



The Benefits of Financial Freedom

To be totally free in your financial affairs, you need an environment that permits you to work toward any financial goal you choose. As Americans, we have inherited the foundations for a free financial climate. We enjoy the benefits of liberty, the free enterprise system, and capitalism. They're celebrated to be the most progressive and encouraging economic systems in the world. Without them, you could be misdirected onto paths leading to dangerous destinations—situations that could enslave you.

Capitalism is a political economic system where private wealth, lawfully acquired or developed by private enterprise—under free competition—is owned or managed by those who earned it.

Why the Success?

During its first 200 years, America emerged from a primitive wilder-

ness to a nation now producing one sixth of the world's goods and services. Historically, no other nation has ever achieved such success. But America's success can't be credited to unusual resources or attributed to a unique breed of people...similar resources are found throughout the world and the people of America are races of all nations.

In fact, you'll discover the success comes from the genius of the free enterprise system and how it encourages millions of Americans to be responsible capitalists and stewards. America's vast financial achievements stem from this great system.

The Free Enterprise System

America is the biggest economic power in the world today. You have all the natural resources, economic powers, and financial tools needed to provide goods and services to a

global market. The only limitations holding you back are capital, raw materials, knowledge, industry, competition, and the moral guidelines of honorable citizenship.

The core of this model is the free enterprise system. It's a system supported by an environment of free trade. In this environment of a free society, the free enterprise system has blossomed and flourished through the genius of responsible capitalism.

Private Property

Private property is one of the leading characteristics of a free society. However, its ownership is fragile. Throughout history, disputes have raged over the issue of land ownership—private ownership versus public ownership. Sometimes this debate has grown so heated, nations and even families have battled each other. These destructive conflicts have caused the legal system in every developed county to enact regulations for standardized ownership of real estate.

These laws and regulations governing land ownership have in great part, fostered the political economies of the free western world. These laws define land ownership, protect the rights of landowners, and penalize those criminals guilty of illegal land dealings

In America and throughout western civilization, political power and wealth are often tied to land ownership. In contrast, communist countries forbid personal ownership of land, claiming

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the right of common possession. The collapse of communist Russia in the twentieth century, reveals the failure of the restrictive policy of communal ownership.

Pride and Care in Ownership

It's been proven when individuals own property, it leads to a sense of pride and responsibility in caring for and improving the property. When you own property and make improvements, you truly feel responsible for it. Once landowners add their labor to property, the value of it becomes the combination of the land value—plus the value of the added labor. Because labor is private, the value of the land becomes based even more on the added value of human labor than on its original value.

Responsible Capitalism Means Stewardship

In Western history, wealth has always been connected with land ownership. Through land improvements a landowner became wealthier. The wealthier a landowner became, the more respect he received. Respon-

ble stewardship affords benefits that fall into three main categories:

1. Capital Increases Your Opportunities

Our ancestors entered the industrial revolution with visions of a new world where machines could increase physical abilities, replace backbreaking labor, and protect you from unsafe working conditions.

The computer age brought predictions of amazing mental enhancement. Computer science put men on the moon and personal computers became as commonplace as television sets.

In much the same way that machines and computers increase our physical and mental abilities, money or “capital” increases our personal opportunities. Today, capital is leveraged to buy, sell, trade, loan, and exchange assets. It can help you develop opportunities for personal gain and self-expression.

2. Preserving Your Estate Blesses Your Family

In some ways America has unique laws of inheritance. Through proper planning, you may pass on your assets, real estate holdings, and other capital to family members, friends, or charitable organizations. Then you guarantee those closest to you in life benefit from your financial assets when you pass away. So acting as a responsible steward brings rewards to you and your loved ones.

3. Capital Benefits Your Family and Community

Private property is not entirely “private.” It's part of the resources of Mother Earth's original gift to you. Because of this, communities feel some sense of responsibility and ownership for private property. Zoning and Public nuisance laws may apply to your property affecting its upkeep and maintenance. Municipalities may exercise “eminent domain” laws and convert private property to public property.

This view of shared ownership means although private property benefits private individuals and families, its value and improvements may also benefit the community. Society encourages and supports the efforts of private landowners to act responsibly in maintaining and improving their property and neighborhood. ■

Pride in Ownership

One of the greatest qualities of successful people is a sense of pride in ownership. Generally this is applied to home or property ownership. The feeling relates to a long standing and historical social status conveyed toward property owners and results in a feeling of financial accomplishment. It also shows in commitment to the local community as well as a sense of pride in maintaining the property's appearance—which in turn increases its value.

This pride in ownership can also be applied to any held position or life success. For instance pride in ones job position or the skills they can bring to their employer conveys a sense of pride. Taking ownership of responsibilities and projects that are entrusted to you will result in feelings of well being as you receive the praise for a job well done and in knowing that you created something worthwhile. Engaged employees who take ownership of their work are some of the strongest assets to a business.

Taking responsibility for your financial success can also offer great benefits. Not only will your family be blessed with life necessities, but owning your financial decisions today will result in that same pride of ownership that comes any time you realize success in your life. In addition, removing the stress of debt, poverty, and need that enters life through poor financial decisions will result in a more relaxed and healthy life. Make your financial life something you can be proud of by owning your part of the process and you will find success.

Establish and Maintain a Savings Program

Build up and Increase Your Capital

There are two valuable tools to help you build and increase your capital—both are within your grasp and well worth using. One is a successful savings plan, the other an effective investment program.

A Successful Savings Plan Looks to the Future

Whether you're saving for your child's education, a new home, a dream vacation or your retirement, saving is the result of planning. No matter what personal goals you've set, plans can only be made for the future. They have nothing to do with the past, and affect the present only in your daily choice to stick to your plan. A goal's nature is firmly planted in the future whether for a day, a month, or a year.

Postponed gratification is the price for a strong financial future. Exercising patience and self-discipline insures your future is filled with less worry and more happiness through financial security. This is exactly opposite of current marketing—and the attitude of self-indulgence and instant satisfaction.

Great Power in Focus and Consistency

If you poured a bucket of water over a sandstone boulder several times a day for ten years, the sandstone boulder would probably change very little. But, if you dripped water on the same spot on the stone every second—minute by minute, hour by hour—for the same ten years it could make a noticeable indentation, maybe even produce a hole all the way through the boulder. Successful Saving is focused and consistent.

Saving is NOT Complicated!

Many people just lack training in self-discipline. You need to practice

more self-control and follow your true goals and dreams. In a world of convenience and instant gratification, it's easy to get used to giving in to what's fastest or easiest... unfortunately, it often isn't what's best for you. Getting tempted down a side road leads away from your goals and dreams, and you'll end up frustrated and disappointed in yourself and your future.

Your grandparents dreamed of the days when much of the drudgery of earning a living would be replaced by machines and scientific wonders. They dreamed of thirty-hour workweeks, more free time, peace and prosperity. But tomorrow didn't come as they imagined. Instead, many Americans have become virtual slaves to current wonders and technology and the instant gratification it presents.

What's Your Financial Attitude?

Describe your current attitude toward "savings." Also write down your feelings about your attitude. Do you find saving difficult or easy... inconsistent or steady... rewarding or nonexistent?

Today, the typical family puts in longer workweeks, has less free time, and chases prosperity on a treadmill going nowhere. Families often exercise too little choice or planning in spending their money. They find themselves in financial bondage because they lack the essential skills of self-discipline and planning necessary to face a flood of choices.

Live Happy—Do the Right Thing.

The number one reason for not starting a savings program is

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Ways to Take Ownership of Your Life

1. Understand that no matter where you are in life the only person out there who can change or improve your life is you. The saying "when you point one finger, there are three fingers pointing back at you" is true. You may not have had full responsibility for getting to where your life is at right now... but you do have full responsibility for improving your situation.

2. Take time to identify all of the rolls and responsibilities you have in your life, for instance: husband, father, provider, employee, son, brother, soccer coach, bible teacher, community leader, account trustee, etc. Then list what you are doing for each. Are you failing at any aspect of those responsibilities? Set goals to improve your ownership of these rolls.

3. Find ways to improve the environment around you which will help make your jobs easier. Does the house need cleaning and organizing? Are there home or car repairs that need to be taken care of? Is the yard in need of some TLC? Do you need some additional work training? Set aside some time to clean up your surroundings and take care of personal needs so that you can focus on other responsibilities.

4. Plan some time away from distractions to review your financial life. What is your monthly budget? What are your assets and debts? What does your savings look like? Retirement? Investments? Life insurance? Do you have short and long term financial goals, and how are those progressing? Set goals to fill in the gaps in your financial plan and don't forget to include ways to reach those goals.

ARTICLES

TIPS & TRICKS

Establish and Maintain a Savings Program

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procrastination. People understand the principal of saving, and they're aware of the benefits—many even have some sort of plan. But they struggle with just getting past standing still. You may either put off starting or make excuses to not follow through. When you're not true to your sincere desires, you become discouraged and unhappy—which often holds you back from your goal.

Time's Your Asset

The problem's compounded since procrastination robs you of TIME, which is a critical asset of your successful savings plan. It's not all your fault, the culture of convenience and instant gratification, says it's not popular to sacrifice the 'bling, bling' of today for financial security tomorrow. And you've learned the need to belong is a primary social need. But to live right—you must do right by yourself—you must act responsibly.

Tempted by Modern Advertising?

You've already learned how relentlessly marketers work to manipulate you, and your children, toward short-term buying decisions. The multi-billion-dollar advertising industry thrives on glamorizing the "benefits" of instant gratification.

Small thinking...

Today, people seem more interested in things than in principles. The emphasis on the improved value of property instead of the pure value of land is a good example. Today's landown-

ers control small parcels of property with improvements of maybe a fence or garage. It's much different than the larger, productive land tracts typical of earlier land ownership. Such fragile improvements show our contemporary interest in things of short duration. There's nothing wrong with small improvements, but the emphasis is on immediate fulfillment instead of enduring quality. It's shortsighted and causes people to devalue the virtues of long-term planning.

The Secret to Saving is Simple.

To become a great saver, simply learn new habits and attitudes towards money and its use. Everything you've learned in these Financial Fitness Workbooks will help you achieve this. Your emphasis must be on your long-term goals instead of short-term impulses. Live your financial philosophy and follow your roadmap to a financially healthy future. Don't be blown off course by the winds of instant gratification. You're the one who decides who'll control your financial future... will it be you or your creditors? Now you know the steps you must take if you want to arrive at Financial Freedom, so choose to be the master of your future.

You Can Do This!

There are multiple resources available out there for reference, ideas and support. The important thing to remember is that your financial

health isn't going to change overnight. It is a process that begins with daily financial choices and it builds into years of savings built around a strong financial plan. Remember these three steps:

1. Take Control of Your Finances
2. Improve Your Financial Life
3. Prepare for the Future

It may seem like an old cliché but the real truth is while it won't be easy—in the end it will be worth it! ■

Call for a free financial review.

Need help getting your financial plans in order or setting reachable goals? Call one of our certified counselors today.

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