen is not afraid to fail.

Failure is another stepping stone to greatness”

- OPRAH WINFREY

Talk Show Host

Debt is usually a very personal and unique situation depending on how quickly you can pay it back with your income, how much your expenses are and what interest rates your balances carry. Everyone’s got their own blend. The best thing you can do to get out of debt is to stop ignoring it, make deals with the lenders to lower your rate and create a better repayment plan to prioritize making those payments.

Now, even if you don't have debt or when you pay off your loans and you become debt-free, there is debt etiquette to follow to build your fortune. Here’s the right way of using credit and debt:

- It's good to use debt if you invest the borrowed funds and the return you make on your investment is higher than the interest rate you are paying, especially if the return is guaranteed. Therefore, you are making what's called a spread.

- It's good to use credit for living expenses like groceries and utilities to build a solid credit history and increase your credit score, so long as you pay off the balance in full within the grace period, usually 21 days. This way, you never incur interest charges.

Several employers are becoming increasingly aware of the student loan debt load many millennials carry, and some employers are even contributing to solving the problem. Companies like Chegg and PWC are offering programs to assist their millennial employees with these challenges. If you are currently employed, ask your HR department if they have such a plan.

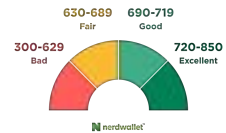
Girl, if you want to get your money right, you've got to get debt right! You are now equipped with the power to stop wasting all your income on credit card bills and start building some serious wealth. You are one step closer to becoming a millennial money queen!

MONEY QUEEN MOVE

EMBODYING THE KNOWLEDGE

There are a few key personal finance metrics you need to know to get your credit game on lock! From your credit score, to liquidity and debt-to-income ratios, you need to be on top of these numbers to master money and be debt-free!

What's your credit score?



What's your liquidity ratio?

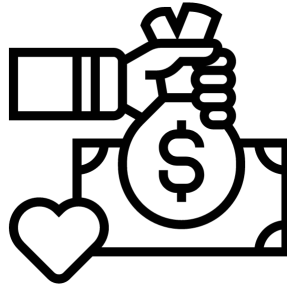
This measures how well you can meet an unforeseen event like an emergency. Target 15% liquidity and being able to meet 3-6 months of living expenses.

Liquidity ratio = liquid assets / net worth (subtract liabilities from assets to find your net worth)

What's your debt-to-income ratio?

This measures how much of your income is being consumed by debt payments. Target below 30%.

Debt-to-income ratio = total recurring debt payments / gross income



CHAPTER 6

SMART AND CONSCIOUS SPENDING

“Having loads of money doesn’t make you a better person...spending it smart does”

-ZIAD ABDELNOUR

Investment Banker

In 1906, Italian philosopher and economist Vilfredo Pareto gifted the world with an incredible observation. As an avid gardener, he noticed that 80% of the peas in his garden came from 20% of his plants. He very intuitively asked, “Where else could I find this ratio?” Pareto found the same ratio in the wealth distribution in Italy, 80% of the land was owned by 20% of the population. The more he looked, the more he found the ratio across society. Now you know why we only wear 20% of our wardrobe 80% of the time!

The Pareto principle is one of the pillars of your new empowered financial life. We will be applying this over and over again because it works like a charm. The first application will be in spending. By applying the Pareto principle to your outflows, you'll likely find that 80% of your income goes to 20% of all your expenses, mostly housing, debt and taxes. According to statistics, millennials on average spend 30% of their income on housing, 30% on debt, 20% on taxes and health care, 10% on transportation and 10% on discretionary spending. This distribution is unique to everyone and varies according to where you live, but those are the major categories and what we are focusing on. Find out exactly where your 80% spending is going, aka your big expenses. Being smart about the big expenses will be far more impactful than being thrifty on the little things. We've already handled the debt expense, next comes housing.

HOUSING

While most millennials aim to buy a property, the majority of us are still renting. Let's see how you can be money smart about your housing expense.

A few years ago, I was in the market to buy a house. I shopped around for months! As much as I wanted to make a purchase right away, I wanted

MILLENNIAL MONEY QUEENS

to buy the right property. The plan was to live there for a couple of years and then turn it into an investment property, but nothing was the right fit. So, instead, I decided to rent for another year while shopping for the ideal place to buy. I found the perfect temporary rental property: a gorgeous townhouse on 3 levels with a skylight, absolutely necessary indoor parking for Canadian winters, and the best part? It was pet friendly. Except, the place was in shambles.

The landlord assured me he would renovate, but my recent experiences with renovations meant a new coat of paint. The whole place needed to be gutted. Naturally, I was a bit skeptical. We came for a visit and saw he had started the renovation. Alright, first requirement checked. As I walked around, I asked for a few upgrades. I told him I needed new doors on my daughter's closet, a dishwasher, a new engine on the garage door, brand new floors everywhere, add this here, take this out from there, on and on. I thought this guy was going to kick me out. To my surprise, he agreed to everything we asked for!

As we were about to close the deal, my husband said: "Wait, let's ask for a reduction on his asking price". I nearly flipped out. No, I actually flipped out at him! Why would he risk losing this perfect property, even if it was a rental? Guess what? The landlord agreed! We ended up saving a few thousand dollars a year just by asking. Sounds simple? it is!

A friend of mine tried a similar strategy. When his roommates relocated,

he was left alone in his 3-bedroom apartment. He wasn't able to find other roommates, nor did he want any. He was convinced he'd have to move, there was no way he could afford the rent on his own. He looked around, but the other options were downright depressing. He also figured he'd take a shot at asking his landlord if he was open to a new arrangement. But he needed a bigger reduction to be able to afford to stay there on his own, so he came up with a clever idea. He made an irresistible offer to the landlord: he would manage and maintain the property and upgrade a few things. The landlord was still in charge of any out-of-pocket maintenance and upgrade expenses, but my friend would take care of everything for him. This essentially took away all the annoying "landlord headaches" while increasing the value of the property. Guess what? His landlord agreed as well!

Typical money tips for millennials who are trying to get control over their finances are to reduce their housing expense by taking on roommates or to eliminate the expense by moving back with their parents temporarily. Alternatively, it is to reduce the housing expense by moving to a smaller place or a less desirable location. While all that can be practical advice and something you may want to consider, we also want to enjoy our living accommodations, especially in the age of working from home and lockdowns. No matter what your arrangement is, negotiating can lead to more money in your pocket. So, don't be afraid to ask!

Whatever your situation may be, there certainly are ways to reduce your

housing expense. Get creative like my friend did and simply ask your landlord if she or he would be open to a reduction or an arrangement, for example if you offered to sign for two years instead of one. Getting \$100 off your rent will result in a \$1,200 savings! Alternatively, you'd have to give up your Monday and Friday lattes for a whole 18 months! See the power of working on the big expenses? The amount you save can be put away into an emergency fund if you don't already have one.

For most millennials, once their debt is under control, their next biggest goal is to buy a property. Buying a property is certainly an important step in building wealth. Past generations often built the bulk of their net worth with their home purchase. That's why they are always so happy to remind us to buy a property! They do have a point, but buying a property is a big commitment and requires the right circumstances; otherwise, it quickly becomes more of a burden than an investment. Home prices and our personal financial situations are different now than they were in our parents' generation. Once you get your money train back on the right tracks, buying a property is something to consider, whether it be for yourself to live in or as an investment property, which will allow you to build assets and create a passive income stream, a major goal in becoming financially independent and strong!

You also need to be prepared to understand how mortgages work and how much you are actually paying for that property. You can easily pay a lot

more for a property just because of interest. If you retain just a few things from this book, other than you are much more powerful than you think you are, may it be that interest is a killer when it's used against you, and it's your best friend when it's working for you. When shopping for a property, consider that as attractive as it may be to take out a 20-year plus mortgage and have lower payments, the interest expense will be higher.

As important as buying a property is, it's not something to rush into, just like marriage, it's gotta be the right match and with the right terms in place. On top of the interest expense from your mortgage, other expenses come with homeownership like maintenance, homeowner association fees, insurance and taxes. So, don't be afraid to continue renting if that's working for you instead of giving in to the "you're paying someone else's mortgage" peer pressure, the flexibility you get with renting may just outweigh the pros of homeownership.

TAXES

There's an almost invisible expense eating away at your income called taxes. Depending on where you live, you are either grateful to pay taxes or passionately disapprove. Either way, if you don't file or pay too much, you're in trouble. A huge part of my work in wealth management was tax

MILLENNIAL MONEY QUEENS

planning. We wanted to make sure our clients kept as much of that hard-earned money as possible. Same goes for you, darling. Being the largest generation in the workforce makes us important taxpayers. We all hope our tax dollars are being put to good use, but at the end of the day, there are some clever accounting tactics you can use to meet your fiscal obligation while also keeping more of what you earn.

If you don't have an accountant, spend the \$200 they'll charge for a simple tax filing, it's likely to be well worth it. Once again, don't be afraid to negotiate, it's helpful to show up well ahead of the hectic tax deadline time to get a better deal. A recent survey showed that 80% of millennials worry about filing their taxes with concerns about making mistakes, not getting the best possible refund and overpaying taxes. Yet only 27% of us will turn to a professional. It's time to get serious about taxes, my friend. The first year my dad stopped doing my taxes, I filed on my own. I assumed everything was ok, even though I never got anything back from the government, whether it was a refund or bill, no assessment, nothing. To me, no news was good news. Girl, was I ever wrong. The following year, my friend referred me to his accountant. I got an irresistible offer, so I decided to give hiring a professional a shot. Well, it turns out that my solo filing never made it to the government! After I made the switch from my dad to my accountant, my tax refund more than doubled. I know you meant well, Dad, but there are places to save and then there are places to invest. Tax filing is one of

them.

Your accountant may pop in once a year, the rest of the time it's you and your money. So, you still need to level up your financial knowledge, do your due diligence, and educate yourself. That's exactly what you are doing now!

We millennials love gigs, side hustles and contract work since it gives us more flexibility and freedom over our time. Becoming an independent worker and generating income on your own can also benefit you from a tax perspective. You open up the option of writing off tax-deductible expenses like car payments, gas, a portion of your rent for a home office, for example, expenses that you would be paying anyway. While I will dive deep into the income perspective in the next chapter, let me just say that the moment you step into contract work, you are taking a step towards independence. And independence requires responsibility. Since you are not an employee, there is likely no withholding tax on the income you receive, which means that you need to save a portion of that income to pay for your taxes when they come due.

I'll never forget my friend Liam's face when he got slapped with quite the hefty tax bill. He, unfortunately, had already spent all his tax money on living expenses. Liam was an independent worker in the video and audio production field and made a great income that year. But because he wasn't thinking ahead and hadn't prepared for taxes, he owed the government tens

MILLENNIAL MONEY QUEENS

of thousands of dollars and only had a few thousand dollars left in his bank account. If he had been properly advised, he would have put away the money for taxes and invested in something safe to earn some interest. See what I mean? Financial literacy is not only legit but really important!

The first thing to do when it comes to taxes is to pay your future self first and reduce your present taxable income. One of the single biggest steps you can take to help your financial situation is to start contributing and hopefully maxing your retirement contributions. Whatever country you live in, there likely is a system where you can contribute to a tax-deferred savings plan, like a 401k or an IRA in the U.S. or an RRSP in Canada. Your contribution reduces your taxable income, this is huge! Instead of paying the government, you are paying yourself, so make the most of this! A problem I've seen with my friends and millennial clients is that they don't think they have enough to contribute right now, so they keep deferring. My friend, what you need to defer is your taxes, not your contributions. Deferring taxes is the difference between a portfolio starting at \$200,000 and growing to \$600,000 without deferring taxes or over \$1,000,000 with deferring taxes! Which one would you want? No brainer, right?

As the young investor that you are, your single biggest edge right now is your time horizon. More time invested means more time for your money to multiply. When we get into the investment section, I'll introduce you to my favourite kind of financial magic, the same one credit card companies are

using against you, compounding! Every decade you put off on your retirement savings means having to save double! Double! That is a huge deal!

When I was in my early twenties, I worked for one of the major Canadian banks. That was a crucial step in my epic money mastery plan. I wanted to go right in the eye of the storm, see, speak, breath, live money, be the money! I had no clue how any of it worked before working there, so my learning curve was pretty steep. I met this one girl who was in my training class for Everyday Banking Associates.

Arianna was also in her early twenties, and when we got talking about retirement savings in the training, it became clear that this girl knew how to play the money game! We became friends and then one day she revealed it to me, “My retirement savings account is already over \$120,000”. I couldn’t believe it. “How on earth did you manage that?” I asked. “I’ve been maxing my contributions since I started working 6 years ago, and I always use employer-matched contributions. You’d be surprised how far that goes, it’s awesome!” Arianna had already guaranteed her future millionaire status, without adding another penny and compounding that account over the next 30 years, her account should grow to over \$1.3M by her 50th birthday.

The employer-matched contribution is free money you don’t want to leave on the table. If you’re employed or plan on getting a job, employer-matched contributions are one of the first things to look at. Typically, each employer will have their own plan with their own terms, but the general

MILLENNIAL MONEY QUEENS

trend is that your employer will match your contribution up to a percentage of income. It would look something like a 100% match up to 3% of annual income, which means that if your salary is \$50,000, your employer will match your contribution up to \$1,500. In practical terms, this means saving \$60 of your bi-weekly paycheque and instead of spending it on dining out, you contribute to your retirement account. This will lower your income taxes and contribute to your future financial security. Let's say you don't change this, and you continue these \$60 savings; in 30 years, you should have \$200,000. Pretty good, right?

Part of the problem is that we feel like 30 years is too far away, so we skip on these little 60-dollar chunks. In 30 years, you will either be thanking yourself or beating yourself up for not having done this now. Imagine you had started 10 years ago when you began working and earned 3% on that money, you'd have close to \$30k right now. That's a down payment for a house!

Talking about down payments, many governments will allow you to borrow from your retirement account for your down payment. First-time homebuyers can use the funds in their retirement account up to a given maximum for a home purchase or home improvement and pay themselves back over a specified period of time. Whatever country you live in, be sure to check out what plans exist for using retirement funds to buy your first home. Millennial money queens tend to love elegant abodes; this is a great

way to be money smart and buy your perfect home.

Being smart about taxes extends beyond tax-deductible contributions. Plans like Roth IRAs and the 529 savings plan allow you to grow your accounts tax-free. Student debt is huge among millennials, as we all know. Many of us are becoming parents now. I certainly wouldn't want my daughter getting stuck in an indebted position in her future. While no one knows what the world will be like in 20 years, starting to save now for your child's education can be a smart move. Just like retirement savings and home buying plans, different countries have different programs. Typically, you contribute after-tax dollars, meaning the contribution does not lower your taxable income and consequently your taxes, but it does allow your contribution to grow in a tax-sheltered environment, which is a huge plus! Some countries or states and provinces also offer grants. Yes, free money! So, it's time to start researching!

My next favourite tax strategy is donating! As a generation, millennials seem to be inclined to give, even when we are often so financially bound. Despite the headlines and the name-calling, we are actually pretty sensitive to important causes like the environment, social, racial and gender equality. We like to have a purpose and to make a difference. As the old saying goes, put your money where your mouth is, but in the case of donating, that really works out for you. A charitable donation is another way to reduce your taxes. It ensures that part of the money you spend is going to a cause that's

MILLENNIAL MONEY QUEENS

important to you, not your government's agenda, which, let's be real, is not always aligned with our values. Would you rather fund military action or your local dog shelter? Remember abundance from the beginning of this book? Abundance relies on the notion that giving and receiving are part of one single motion, like yin and yang, they work together, case in point here. Give to receive, money queen, emotionally and financially.

TRANSPORTATION

The next big expense is transportation. Purchasing a car is typically not as high on our priority list as it was in past generations. If you don't need it and don't enjoy driving, the combination of public transportation, ride- and car-sharing options works just fine. That is while you're single, childless and living close to your office. However, once life gets more complex and the family starts to grow, a car tends to become significantly more important. Trying to fit a car seat, a stroller, a diaper bag, a medium-size dog, groceries and any other random things you may need in a city bus or an uber is not so straight-forward. But as I always say, wealth is personal. If a car is not important to you, don't spend your resources on it! You can easily have access to a car when you need through programs like Zipcar.

For all the SuperCarBlondies (or Brunettes, or Redheads, or Platinum-

Head and so on) and other aspiring millennial money queens, though, a car is definitely on the wish list, often a luxury car. Aussie Millennial Money Queen, Alex Hirschi (aka SuperCarBlondie), created a whole business out of it and joined the two comma club! The same kind of business you will be taught to launch in our next section about money inflows, how awesome!

If luxury cars are your thing, listen to this story. I always thought I couldn't afford my dream car, a white Audi Q5. When the lease on my Jetta ended, I visited the dealer for a renewal. Since we now had a baby, I was on board with the SUV idea. Volkswagen wanted to charge me \$600 for a Tiguan. Our negotiation went from diplomatic to outright brutal, and the best we got was the winter mats that come with the car. In perfect synchronicity, my friend, who had no idea I was shopping for a new car, sent me a picture of his new car, a BMW X3. "Just got the best deal, \$8k! It's used and a few years old, but it's in perfect condition!" I could not believe it. A couple of weeks later, I was driving my dream car (yes, I visualized and affirmed a million times a day, gotta walk my talk, right? But hey, it worked, otherwise I wouldn't be sharing it with you here). All in, it cost me about the same as the brand new "das auto" VW would have, what a scam that would have been.

As tempting as it can be to lease or buy a new car, consider buying used with an inspection to know exactly what you are buying and an extended

MILLENNIAL MONEY QUEENS

warranty for the probable future car issues. For most people, a car is usually not an investment and loses value each year. Did you know a new car can lose 20% of its value in the first year of ownership, and then 10% a year for the next four years? It turns out that the very moment you drive your brand-new whip out of the lot, it starts to lose value! Which is good news if you are in the market for a used car. There's a sweet spot around 2-3 years where cars are still in great shape, with a sleek design and modern technology. Reselling cars is big business for the dealers too, so they want to make this decision easy for you. How? Insurance, of course! This one made sense to me, though. "It breaks, the dealer fixes, no extra cost. Sold!"

OTHER RECURRING EXPENSES

Once you get the bug of getting better deals on big things like cars, it all becomes a really fun game. My husband and I have this great annual tradition. Every winter, once we've gotten over the magical initial snowfalls, when we are fed up of being indoors and we get bored, we hit the phones. We call all our service providers and ask for better deals. We tell them their competitors gave us an exclusive offer and since we have been clients for so long, we wanted to give them a chance at retaining our business before we walk out. In the past 10 years, I've always gotten a better deal, it's like they

MARIA ALCANTARA

have this magic invisible box at the client retention department with all kinds of deals you'd never hear about. This has multiple times funded unexpected winter getaways with all the unplanned savings we were able to get.

You'll get to practice this in the "Millennial Money Queen 21-day Program". I really want you to become a money queen asap, so I've given you my best script in the program for negotiating recurring expenses like credit card payments. Keep doing this once a year. Call your service providers and renegotiate your rates. You'd be surprised how just asking will take you a long way. In author Tim Ferris's business coaching, one of the tasks is to go out to a coffee shop and just ask for a free coffee. It's incredible how far you'll get by learning to overcome the fear of asking or the potential rejection. There is only fear to lose and so many good deals to be gained!

DISCRETIONARY SPENDING

The last thing I'll say about smart spending is on your discretionary spending, your personal shopping. Here's the deal, sis. We were trained for decades to want to switch out our wardrobe every season. Some very shrewd businessmen a long time ago realized that we ladies are especially susceptible to spending money on our looks. From changing our hair

MILLENNIAL MONEY QUEENS

colour to buying a new statement jacket every fall, many of us are suckers for fashion, even though fashion trends are indeed ephemeral. I get it, it's fun. It's also big business, so retailers often make sure that your lovely garments only last a little while until they start to disintegrate and that next season has a whole new line, otherwise you wouldn't buy. Just like a diamond being the statement of true love, this is all based on very intentional marketing to make more big bucks, at our expense.

So, by all means, enjoy pampering yourself but consider how you are spending. Make it a conscious ritual! From choosing to buy items you need at the best price, like when they go on sale, to investing in quality pieces which won't need to be replaced every season. Be money smart, queen!

I invite you to practice conscious spending. Be mindful of where every dollar is going. Just like Marie Kondo and her master organization skills, ask yourself, what is this purchase bringing me? Is it fulfilling a value for me? Is it truly making me happy? Or is it just another conditioned purchase?

You'll also get to apply this when you get to the "Millennial Money Queen 21-day Program." You'll know exactly what questions to ask before any purchase to make sure that whatever you are spending your money on is for your highest good! If something is unimportant to you, spend only as little as needed. This will allow you to have extra money available to spend on things that are really important to you and will make a difference in your life. Travelling is a great example of conscious spending for a lot of money

MARIA ALCANTARA

queens. If exploring the world is important to you too, reduce spending on things that are not so important to you, maybe like TV or dining out, and use that money instead to plan your next vacation. If your closet is full, you don't need new clothes and fashion isn't so important to you, don't fall prey to ads, and instead, spend that money on what matters to you. You are not just a consumer robot, you are a free-will being. It's time you exercise that power when it comes to spending your money.

*“You may not control all the events that happen to you,
but you can decide not to be reduced by them”*

- MAYA ANGELOU

Poet and Civil Rights Activist

EMERGENCY SAVINGS

Let's talk about savings. Ah, the other source of stress for so many millennials. I don't know where you stand, but most millennials could not cover an unexpected \$1,000 bill. I remember when my 20-year-old dog got sick. Yep, 20 years old, that dog grew up with me, he was a part of me. I distinctly remember driving him to the vet hospital wondering if that was the night when I would get the bad news and a ridiculous vet bill which I

MILLENNIAL MONEY QUEENS

wouldn't be able to afford. I don't know which was worse, the sadness of losing my best friend or the regrets of not being able to cover the bill for his care. That did it for me and was the turning point to getting my money life together. I never wanted to experience something like that again. Luckily, he made it, and the vet bill was minimal, but the experience was a real wake up call.

We have such a hard time with saving because we feel like there's hardly enough right now, so we think, "When I make more money, I'll catch up on my savings." Listen up, that is financial illiteracy at its best. Money doesn't play catch up like that. Money grows, and it won't wait for you to decide when it's a good time, the best time is right now! All money multiplies over time when nurtured. It's time to start thinking about your emergency savings as a safeguard for the time in your life when you need that money most, and that day may come when you least expect it.

I challenge you to come up with \$1,000 within the next month. I know you can do it, it's time you start believing you are becoming money-smart and can start growing your accounts. How do you do that? First, take a look at your expenses, and for the next month, see where you can cut back. I guarantee you that you can come up with a nice chunk just like that.

First stop, subscriptions. The internet age has created a phenomenal business model, online subscriptions. Whether you are getting physical goods shipped to you in a FabFitFun box, or enjoying a service like Audi-

ble, the business is getting paid every month instead of your savings accounts. I run a periodic check every couple of months to see what apps are leeching on my bank account and I don't even know it. How many streaming services do you need? Amazon Prime, Netflix, YouTube TV, Hulu, Disney freaking Plus? How many apps are you paying for and don't need? Do you still have a gym membership that you never go to? Time to switch to Nike Training Club, it's free! I used to get makeup shipped to my house in a box every month, was that necessary? "But it's only \$15 a month!" Yes, that's why you say that and can easily be spending \$100 a month needlessly, especially when you're trying to build an emergency fund. Lastly, I hope you still don't have those crazy cable/satellite TV monthly bills for channels you likely don't even watch! That can easily burn \$50-\$100 a month!

Next, estate sale! Just kidding, you don't need to sell everything in your house, but I bet you've got some valuable stuff you don't use and don't plan on using it ever again that you can turn into cash right now. The last time I did this, I sold a PlayStation, a GoPro, winter tires, a DKNY blazer and a coffee machine. You can come up with \$1,000 within a few weeks, and you will be very thankful you did so when you need it.

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FROM SAVING TO ALLOCATING INCOME

Now that you're getting your emergency savings under control, let's reformulate your perspective of overall savings. Magic happens when you shift your mindset from saving money (i.e., thinking in lack) to allocating money (i.e., thinking in abundance). When I started practising income allocation instead of savings, I was astonished at the change in feeling I experienced and the growth of my accounts. I felt organized with my money and well-funded for my different purchases. That was a huge relief! Since I had allocated accounts, it was easier to stay within my means and not overspend and get back into debt.

When you focus on saving money, it comes from a place of “not enough” and it tends to be stashed rather than invested. Instead, when you focus on income allocation and you designate a part of your income for the different money needs in your life, you feel abundant. This is money management for money queens!

There are all kinds of shoulds, musts, and borderline finger-wagging rules about how much you should save. This often just makes us feel guilty about it and not exactly empowered to manage money like a pro. Especially for us millennials right now, things may be a little shaky, so my take is this: be smart about where every dollar is going and allocate your income based on your needs and goals. It's time to move to the next level in life and grow

your wealth! Think of it as paying yourself and your future. You deserve it, darling.

Money is a resource that also exists for our enjoyment. Problems arise when there is either too much or too little enjoyment. At too much, you're blowing everything you make and not planting any seeds. At too little, you save absolutely everything without a plan and have no fun. I want you to feel wealthy right now! You don't need millions for that yet, but you do need to be able to enjoy some of the fruits of your labour.

So, pick a percentage that works for you, 10%-20% of your salary is ideal. Start small if you have to and make sure to increase your account contributions as your income increases. Split that part of your income over 5 dedicated accounts: emergency money, fun money, retirement money, investment money and long-term fortune money.

Emergency money will fund unforeseen expenses. Fun money will fund all the treats you want to offer yourself, be it lattes, a new statement jacket or a night out. Retirement money will fund the days you stop working for an income. Investment money will fund your assets, be it a stock portfolio or a real estate property. You will learn where and how to open and fund all these accounts in the 21-day program to ensure your income allocation success! Outflows, check! Now, things get really exciting, time to talk about making moneeey!

MONEY QUEEN MOVE

EMBODYING THE KNOWLEDGE

Knowing where your money is going is a huge part of mastering your finances. Take this opportunity to find out exactly how much of your income you are spending in each major category and brain-storm ideas from the strategies given to optimize your spending.

Annual and monthly income before taxes

HOUSING

What percentage of your income is spent on housing and how can you optimize it?

MARIA ALCANTARA

TAXES

What percentage of your income is spent on taxes and how can you optimize it?

TRANSPORTATION

What percentage of your income is spent on transportation and how can you optimize it?

OTHER RECURRING EXPENSES

What percentage of your income is spent on recurring expenses and how can you optimize it?

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DISCRETIONARY SPENDING

What percentage of your income is spent on discretionary items and how can you optimize it?

EMERGENCY SAVINGS

What percentage of your income is allocated to emergency savings and how can you optimize it?

RETIREMENT SAVINGS

What percentage of your income is allocated to retirement savings and how can you optimize it?



CHAPTER 7

SUPERCHARGING YOUR INCOME

“Financial Independence is the ability to live from the income of your own personal resources”

- JIM ROHN

Entrepreneur

The model was simple: go to school, get a job, climb the corporate ladder, get married, buy a house, have kids, save for decades and retire happily ever after. But real life can be a little more complex, right? We need to talk about work.

Work is a huge source of stress for some millennials. Are we lazy and entitled as we’ve been called? Are we unstable and unwilling to stick to a

MILLENNIAL MONEY QUEENS

job? Instead, we may be the first generation to truly understand the role of work in our lives, as a tool for growth, self-development and expression rather than just a way to make money. I don't know about you, but I've always loved to work. Yet, office jobs quickly began to feel like a life sentence, like I had to do my time. I vehemently denied that for as long as I could, but part of the key of living the life that is meant for you is to become aware of your feelings, to accept them and then choose how you will change your course of action. Apparently, I was too colourful for the corporate box. Maybe so are you.

Corporate culture loves consuming your time. It's all about showing up the earliest, leaving the latest, working the hardest and maybe, just maybe you'll get your boss's attention for a raise or a promotion. But at the end of the day, you're a line item on a balance sheet, you are a resource for the business to make money with. Harsh? A business will not hesitate to let you go to ensure its survival. It's all bye, Felicia, but no hard feelings, doll, it's just business. While some of us have found their calling, are passionate about their work, love their jobs and colleagues, others are struggling big time with no purpose and a meagre salary.

You can only save and cut back so much, so the other aspect of improving your financial situation is your income. Millennial finances can be a huge opportunity rather than the sad story that keeps getting reinforced. We are the most tech-savvy, most educated, most purpose-driven generation, and

we have an incredible entrepreneurial drive. Those are huge strengths. Now is the time you get a process to turn all your skills and talents into income. Despite our desire for a more balanced lifestyle with more freedom and higher income, our generation is seeing fewer entrepreneurs than our predecessors. After personally interviewing many millennials, I noticed that many have really good ideas, but most of them don't make a move. One of the reasons is because they have a hard time securing funding for a new business given their existing debt load, and another reason is that there's a lack of savings to invest in a business. Frankly, it also seems to be because they are afraid. All totally understandable, but when you see people starting businesses online with practically no money, investing their time and creating products that require no seed capital, and a few years later they are making \$100k a month, you gotta wonder, "What am I waiting for?" Still want to stick to your safe-not-so-safe job?

The relationship we millennials have with work can be somewhat unstable, to say it gently. On the one hand, we are told that we should follow the traditional path and stick to the same job. On the other hand, we saw massive layoffs just as we were getting out of school and entering the labor force during the recession, and now, a decade later, another wave of massive layoffs and employee surveillance for those remaining on board during a pandemic. Are we cursed or what?

It's almost like the universe is trying to tell us something, maybe that it's

MILLENNIAL MONEY QUEENS

time to grow up? The business of trading time for money is betting on the slowest horse in the race, sure, you are in the race, but you likely won't leave with a glorious prize. It's a means to progress, albeit rather slowly. You might make it to the next paycheque, but what happens if there is no next paycheque? Forget the quality of life that's already gone with the wind. Jobs are paramount for economic growth, our system needs workers to produce goods and services and the workers create the fundamental middle classes, which fuels the demand that powers our economic engines. But remember, true wealth is more than just money. Maybe you're making a good salary, maybe you're not, but if you can't stand the hypnotic lifestyle, this is meant to wake you up!

GENDER PAY GAP IS STILL HERE?!

Millennial women seem to be a tad frustrated with their working circumstances. Even with ever increasing higher education and being an almost equal part of the workforce, we still have to deal with the gender pay gap. According to a Payscale report, "In 2020, women earn 81 cents for every dollar earned by men". This often leads a few women to explore forging their own path by creating independent income. Having to compromise your career for wanting to start a family, feeling uncomfortable asking for a

raise and having difficulty in maintaining work-life balance for a lifetime earnings of \$3.5M to \$4.5M, while earning close to \$1M less than our male counterparts is simply preposterous. It gets ever worse as women climb the corporate ladder, the pay gap actually widens as a lady progresses from entry-level jobs to manager, director and all the way to the executive level. While becoming an entrepreneur is not a guaranteed victory, it blasts through the glass ceiling we've become accustomed to. Millennial women who have become successful entrepreneurs seem to agree that leveraging technology was key in increasing their earning potential and work-life balance.

If you go on YouTube or Facebook right now, you'll probably be bombarded with ads from 28-year-olds from all over the world telling you they've got the solution for you: "Never work another day in your life, embrace the laptop lifestyle, travel the world and make millions. Look at me, I started in my parent's garage, and just a couple of years later, I'm balling it out in a penthouse in Manhattan on weekdays and a villa in Bali during the holidays."

I spent a lot of time studying what they are doing, probably too much time. I did that because, of course, their offer is irresistible. What millennial doesn't want to ditch the 9-5 rat race and become an overnight millionaire? I spent so much time observing them because, in my career in banking and investment management, one thing stood out above all else, those who were

highly successful had a business and multiple revenue streams.

LET'S MAKE ONE THING CLEAR

Everything grows, right? Remember abundance? This means business grows too, the way we operate, our technology, our intelligence, our experience, everything grows exponentially. Consider that over the past 1800 years, economic growth was pretty much flat until we invented machines and regular folk realized what capital is. They came to the powerful realization that with an investment, a process could be created with machines that would create products and nearly print them money.

Heads up, I'm oversimplifying this to make a point. Of course, life is not that simple. My point is that there was a flip when technology picked up and capitalism flourished. Is capitalism perfect? Definitely not, but that is way beyond the scope of what I am sharing with you in this book. Essentially, it's time to build your own empire, and you can do that as a one-gal show by leveraging the incredible skills you have and the power of technology at your fingertips.

We are now in the digital age of the economy. It is 100% possible for you to create a business for yourself so you can start generating some serious cash 24 hours a day, pretty much on autopilot. The premise of this age

is that there is quite a bit of work at first to set things up, I'm not gonna lie. But once it's set, you allow technology to do the heavy lifting for you. To enter the business world, as though it were a separate world from the one we all live in, with the mentality that one can succeed with little money, little experience and a whole lot of heart, focus and dedicated action would be extremely naive by our traditional standards. Well, at this point, traditional standards are barely paying our bills, so they can keep their opinions to themselves.

We live in an age where someone can start an Instagram page or a blog and grow that into an actual business. Is it that simple? Of course not, but it is far more rewarding financially, mentally and emotionally than just following in the footsteps of a crumbling system. The key is to let go of trading time for money and scale your earning power. How can we do that?

"I just love bossy women. To me, bossy is not a pejorative term at all. It means someone is passionate and engaged and ambitious and doesn't mind leading"

- AMY POEHLER

Actor

MILLENNIAL MONEY QUEENS

MORE MONEY WITHOUT WORKING MORE HOURS

“Am I dreaming? Did I just make money while I was sleeping? I honestly thought these things only happened in the movies!” Jacklyn could not believe her eyes, with just a few changes in her habits over a few months, she had replaced her \$2,000 monthly salary.

Jacklyn is an artist. Her parents always said they believed in her and encouraged her to follow her dreams, so long as it was to become a doctor, a lawyer or an accountant. “I love art!” she kept telling them, “I just cannot stand sitting in an office all day doing robotic work, I need to be free to express myself”. Why couldn’t they understand? Jacklyn’s parents loved her very much and only wanted the best for her. They could not see past their hard-wired beliefs that every artist is a starving artist until they die and maybe 0.1% get discovered and end up in a museum. They couldn’t let that happen to their princess.

Except Jacklyn had some cards up her sleeve that her parents didn’t know about. You see, she belongs to a different generation, she can ask Google just about anything. So, she asked, “Google, how do I make money on my own with my art?” Jacklyn fell upon websites where artists uploaded their designs and people could choose to have that design printed on pretty much anything. Jacklyn got paid anytime someone bought any of her designs. All she had to do was create, upload and get paid. It started like that,

simply by creating.

One day, a friend asked Jacklyn if she would teach her some of her art skills, so Jacklyn put together a little lesson. Then she wondered, “Are there other people who would want this?” She did some digging and found the world of online courses. “Wow! People would pay me for my expertise?” A few weeks later, she created a course, uploaded it online and got her first sale. “HUH!” she thought, “I may just be on to something!”

Jacklyn set up her website, showcasing her work, blogging about it, eventually podcasting about it, and growing her social media audience. She discovered the world of advertising and affiliate marketing. “Wow, if I share the tools I use and my expertise with my audience, I can get paid for it?” Boom, another source of income.

A year later, Jacklyn works as many or as little hours a day as she wants, usually 2-4 hours a day, exploring and sharing her passion in so many different ways, and the sales of her courses and designs keep coming in. Jacklyn is now running a business. She learned about personal branding, and eventually came across this concept of independent income. “Is that what I’ve been doing? What else can I do? I love getting paid without having to work so many hours!” You and me both, Jacklyn!

Jacklyn grew her income and started investing. She hired a Robo-advisor to build a balanced investment portfolio including dividend-paying stocks and bonds and now has yet another income stream.

MILLENNIAL MONEY QUEENS

Her next step is to embark into the world of real estate investing. She is growing a savings account for a down payment to buy her first investment property. She knows there's a lot to learn, but she has already completely transformed her life and has learned so much. She is certain she can keep going. Jacklyn was part of the overwhelming 78% of millennials who worry about having good-paying job opportunities. Instead of getting consumed by the fear, Jacklyn created her own opportunity. Jacklyn became a millennial money queen. Wouldn't you like to have a story like that? It's time to introduce you to the magic of independent income.

INDEPENDENT INCOME

In your epic journey towards becoming a millennial money queen, you are now stepping into a whole new realm. A place that most millennials only dream of, not having to trade the majority of your time for money anymore and being able to scale your income to the level you desire. Never dreading a workday again is beyond liberating. Wouldn't that be awesome?

Yet you've been diligently and intentionally trained to think like an employee instead of thinking for yourself and that you need a job to meet your money requirements, all thanks to the factory model of schooling we all went through. The system that shaped the way we view learning and

working was created to make docile, obedient, efficient and standardized factory workers (aka modern-day office workers), quite the opposite of empowering, don't you think?

Mastering money means moving away from the standard of trading time for money and into creative self-reliance. Here's why this is so important. Financial freedom and wealth cannot be created on the salary system you've become chained to. Why? Simply because time is not scalable, you can only work so many hours. Your paycheque is not designed to give you freedom. If it did, employees wouldn't come back to work the next day! That's why 78% of employees live paycheque to paycheque. You are capped on how many hours a day you can work, but truthfully, there is no cap to how much money you can earn during that same hour! Better yet, you can detach your income from your time, and generate income even during the hours that you are not actively working. Yes, it is possible to be travelling over the Mediterranean Sea and be getting paid, and no, it's not vacation time, it's just another day in your life!

Many masters of money passionately support this. In his book "The 4-Hour Workweek", Tim Ferris says "I separated income from time and created my ideal lifestyle in the process, travelling the world and enjoying the best this planet has to offer. How did I go from 14-hour days and \$40,000 a year to 4-hour weeks and \$40,000 a month?" Tim Ferris joined what he calls the New Rich, living a millionaire lifestyle without first having the

MILLENNIAL MONEY QUEENS

\$1M. It's all about freedom of time and mobility (aka not having to be locked in an office 8 hours a day).

This can be you! Tony Robbins quickly learned from his mentor, the legendary Jim Rohn, that “time is more valuable than money, you can get more money, but you can’t get more time.” Once you understand this, then it’s all about “finding a way to add more value than anybody else does, and you’ll never have to worry about anything”. Did he ever, coming from humble beginnings working as a janitor, to owning several companies which generate billions of dollars annually.

This is why you need an income-producing asset or independent income to have freedom over your time and be in control over your money. The good news is that creating an independent income is not as scary or complicated as you may think. Millennials have an incredible entrepreneurial drive and countless tools at their disposal to make this happen. Meanwhile, the number of entrepreneurs in our age group has declined over the past few decades! This is happening because we have so much debt, it takes up most of our mental space and makes it hard to be creative. When we finally push through that barrier and find our big idea, it’s difficult for us to secure funding given our personal balance sheets. Even for those of us who miraculously have no debt, it’s still challenging to believe in ourselves and take the step toward independent income.

The image most millennials have of business and entrepreneurship is

that of a Silicon Valley startup that requires millions in seed capital to get off the ground and turns into a multi-billion dollar machine. In fact, this is not the case, you can create a millionaire lifestyle without needing to be the next Facebook. It's all about leveraging your skills and technology. Your dream life is closer than you may think. It's your time to become a millennial money queen and live the lifestyle that you desire and deserve!

Life doesn't have to be hard! We don't need to struggle with work, time and money! We live in an incredible age where a piano teacher can move away from teaching one-on-one to leveraging technology and change their life! They can stop trading time for money, which will never really make anyone financially rich, and instead double their income by selling courses online. With as little as \$100, anyone can start a lifestyle online business and within a few years, be pulling in over \$100,000 a month. Several online entrepreneurs felt the same pain the typical millennial does before they embarked on their money mastery journey. To inspire others, they often produce monthly income reports that are available to the public. It's incredible how many lifestyle online entrepreneurs like John Lee Dumas, Pat Flynn, Kate Kordsmeier, Paige Brunton, Pete and Heather Reese, Graham Stephan, Adam Enfroy, Lindsay Ostrom, Abby Lawson and many others are making the average millennial's yearly salary on a monthly basis, and in some cases even weekly according to their reports. It's time to make that happen for you, too!

MILLENNIAL MONEY QUEENS

The biggest roadblock that most millennials face is that they don't know how to create an independent income. Don't worry, I got you! You've got a superpower that can be turned into income. You just don't know about it yet, and you tend to undermine it because it's second-nature to you. Your natural powers are the key to your financial liberation. Let's discover them!

These days, there's a lot of hype around building a business that you are passionate about and for every person telling you that it's possible and that they've done it, there is another telling you that following your passion is fool's gold. Both are valid points. Your passion is hugely important in succeeding in life, especially when you begin your journey into independent income, but it's not the only thing you need. I created a simple process to help you identify your superpower. It is a combination of your strengths, what you are innately great at, what you are passionate about and what's most important to you in life. Once you unveil your superpower, you will instantly gain clarity into the opportunities available to you.

This was a huge breakthrough for me, and now I want to share it with you. I've seen people change their lives once they discovered their superpower through this process. This is my calling, to empower you to become the creator of your dream life and to support you all along the way to abundance, financial freedom and fulfilment. I recently heard this really cute new term to describe work: play + work = plork. Shall we?

MONEY QUEEN MOVE

EMBODYING THE KNOWLEDGE

Supercharging your income can totally change the money game for you. While more money won't necessarily make you happier, it can certainly open different doors and provide different life experiences that you may desire. Explore your current income-generating situation and where you'd like to go from here.

What is your current employment situation?

Are you passionate and fulfilled with your work?

Do you feel you are paid adequately for your position?

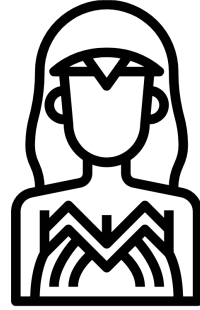
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Is your income providing a level of income that meets your desired lifestyle?

What is your dream job?

When was the last time your income increased?

If you would like to and could be your own boss, what would your business look like?



CHAPTER 8

VPAK - YOUR SUPERPOWER

“I’d feed my curiosities, stay in touch with people I care about and meditate”

-RAY DALIO, on advice for young adults during the Covid pandemic

Hedge Fund Manager

The superpower that will give you the million-dollar idea lies within your VPAK. What is a VPAK, you ask? Please do not judge the name! My husband was joking one night, and it stuck. I’ve taught this strategy over and over again, and it works like a charm, so here we are. The VPAK is your hidden superpower of specialized talents and knowledge that is unique to you, and it’s broken down into 4 components that make you so incredibly valuable as an independent income creator.

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You may already have an idea of what your strengths are, and that's great. If not, this exercise will help you validate and clearly understand what your VPAK is and then develop it into a million-dollar business. VPAK stands for Values, Passion, Abilities and Knowledge. The best way to get clarity around this is to dive right into an exercise, so let's do that right now.

VALUES

Why are values so important? Why are we starting here? Because values determine the decisions we make. But it's not always so straightforward, simply because you were never taught how to find your values and how to design a life aligned with them. The key to living a good life is to make your lifestyle align with your highest values. Since we often disregard our values and instead choose a cookie-cutter life, we are all very susceptible to being unhappy.

For example, if you value freedom, you likely desire to do what you please during your day. But if you don't value your time, like most of us were trained to do, you will choose to stay in a job you dislike and continue to trade time for money. The typical 40-hour workweek in a 9-5 is the definition of not valuing your time. No matter how much money you make in a job that makes you unhappy, it's violating a major value for you, freedom,

so you'll never really reach happiness. Alternatively, if you value stability and predictability, giving up that paycheque may create unwanted chaos in your life. We are all unique, embrace who you really are and strive to create a life that has meaning for you!

Values are the starting point of your superpower because when you learn to design a lifestyle aligned with your values, you “become inspired and awaken genius”, as a world-renowned human behaviour specialist, Dr John Demartini, so brilliantly says.

If you want to overcome your debt, break free from your job, and create wealth, you need to live a life aligned with your highest values. You need to reach that genius zone inside of you that currently lays dormant. So, what is most important to you? Is it freedom? Is it expression? Is it wealth? Is it health? Is it status? Is it family? Is it discovery? Is it growth? This is all unique to you, it's not about what your parents want, what your spouse wants, what your friends think. It's finally time to listen to yourself! As Steve Jobs once said, “Your time is limited, so don't waste it living someone else's life”.

What are your values? What is most important to you in your life? For example, the top values driving me in my life right now are freedom, growth, wealth, purpose, family and spirituality.

Here's a list of values, choose the ones that mean the most to you. Select up to 20 values which are most meaningful to you. It could be that some of

MILLENNIAL MONEY QUEENS

your values are not listed here, so feel free to add your own to the list. Now, out of all those 20, circle the top 5-6, the ones that are an absolute must in your life.

Value list

- Achievement
- Adventure
- Authenticity
- Autonomy
- Balance
- Challenge
- Community
- Compassion
- Connection
- Contribution
- Creativity
- Curiosity
- Discovery
- Expression
- Fairness
- Faith
- Fame
- Family
- Freedom
- Friendship
- Fun
- Generosity
- Growth
- Happiness
- Harmony
- Health
- Honesty
- Independence
- Influence
- Knowledge
- Leadership
- Learning
- Love
- Meaning
- Money
- Poise

MARIA ALCANTARA

- Purpose
- Simplicity
- Success
- Recognition
- Spirituality
- Time
- Responsibility
- Stability
- Wealth
- Security
- Status
- Wisdom

PASSION

Next on the VPAK is “P” for passion. Passion is an emotion that fires you up. Picture someone you know who is so passionate about something, and they just can’t stop talking about it. They immediately light up and can go on and on for hours! Passion is something that you cannot fake. When you touch on your true passions, you come alive, you glow! Passion is what keeps driving us when things get challenging, and challenges are good! They serve the important purpose of making us a better version of ourselves. “People with passion can change the world for the better”, in the words of Steve Jobs.

Many of the millennials who have beaten the odds and have become astonishingly successful learned how to monetize their passion. That passion became a love for their work, enabling them to find financial freedom, purpose and fulfilment. Identify the top 3 things you are most passionate

MILLENNIAL MONEY QUEENS

about. Here are some questions to help you gain clarity:

- What do you enjoy doing for hours on end?
- What immediately lights you up?
- What do you do for immediate fun and joy?
- What do you love learning about and talking about?
- What are you most excited about in your life right now?
- What are some activities you love and lose track of time doing?
- What are you so interested in that you would do for free?
- What interests do you like reading about?

ABILITIES

Next in the VPAK is “A” for abilities. Abilities are amazing because they are often part of the practical skills we need. They are things you are inherently good at or strengths you’ve developed over time. Abilities often show up in any technical things you can do. For example, maybe in your job, you learned how to master Excel, or maybe you’re a really good writer, or maybe you’re good with people. Maybe you’re good on camera, and maybe you’re a good marketer. What abilities do you have that you can leverage? Your abilities will help you express your passions and turn your specialized knowledge

(which you'll identify in the next step) into your million-dollar business.

Think about these questions to find your abilities:

- What are you inherently good at?
- What are some of the successes you've had in your life?
- What interesting skills have you learned?
- What are the things that people have told you that you are good at?
- What abilities come naturally to you that others find difficult?
- What practical expertise have you learned in your job(s)?
- What technical abilities have you developed in your life?
- Did you study and/or develop a trade?

KNOWLEDGE

Knowledge is often an extension of your passion. For example, I am passionate about financial freedom, so I've developed knowledge in wealth management. Maybe you're passionate about fitness, so you've become knowledgeable about the different types of workouts, the best foods to eat, healthy recipes and so on.

It could also be something you learned in school. We are the most educated generation, and we often don't use all of it. Or maybe you didn't go to

MILLENNIAL MONEY QUEENS

school and your knowledge is pure life experience or self-taught. For instance, I taught myself yoga for years, and now I've become very knowledgeable about it. So, what amazing and specialized knowledge do you have just waiting to be put to use? Think about the following:

- What specialized knowledge do you have?
- Do you have a degree or a certificate in a certain field?
- What topics have you geeked out on over the years and know so much about that your friends come to you for help?
- What topics have you studied?
- What have you gained experience in?
- Have you ever been mentored on a particular subject?

Now, we are going to tie it all together to find where your values and passions align with your abilities and knowledge. Where do they merge? Make a list of sentences following the formula below for your VPAK and see which one makes the most sense to you.

I express my passion for _____ and my knowledge in _____ through my abilities in _____ to create a life aligned with my values of _____.

Here's mine to give you an idea:

My top values are freedom, wealth and purpose. My passions are financial freedom and self-development. My abilities are creating content, writing and graphic design. My knowledge is in wealth management, mindset, financial behaviour and psychology.

I express my passion for financial freedom and self-development and my knowledge in wealth management, mindset, financial behaviour and psychology through my abilities in content creation, writing and graphic design to create a life aligned with my values of freedom, wealth and purpose.

I'm going to tell you something I wish I had known a long time ago. There are no guarantees in life, there is no certainty. That is very scary for a lot of people. It paralyzed me for a long time. At the end of the day, you won't know whether something worked or didn't until you try it! You will never know whether you can be successful on your own and create independent income for yourself, start and grow a business, overcome debt and achieve any other dreams you may have until you go for it! Inaction is guaranteed failure, sis. Don't let that be you. You are far too awesome for that.

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RETURN ON INVESTMENT

Most people don't view their jobs as an investment, it's usually seen as a safer route to stable income. Shifting your perspective of your work can dramatically impact the results you get. Whether you look at jobs or a business, we are always investing a combination of our time and money in order to get a return. If you love being employed, use this notion of return on investment to realize the potential you have, which can always increase as you develop new skills and learn new things and your values may very well change over time. Your VPAK works just as well in your job as it does in a business. Knowing your worth can give you the confidence you need to step up and ask for a better deal, be it a salary increase, additional benefits or more flexibility. It allows you to get a better return on your investment in your work. Now, if you want an even bigger return from your work, you may need to consider being captain of your own ship and removing the salary cap.

Increasing your income is key to changing your financial situation. It won't happen overnight, you will most likely need to learn a lot along the way, but the journey alone will be worth it. To the millennials who I have personally seen cry on their way to work because they felt meaningless and broke, I say, take one year and give yourself a shot. If you have a job, you don't have to quit, I know life gets busy, but it's all a matter of prioritizing

what's important to you (remember, values!). We can all Netflix and scroll through social media a little less and work on a project a little more. That little project could replace and even increase your income, give you purpose and fulfillment and completely change the course of your life!

MONEY QUEEN MOVE

EMBODYING THE KNOWLEDGE

You have a superpower just waiting to be discovered and shared with the world! We are the masters of our destiny, although we tend to undermine our own power and end up self-sabotaging. What some people call luck may just be the reflection of how open others can be to creating new opportunities for themselves by making the most of their VPAK. How will you use this power to create your dream life?

VALUES

How well does your current lifestyle meet and fulfil your values?

PASSION

How important is it for you to be passionate about your work?

ABILITIES

Do your current income-generating activities make the most of your abilities?

KNOWLEDGE

How much of your knowledge base is currently being used in your work?



CHAPTER 9

LIFESTYLE BUSINESS

“There has never been and never will be another you. You have a purpose - a very special gift that only you can bring to the world”

– MARIE FORLEO

Entrepreneur

Once you know what your VPAK is, you are one step closer to creating an independent income. You now have a direction, you know what makes you unique and how you can bring value to the world as an entrepreneur! From here, it's all about immersing yourself in the world of lifestyle business and entrepreneurship. The key is in creating a lifestyle business that will give you

independent and passive income. Its purpose is to allow you to live a certain lifestyle. It's built around you and your values, whereas traditional business and jobs tend to work the other way around. Lifestyle businesses are primarily created online, giving you flexibility and a bigger reach. It's a far more balanced approach to work than the glorified work till you drop culture.

Here's a 5-step framework to create independent income that requires little upfront cost to set up and launch while giving you unlimited potential:

1- YOUR VPAK

You've already completed step 1, identifying what is unique to you and what you can offer to the world. The combination of your values, your passion, your abilities and your knowledge, your VPAK, is the secret sauce of your independent income. You already have an idea of what is special about you. Next, you will find out where you can apply it and bring the most value to your potential customers. Offering the knowledge you have to people seeking it or sharing your passion with others who have the same interests can change your life! This immediately changes the vibe of work. It becomes far more rewarding, fulfilling, fun and profitable.

2- YOUR NICHE

Lifestyle businesses typically start online. After all, it is the one place where billions of people congregate daily. You have direct access to this huge market. The key is in finding what specific segment of the market you can focus on. This is known as your niche, and as the saying goes, riches are in the niches. Think about who your ideal customer would be. What are their biggest problems? Then, think about how you can help solve their problem with your specialized knowledge and the solutions you could create for them.

Creating a customer avatar to identify your niche is a must. A customer avatar is a fictional character profile representing your perfect customer, with details like age, gender, location, interests, lifestyle, preferences, goals and pain points you can help them with. You can find all this information online through reading reports, Q&A websites (like Quora and Reddit), Facebook groups and social media post comments, and by finding successful people in your niche who already have a customer base. Once you know who your perfect customer is, compile a list of where they are hanging out online. What blogs, websites, Facebook groups and hashtags do they follow and who already has their attention. Watch the conversations they are having and what interests them, so that you know exactly what content you should create that they can relate to.

3- YOUR SHOWCASE

Once you know your niche and have created your customer avatar, it's time to get creative. Lifestyle businesses are all about creating content that is educational and/or entertaining to your audience. The internet has given every single one of us the ability to showcase our work. Content creators typically start either with blogging, podcasting or video, and most often, they grow into a few of these media channels. It's all about engaging with your audience, delivering value and showcasing your expertise. In this day and age, we've been bombarded by filters and perfect looking Instagram feeds. This means we've learned to filter that out, too. Your best bet is being yourself. Authenticity is what our generation values most today. Author and entrepreneur Rachel Hollis went viral after proudly showing her stretch marks and has gone on to influence millions of people worldwide and inspire them to live their best life. Being your real self is the best choice you can make, there are people who will resonate with you and be grateful for the voice you've given your group.

Build connections with the people and websites you found in your niche list so that you can show up to their bigger audience, collaboration is the new competition. This allows you to grow your audience and your email list faster. The list of subscribers is the money maker in online lifestyle busi-

nesses. Email marketing is still running the show. When you build a direct line of communication with your audience, you get to find out exactly what problem they have that you can help them with. This will lead you to the next step, offering your solution.

4- YOUR SOLUTION

There's a saying in business that you can succeed when you solve someone's problem. You've found solutions to situations in your life, and that, most likely, has something to do with your VPAK. There are other people looking for the same solution! When you can build authority and a relationship with your audience, they get to know, like and trust you, the trifecta for success of lifestyle businesses. This means they'll be ready to invest in the solutions you have to offer such as a book, a course, a workshop, a masterclass, coaching or mentoring. Those are all starter lifestyle business products. Some of them, like books and courses, are known as evergreen, which means you create them once and then repeatedly sell the same product, unlike physical products where each product needs to be manufactured individually or services that need to be rendered at every sale.

This process allows you to create a sales flow with a product prototype

MILLENNIAL MONEY QUEENS

and validate your product so that you're not stuck building a product your audience will not be interested in. This will save you lots of time, money and trouble! Once your product is validated and created, your focus moves to connecting with your audience, growing your reach and maybe even creating other products.

You can also tap into the solutions other people have created through affiliate programs. These programs work in 2 ways. You can either become an affiliate and get paid a commission for sharing a product or a service with your audience. Or, you can build your own affiliate program and have other lifestyle entrepreneurs share your products to their audience and you pay them a commission for every sale. This can be very useful when you're starting out and don't have a big audience yet or if you have an audience but don't have a product of your own to sell. There are many websites known as affiliate networks that facilitate these connections. This is a huge step into creating independent income!

5- YOUR GROWTH

The truth is that everything worthwhile in life takes time; that's part of the game in our world. Whether you are planting a seed, getting out of debt, starting a business or growing your wealth, everything requires time.

MARIA ALCANTARA

The track record for most lifestyle businesses shows that it usually takes time to start, and then a few years later, many lifestyle entrepreneurs are collecting an independent monthly income in the 5 to 6 digits range. It really is a dream “job”, and while it takes some work, it’s also a lot of play. You become captain of your own ship, and your earning potential can certainly skyrocket.

Growing your online business skills, your audience, your reach, your connections and your email list will require time and effort but will likely be very fruitful! Once you build your process following this framework, you become a player in the online business game. It’s a game you want to join! E-commerce has grown exponentially, and it’s likely to keep going. Global e-commerce sales are expected to reach USD 6.5 trillion by 2023. This is a time for millennials to become proactive in creating independent income. It’s never been easier to start your very own lifestyle business.

“If you push through that feeling of being scared, that feeling of taking risk, really amazing things can happen”

-MARISSA MAYER

Businesswoman

THE WORLD IS YOUR PLAYGROUND

Following those 5 simple steps can change the course of your life! In your quest to maximize the power of your money, starting and growing your lifestyle business also means you can now be location independent! This is something important to consider but is also a very big decision. While being a citizen of a North American country is great, being a resident isn't always ideal. Many millennials have chosen to move to a tropical alternative as a way to create work-life balance and become digital nomads. It's understandable when you compare the high cost of living, high taxes and, for some of us, the brutal winters with attractive tax rates and a currency exchange rate that may magnify the power of your money or help you buy something of higher value. The same \$500,000 I'd spend in my hometown in Canada on an 800 sqft cookie-cutter condo is a far cry from the beach villas I could get along the Pacific Ocean in Central America. Beautiful destinations like Bali have become lifestyle entrepreneur hubs. Expats have settled coworking spaces and retreats to teach their fellow millennials the joys of creating independent income while watching the waves crashing and the monkeys swinging. "About \$1,300 a month is more than enough to live in a nice villa, travel around and eat out almost every day", according to Entrepreneur Handbook.

I spend quite a bit of time travelling around the equator, scouting out where I will likely make a move to, between Caribbean Islands and Central America. Your mindset gets a makeover when you meet the countless expats who made that same move. When I was last in Costa Rica, I met some wonderful individuals and lifestyle entrepreneurs living in jaw-dropping villas on a golf course with an ocean view in gated communities. The coolest lifestyle entrepreneur I've ever met was also the youngest. At the ripe young age of 13, this kid had already secured sponsorship with Quiksilver for his mind-blowing surfing skills, which he proudly showcased online. I've met lifestyle entrepreneurs in every field that chose a more laid-back lifestyle and would never turn back. From wellness to photography, to finance, to hospitality, to graphic design, to real estate, it all became possible once they built their lifestyle business and mastered their time, money and location.

This is all available to you, and if this is what you want, it's time to get to work. Not knowing how is not a valid excuse, and the income and lifestyle opportunity is just too big to ignore. I really am talking about potential \$50,000 monthly revenue. That's more than most millennials make in a year! Don't you think that's worth your lifestyle business education? Which will most certainly cost a fraction of what you paid for your formal education. There are countless resources to teach you how to build a successful lifestyle business and create independent income. From books, to YouTube, coaches, courses, mentors, on and on, there are both free and paid options.

Investing in yourself and your learning is paramount because it will dramatically impact your future financially and emotionally. A lot of people hesitate to spend money on their growth and learning because they are concerned it will not work. That couldn't be farther from the truth. While investing in markets and assets are great, you are your own biggest asset. Investing in yourself with time and money is the best investment you can make. So, with whatever budget works for you, invest in fast-tracking your learning from those who have mastered lifestyle businesses. Free resources are great, but when you pay, you pay attention. Human beings are funny that way. We tend to place more value on things with a big price tag, since **we equate price to value**. The best investment you'll ever make is in yourself; you can never lose that investment.

THE LITTLE VOICES

Creating independent income is a milestone in becoming a millennial money queen! Typically, at this point, most people get excited about the prospect of such a drastic change in their work, income and lifestyle. But there can be a little voice in the back of your mind asking whether you can do this. It is the voice of fear and if you listen to it you'll fall into the classic imposter syndrome trap. You deserve to give yourself a chance! Many life-

style entrepreneurs who fondly share their success stories have similar beginnings, feeling financially and emotionally broken. They realized that there was another voice speaking to them, the voice of love, it encouraged them to keep going even though there were no guarantees and it reassured them that no matter the outcome, they would learn and grow from the experience of stepping into the unknown. Those who pushed their boundaries and explored what lies beyond those challenges are a huge inspiration to us. The only thing stopping you is you. Which voice will you choose to listen to?

Right now, you're at a fork on the road. One path will lead to continuing to struggle with money and time for the rest of your life. You'll always have to be watching your spending, working for someone else and being subservient. You will wake up every day wondering when this will end, hoping to retire and still have to watch your spending then. The other path leads to your wildest dreams. You take a shot at mastering money, overcoming debt, creating independent income and having the freedom you've desired for so long. You grow along the way, and you'll wake up every day grateful for the fabulous dream life you get to live. It won't happen unless you choose it!

Picture your life 10 years from now. You spent a decade growing your business, became your own boss, made millions of dollars, grew your wealth and contributed to causes that are important to you. You would probably be thanking yourself for giving your dreams a chance! I experience that every day. If I hadn't decided to embark on this journey, even

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though I felt unprepared and unqualified, I wouldn't have grown to where I am today and written this book for you.

According to research, individuals need somewhere between \$75,000 to \$95,000 for life satisfaction and emotional well-being. Beyond those figures, happiness tends to level off. Lifestyle businesses allow you to create independent income that often exceeds those numbers. The excess is the perfect money seed you can plant to grow your fortune and secure future financial wellbeing through the power of compounding. Let's learn some money magic!

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YOUR NICHE

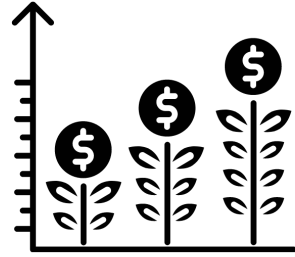
Who could benefit from what you have to offer?

YOUR SHOWCASE

What kind of media and content would you like to create to share your work?

YOUR SOLUTION

What solution have you found in your life that your niche could also benefit from?



CHAPTER 10

MONEY MAGIC

“If you understand compound interest, you basically understand the universe”

- ROBERT BREAUULT

Operatic Tenor

Time to step into financial Hogwarts. You are about to learn some true money magic. I will keep beating the drum for abundance until it's imprinted in your mind. Abundance makes the money world go round. **Money may not grow on trees for everyone, but money does grow like trees**

for everyone, and it's time to plant some seeds. The next level of abundance is to understand fractals. Simply put, a fractal is a never-ending repeated pattern, it is found everywhere in our universe. You've already been introduced to compounding, but I would be doing you a disservice if I didn't reiterate how powerful compounding is. Compounding interest grows like a fractal. It's simple in that it is a repeated pattern, but the repetition creates intricate, complex and magnificent structures, like the multiplication of cells becomes a tree or a human being! Magical, isn't it? Likewise, the simple repeated actions of investing and reinvesting the gain will lead to the powerful result of wealth!

When writing this book, my principal aim was to give you the mental and financial skills, resources and education you need to change the course of your financial life with practical ways to create wealth. I read all the traditional finance books, and although the information is valuable, the delivery was far from inspiring and exciting. I don't see too many millennials picking up these textbooks and learning about ETFs, MFs or MBSs. WTH, right?

Most of the information millennials need to achieve financial freedom wasn't easily accessible or simple enough to apply and understand. In order to make your money grow, it needs to be placed in vehicles that will allow that to happen, yet many of these financial products and services were not affordable to our generation.

So, my biggest challenge was to make this information fun, exciting and

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to the point, and give you a shortcut to the solution for your money problems. Especially needed was education about investing and the best partners to help you on your financial journey with portfolio management and financial planning. For most investors, one of our biggest financial goals is to have our money working for us and eventually live off of our portfolio income while continuing to grow our wealth. If that is your goal as well, you need to start right away instead of postponing your wealth creation until you earn more or life gets simpler. Time is by far your biggest asset, use it wisely!

The single most important thing you need to know is compounding interest. This means that you reinvest your profits, which allows you to generate interest on interest. The "miracle of compound interest " grows your portfolio exponentially, like a fractal!

HOW TO GROW MONEY

Compounding is a real money machine. It's what makes 3 different individuals who all save \$120,000 over 10 years end up with \$175,000, \$520,000 or \$1,200,000 by retirement.



Joyce

Invested \$1,000 a month for 10 years, allowed the account to grow for another 20 years



Victoria

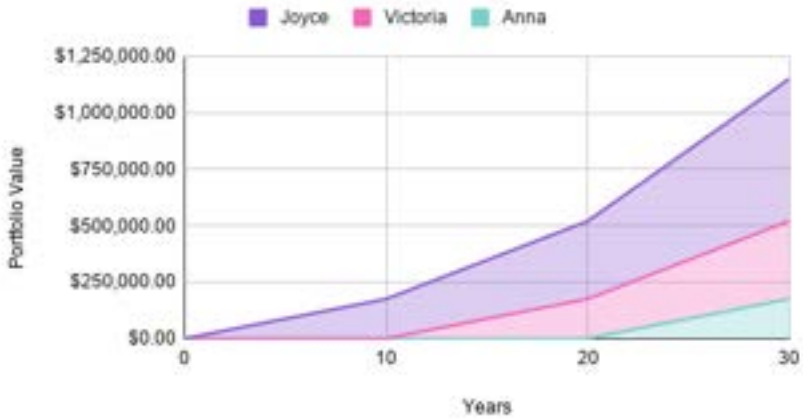
Started 10 years later, invested \$1,000 a month for 10 years, allowed the account to grow for another 10 years



Anna

Started 20 years later, invested \$1,000 a month for 10 years

Compounding Interest



The only difference between those 3 is how long that seed of \$120,000 was allowed to grow. Who would you rather be? Your single biggest advantage is your age! Start investing now, and you secure your financial freedom,

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it's as simple as that. Every year you postpone this, you are choosing financial instability.

The best explanation of compounding I've ever heard came from the man whose face is now on the highest denomination of American dollars in production, the \$100 bill. Benjamin Franklin explained compounding like this: "Money makes money. And the money that money makes, makes money". It appears another one of our world's greatest minds also had quite a bit to say about compounding. Allegedly, Albert Einstein called compound interest the 8th wonder of the world and made it clear that we either have this force working for us or against us, "He who understands it, earns it; he who doesn't, pays it."

Your debt is run by the power of compounding; that's why it's such big business. That's also why it seems almost impossible to get ahead, especially when you're only making minimum payments. We've already given debt enough energy and attention throughout this book, now it's time to make that same force work for you!

A TALE OF TWO SISTERS

Sabrina and Sienna were born 3 years apart and were very close. Both studied finance and worked in the same bank for years. Sienna, the

youngest, was very independent. Sabrina, the eldest, was a bit of a rebel.

When they both started working in banking, Sienna asked her big sister about retirement savings, credit and investing. Back then, the stock of the bank they worked at traded around \$60.

Sabrina was a YOLO girl, she lived for the party and didn't take things too seriously in life, so when her younger sister asked her about these things, she just laughed.

Sienna was used to having to figure things out on her own, so she picked up a copy of "The Intelligent Investor" by Benjamin Graham. She learned all about investing in stocks and realized how her wealth could grow over time. The bank had just launched a new platform for investing using technology to build portfolios at a fraction of the cost of traditional advisors. She decided to give it a try, and invested her first few months' pay, totalling \$6,000, and added \$300 from every paycheque. Little did she know how that would change the course of her life. That little investment would grow to nearly \$1M before her 50th birthday.

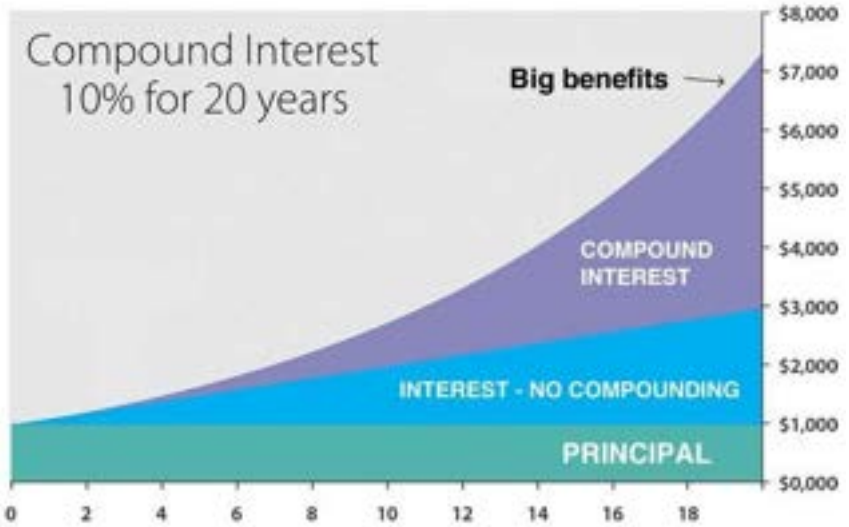
Sienna was quite driven, so she also started a lifestyle business teaching all the banking tips she learned while working at the bank. At first, she was petrified she'd fail, but she had seen so many income reports online that she just had to know whether that could be her one day. She dove right in, and future Sienna would be forever grateful for young Sienna's brave first step. In the first year, she made \$100,000. In the second year, she made \$650,000.

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She had started to see her money grow in her portfolio, and she understood the power of compounding, so she decided to go in with a lump sum. She stashed away \$500,000 for the next 10 years. By her early 30s, she was a millionaire. Sienna kept doing this year after year. Her business kept growing, and so did her investment. Every year, she'd put away \$500,000 for compounding. By her early 40s, her portfolio was worth close to \$8M, which grew to \$17M by her 50s, then \$37M by her 60s, \$82M by her 70s. Like I said, money magic. Wouldn't you like to have a similar story? It's entirely possible.

Sabrina on the other hand, who had the same job, same education but a very different mindset and money habits ended up unemployed and depending on her partner. When her relationship turned sour, she didn't have the financial means to leave. So, she put up with a toxic relationship because, in her mind, she couldn't afford to be independent, nor was she good enough to handle money herself. She would have to rely on her partner or her parents for the rest of her life.

Maybe Sabrina and Sienna were polar opposites, and maybe you fall somewhere in the middle. But I want it to be crystal clear to you that the money seeds you plant today will grow into a truly majestic money tree over time. This is all because of compounding. The magic is that once you start earning interest and reinvesting that interest, your rate of growth accelerates like this:



Source: thecalculatorsite.com

Now, maybe you know nothing about investing and the stock market or maybe it's just not a subject that interests you, and that's ok. Even so, we millennials need to have exposure to the financial markets and invest because we have the luxury of time. **Time is what will make our money seeds flourish into serious wealth and allow us to create passive income in the future.**

To put this into perspective, if you had invested \$500 in Amazon stock 20 years ago when the company went public, you would have made \$1,000,000 in profit at the share price when this book was written.

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If you would have invested \$1,000 in Netflix 10 years ago, it would be worth more than \$20,000 today. Do you see how powerful time in the market can be? Sure, there are ups and downs, but your mindset should be to diversely invest in great companies with money you don't need to count on anytime soon.

The other key in successful investing is knowing what to invest in. Investors worldwide are seeking alpha, a way to beat the market and gain beyond the benchmarks. Well, let's be real, you have your own life to live, and maybe your life mission is not to beat the markets. Professional portfolio managers can be costly. They typically charge you a percentage of your portfolio regularly to manage it. Most managers will not even look at you unless you have at least \$1M in investable assets. Otherwise, it doesn't make financial sense for them. That's their business model and it was part of my job for years. You are getting the same level of insight our high-net-worth clients got, you're very welcome! So, not only do you need to figure out what to buy as an investment, but you also need to figure out how much to buy. Welcome to asset allocation.

PORTFOLIO CONSTRUCTION 101

There are 3 main asset classes in portfolio construction: equities such as

stocks which have higher risk and higher reward potential, fixed income such as bonds which have lower risk and lower reward potential, and cash earning interest which is the safest and thus offers lowest reward.

Equity refers to ownership in a company. When you buy a share in a company's stock, you become a shareholder. Equities will bring you money either through an increase in the value of the stock or in the dividends the company will pay. Dividends are profit distributions to shareholders, and not all companies pay dividends. The last vacation I took was paid for by dividends, so it can be a nice supplement to your income!

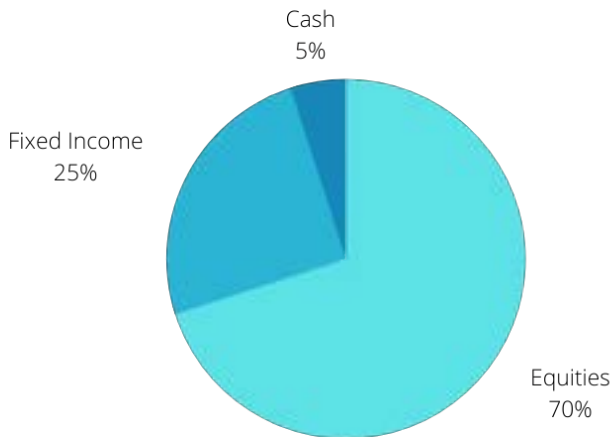
Fixed income refers to debt-related investments like bonds. Companies and governments use bonds to raise money for their activities. When you buy a bond, you are lending money to the issuer of the bond. The issuer is usually a government or a company who promises to pay you back the full amount in a given amount of time plus interest for the time they used your money. Because your principal (the amount you bought the bond for) is guaranteed, it is less risky than equities. The potential return on your investment is often lower than the potential return of equities, but it is usually more stable.

Cash in an investment portfolio aims to keep a portion of your money safe and readily available. It is typically invested in a vehicle that will pay you an interest rate higher than a basic bank account. This means your money is still growing or at least keeping up with inflation and will have no risk.

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These instruments are known as securities, and financial engineering creates very innovative variations. From different classes of shares or types of bonds to derivatives, commodities, currencies and much more complex instruments, it can quickly become a convoluted maze. Most retail investors stick to the 3 main asset classes of equities, fixed income and cash, from there, picking the right company to invest in or what bond to buy can be tricky. There are almost unlimited ways to evaluate any of these investments. Right now, all you need is to know what they are and what purpose they serve. As we proceed, I'll give you the best strategy to use to grow your investments without the needed expertise or paying top-notch professionals' high fees.

The combination of what percentage to put in each asset class, your asset allocation, is considered the holy grail for growing your portfolio. The main rule of thumb is simple. Out of 100, subtract your age, and the balance is your equity allocation, so if you're 30 right now, 70% of your portfolio should be in equities.



This, along with the investor's risk tolerance and objectives for the portfolio, determines how it will be invested. No matter how much risk you are willing and able to bear, diversification should never be ignored! There are countless forces moving different investments and markets, therefore the more diversified you are, the less volatility you should experience over time. Diversification goes beyond stocks, bonds and cash. It can dip into real estate all the way to cryptocurrency. Diversification also applies to your sources of income, if you rely on a single source, you can get into big trouble if it dries up. Multiple sources of revenue ensure that you have a constant and steady stream of income, a money queen must!

I just gave you a baseline, but of course, it's more complicated than that, because you now have to figure out what to buy. Out of the countless financial vehicles out there, what is the winning combo? It may sound a lot like a gamble. Let's say you've found your top candidates, let's talk about fees. It is only very recently that the entire industry was essentially forced into being more transparent about what they were charging their clients. There are pages and pages of acronyms for fees. There are transaction fees everywhere. No, really, even your local bank needs to get a humility snap back into reality. Every time you touch money, somehow, somewhere, someone is making some serious dough.

So, what do we do? Back to the piggy banks? Heavens, no! Ever heard about inflation? Your money is actively losing value by the day. "What?!" It's

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true, inflation is eating away at your purchasing power. Unless your money is earning at least the usual 3% rate of inflation to keep up, you are effectively losing money every single day as the price of goods rises overtime. That's why our parents and grandparents remember buying candy bars for pennies. Stuff just got real. So, no, piggy banks or idle cash are not a good idea.

After all is said and done, what's a millennial lady to do? Well, you need to grow your wealth! Apparently, we are already way behind the eight ball, ladies even more so, but we also still have time, which means it's time to plant some seeds, like now! No matter how big or small, we have to plant. Compounding will grow money seeds into money trees, remember?

Professional money managers are pricey. The local banks are very commission-hungry, and most millennials can sniff that out, and DIY investments sound easy, but it's a lot harder than it looks. Let's not forget about rebalancing your portfolio. We assumed you figured out what asset allocation to use, and what investments to purchase, but the truth is that investments fluctuate, so your allocation will go all out of whack if it's not rebalanced over time. And allocation is key to successful investing, right? So, now this is almost a full-time job, and most people get whiplash from it. What do we do with tasks that need to be done but we don't particularly like doing them? Technology, of course! Glad someone thought about it and came up with algorithms to figure all this out for us. If Instagram can

figure out how to match me with my kindergarten classmates, can't we figure out our portfolios?

FINTECH'S ROBO-ADVISORS TAKE CENTERSTAGE!

Because of our age, every penny counts. Robo-advisors are a great low-cost entry into the world of investing. Plug in your profile, and the platform will come up with the investment decision options and make your investor life easier. But we are still the masters of our world and need to make some decisions. The platforms are there to help, but they won't do everything for you. You are still in charge of making deposits and recurring contributions (remember, compounding!!!). Robo-advising doesn't mean no humans; the platform just makes it easier for the human running the advisory business. So, don't worry, you can still speak to someone. It shouldn't be like trying to call Apple a few years ago and only being answered by Siri who told you she couldn't get you a tuna sandwich when you asked about upgrading your iTunes. Some Robo-advisors include financial planning, which is crucial to your financial success. I've given you a foundation so that you're not totally in the dark anymore, but just like an accountant, this is usually well worth the investment.

MILLENNIAL MONEY QUEENS

So, it's time to do some online shopping and find the perfect platform for your investing needs, and for the love of God, don't tell me you don't have the money to invest! Start small, start with whatever you can and keep it going. Trust me, you'll be thanking both of us later. **You are actively making it that much more difficult for you to become financially independent, safe and secure every day you put off growing your wealth.** Wouldn't it be awesome to just get paid by your portfolio every month? You can be travelling the world, growing your business, or just literally hanging out, the world is yours to explore, darling. Plant those money seeds!

FINANCIAL WELLNESS

You now have a pretty solid foundation for mastering money. The way we keep track of how well you're doing, your financial fitness tracker, is through a net worth statement. I want to take a step back here for a moment and remind you that although money is important and this entire book is dedicated to helping you master money (so it stops once and for all mastering you), **your worth is far beyond your net worth statement.**

In the past few hundred years, our global society has evolved exponentially. Our level of comfort has dramatically increased, and yet there are

places left in the world where people cannot get clean water, sewage or have enough food to eat. Chances are, this is not too far from your home. So, let's be decent human beings and understand that our worth lies in who we are, not only in what we have. Having is great, not having sucks, we're talking only about good things, of course. Just being human is already a wild accomplishment. Let's be real, between our mind, our body and our emotions, just keeping it together is a miracle some days. So, give yourself a hug and picture me giving you a pat on the back. You are awesome!

In financial terms, a net worth statement is how we measure how we are growing money-wise. In essence, it's pretty straight forward:

$$\text{Assets} - \text{Liabilities} = \text{Net Worth}$$

Assets are anything you own that has financial value. Yes, that includes personal items. Make a list of everything you own that has a value, and most importantly, no debt attached to it. So, if you think you own a house, but you have a mortgage, think again. Your bank accounts, your investments or a fully paid car are all assets. A lot of planners will stop at the big-ticket items. When I worked with my friends and other millennials, there weren't many big-ticket items, given our young age and current financial situation. When we started adding personal items, they felt a lot better about their net worth statement. So, if it feels good to you and doesn't hurt

MILLENNIAL MONEY QUEENS

anyone, go right ahead, darling. It could be jewellery, collectables, art, even designer pieces that have a value if you were to sell them.

I recently read a wealth report revealing how handbags have become the “number one collectable investment for the year”. According to CNBC, “Handbags have officially become an asset class”. Not only can the timeless Hermès Birkin bag hold its value, but it also increased by 13% in value in 2019.

Quick story time. When I was 9 years old, my parents held an estate sale before moving away from Brazil. It was very trippy to come home from school and see a price tag on literally everything in my house. The most heartbreaking part, after my dad joked about my dog and fish getting sold, was our Christmas tree. My mom was seriously obsessed with having the most epic Christmas tree, so she had been collecting these amazing ornaments for decades. One afternoon, this lady just waltzed right in and pointed to it. She said: “I want it exactly like that in my house by tomorrow.” We sold the Christmas tree for about \$15,000. So, there you go, everything has a market value, especially in the age of Facebook marketplace.

Liabilities are anything that you owe. All debt, car loans, student loans, home loans or mortgages, medical bills, credit card debt, even your rent.

Why should you care? Your net worth gives you a snapshot of your financial situation. It’s a good way to find out whether you’re on track or off track. Since you are now officially embarking on actively growing your

wealth, whether that starts with overcoming debt or accumulating assets, I recommend reviewing your net worth statement every quarter to see how you're doing.

THE RISE OF THE MILLENNIAL RETAIL INVESTOR

2020 certainly was a year that shifted a lot of the paradigms we had become used to. One of the big changes was the participation of millennials in the stock market. Equipped with their knowledge of technology and the trend towards commission-free trading, these new investors used the pandemic lockdown as an opportunity to learn about the stock market. With fewer distractions and uncertain times including joblessness, many took a hard look at their current financial situation and decided it was time to take control of their financial well-being. This led to record levels of new brokerage accounts as these young investors sought to build wealth and achieve financial freedom. These “Robinhood investors”, as it's been coined, have even rattled the all powerful hedge-funds in market events like the Game-Stop saga.

Being digital-natives, it is second nature for millennials to research and gain knowledge in most topics very quickly. This can dramatically impact the wealth creation process as one can much more quickly become an in-

MILLENNIAL MONEY QUEENS

formed and savvy-investor with access to the markets and to financial technology. However, as important as investing is, it is accompanied by risk and requires both financial and emotional education. As millennials have officially entered the new age in their wealth creation journey, education most certainly needs to continue to ensure success.

Millennial investors have marked yet another shift in investing, more than any other generational, millennials wish for their portfolio to reflect their values, namely in sustainability, in changing the world for the better and decreasing overall poverty on our planet. We are on the brink of the greatest wealth transfer in history, it is estimated that \$30-\$60 trillion dollars will be transferred from boomers to millennials. That wealth comes with responsibility, what kind of world will we create? What will we choose to fuel with money as a tool? What will we choose to leave in the past by pulling away the money? You are an active player in the new world we are creating, don't underestimate your role! Dream of what kind of world you'd like to live in and leave for our descendants, every time you spend money you are making a vote for the future you are choosing to create.

My dear, you now have the base to master your money and start creating true wealth. Right now, the ball is in your court. On the one hand, you can choose to put this book aside and not use any of the information and continue to hope for miracles, while they do work in my experience, you are

actually the miracle worker you've been asking for. On the other, you can choose to become the master of your destiny, it starts with mastering your money. **For your sake, for your loved ones and for the collective future we are building, be a money queen!**

MONEY QUEEN MOVE

EMBODYING THE KNOWLEDGE

Every investor dreams of the day they will be able to retire and live off of the income their portfolio generates. Some of us choose the FIRE lifestyle (Financial Independence, Retire Early), and save over 70% of our income and stop working by 40, while others barely plan for retirement and work well past 75. Either way, there will come a day where we will no longer be able to meet our expenses with employment income.

No matter what lifestyle you desire, growing your wealth requires time, start today and enjoy your money tree tomorrow! The key is to start, no matter how small, plant your money seed, sis!

YOUR MONEY SEED

How much can you open your investment account with today?

WATERING YOUR MONEY SEED

How much can you contribute on a recurring basis to grow your investments?

YOUR POTENTIAL MONEY TREE

Visit the Compounding Calculator in the U.S. government site and get an estimate of your potential money tree value with compounding. The average estimated interest rate used is 6%.

<https://www.investor.gov/financial-tools-calculators/calculators/compound-interest-calculator>

YOUR ASSETS

List the assets you own and approximately how much they are worth:

YOUR LIABILITIES

List your liabilities and their approximate value:

MILLENNIAL MONEY QUEENS

YOUR NET WORTH

Subtract your total liabilities from your total assets

YOUR INVESTMENT VALUES

What values would you like to support with your investments? (i.e. green tech, electric vehicles, recycling, organic food, sustainability)

CONCLUSION

We millennials have a very different outlook on life than past generations. Come to think of it, isn't that natural? Doesn't every generation think differently than the previous one? Granted, we have challenges, but something tells me we are about to flip this whole thing around. By working together, and empowering each other, we may make history and become the wealthiest generation ever, financially, emotionally and spiritually.

It doesn't have to be so hard and so far away. Be effective in your actions and be smart in your money choices. Use your own heart and head to evaluate what you want out of life. Where are you now and where do you want to be? Stop wasting resources and complaining you have none. Parkinson's law states that "Work expands so as to fill the time available for its completion." It doesn't have to take a decade to get into good physical or financial shape, but the key is to start and be consistent. Take care of any debt, start your dream business and grow your assets over time. Choose to start right now! In the future, you will be extremely grateful for making the life-changing choice to start now and to follow your dreams.

MILLENNIAL MONEY QUEENS

We've been diligently trained to be consumers and worker drones, but thankfully, there is an awakening happening where our generation wants more from life. This often brings criticism and judgement, and that's okay. We are adults now. It's time to take a moment and examine where the system we inherited has led us so far and where it can lead us from here onwards.

This is a time for self-responsibility and self-reliance. It's time to work on ourselves, our mindset, our mental, physical and financial health. It's time to get to work on building the future we actually want to live, not what was chosen for us or what we inherited. It's enough of no self-esteem, enough of no accountability, enough of mediocrity. It's time for you to step into your birthright power and start creating the life you want to live and walk away from being one of the sheeple forever! Everyone is fed up with financial struggle; everyone is ready for a change. We have to be that change! It starts with gaining control over your time and money, darling.

You're fully equipped with a foundation for the money in your mind and money in your world; they are both equally important. You know exactly what you need to drop, like the mental money blocks and the debt in your accounts, and what you need to grow, like a rich money blueprint and the assets in your life. The only way it will happen is if you go for it! Do you know what will be the real treasure at the end of this whole story? You will be astonished at your growth and expansion, your very evolution.

True wealth is far more than money. We want meaning in our lives, and of course, we want financial security. No one wants to keep having panic attacks about money. I've given you the keys I learned in over a decade dedicated to professionally mastering money. I am here holding your hand, every step of the way, until you make your way out of stress and into millions.

I can't wait to meet you on my next retreat, where we hang out at the villa overlooking the Pacific Ocean, cheering to your success. I believe in you, and I will continue to hold that torch for you until you can pick it up yourself.

We can drop the childhood tales. We don't need a prince charming to save us anymore. We are millennial money queens.

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ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Maria Alcantara is the founder of Millennial Money Queens, a leading financial empowerment movement specializing in using behavioural economics and finance to help women achieve financial literacy, freedom and independence. She is a chartered investment manager and money coach with over ten years of behaviour insights experience working with high-net-worth individuals to manage and grow their wealth.



At Millennial Money Queens, we believe we are the stewards of our planet and that every life-form is to be respected and honoured.

While our mission is to empower the women of our generation, we seek to contribute to healing our environment to ensure a sustainable future for all.

We donate a portion of the proceeds of our sales to different organizations that support our vision for an inclusive, healthy, abundant and beautiful future for all.

With your purchase of this book, you have contributed to the collective future success of humanity and Mother Earth.

Thank you!

