



START THE CONVERSATION:

YOUR MONEY YOUR LIFE

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INTRODUCTION

Why Financial Health Matters to YOU!

Want to feel more in control of your money — and your future? Learning how to budget, save, and spend smart is one of the best things you can do for yourself right now. Good money habits help you stay out of debt, make confident choices, and reach your goals faster. It's not just about having cash today — it's about building a life where you're in charge. The more you understand your money, the more freedom and independence you'll have to do the things that matter to you.



HOW TO USE THIS BOOK

Let's Talk Money:

Each chapter in the *Finances and Money Management* comes with **Conversation Starters**—short prompts and questions to help you think deeper, speak up, and really connect with the topic.

These aren't just boring review questions. They're designed to get you thinking about real-life money stuff and how it applies to you. Whether you're talking it out with someone or just reflecting on your own, these starters help you understand the “why” behind each task — and give you a chance to say what you really think.

CHAPTER 1

HELPING YOU TAKE YOUR FIRST STEPS TOWARD FINANCIAL INDEPENDENCE

Ready to level up your money game?

As you start doing more on your own, learning how to manage your money is a key life skill. Opening your own chequing and savings accounts is a solid first move. A chequing account gives you a debit card and online banking, so you can track your spending and stick to a budget. A savings account helps you get into the habit of setting money aside for stuff you really want later on. These small steps teach you how to be smart with your cash—and set you up for long-term success. The sooner you start, the more in control you'll feel.



Actionable Steps

- Compare different banks and decide which is right for you
- Do any of the banks offer points that may help you in the future as your banking becomes more complex?

CHAPTER 2

ENTREPRENEURS

TURNING TALENTS INTO INCOME

Thinking about making your own money?

You're not alone.

More and more young people are getting creative and turning their skills into cash. Whether you're selling your art online, tutoring, freelancing, or building a social media brand, you're showing serious hustle.

Along the way, you're picking up real-life skills like:

- Talking to customers
- Managing your money
- Promoting what you do

These experiences don't just help you earn — they build confidence, independence, and set you up for future jobs or even your own business. With some support and smart choices, you can turn your interests into something powerful in today's fast-moving world.



Actionable Steps

- In what ways do you get money (job, allowance, school grants, side hustles, part time job)?
- A student side hustle can be as simple as walking dogs, mowing lawns or shovelling snow.
- What can you do to bring in a little money?

CHAPTER 3

WHY PART-TIME JOBS MATTER (BEYOND THE PAYCHEQUE)

A part-time job is more than just a paycheck.

Even if it's not your dream job, working in retail, food service, or helping out at a local business can teach you a lot about life. You'll pick up real skills like:

- Showing up on time and being reliable
- Talking to all kinds of people
- Managing your time and tasks
- Dealing with challenges and solving problems

These aren't just "work" skills — they're life skills. Every shift is a chance to grow your confidence, build independence, and get ready for whatever's next. The experience you gain now can open doors later.



Actionable Steps

- Research part time jobs in your community.
- Practice filling out an application, many part time jobs will have you fill one out on paper.
- Use online resources to search for jobs.

CHAPTER 4

EMERGENCY FUNDS: PREPARE FOR THE UNEXPECTED

Actionable Steps

Life happens. Be ready for it.

One of the smartest money moves you can make is starting an emergency fund — a small stash of cash you set aside just in case. Whether it's a cracked phone, car trouble, or a break between jobs, having backup money can save you a ton of stress.

By saving a bit of what you earn, you'll:

- Stay calm when things go wrong
- Avoid borrowing or depending on others
- Learn to plan ahead like a boss

It's a simple habit, but it gives you real power over your own life — and shows you're ready for whatever comes your way.

- Locate your emergency fund in an account that you don't use -- and you can't see easily.
- Contribute regularly.



CHAPTER 5

BUILDING SELF-CONTROL IN A SPEND-NOW WORLD

With so many ads and trends, it's easy to feel like you have to spend. Learning to control those impulses is a key part of building smart money habits.

When you take a moment to pause and think before buying, you'll start to:

- Tell the difference between what you want and what you need
- Make choices that help you reach your goals
- Avoid stress from impulse buys

By spending mindfully, you'll focus on what matters most — like saving for experiences, your education, or big dreams. With the right habits, you'll be ready to make wise decisions, even in a world full of distractions.



Actionable Steps

- Track income and expenses.
- Set financial goals.
- Use budgeting apps.

CHAPTER 6

SAVE BEFORE LEAVING HOME

Ready to leave home? It's not just about packing your bags — it's about planning for your future.

Understanding what to save for now can make your transition to independence way smoother.

Here are some key things to save for:

- Emergency fund – For unexpected stuff like car repairs or medical bills
- Housing costs – Rent, deposits, utilities, and groceries
- Transportation – Car, gas, insurance, or public transit
- Healthcare – Insurance, prescriptions, and out-of-pocket costs
- Education or training – Tuition, supplies, or skill-building courses
- Lifestyle & personal growth – Hobbies, entertainment, and new opportunities

By saving smart and planning ahead, you'll feel way more confident and prepared to handle adult life — and you'll have a solid foundation to build on.



Actionable Steps

- Think about how much money you want to save before you leave home (rent, school fees, emergency fund...).
- Start a regular savings routine and monitor it often.

CHAPTER 7

MINDFUL SPENDING: USING MONEY TO BUY FREEDOM AND EXPERIENCES

Spending isn't just about needs — it's also about enjoying life.

Learning to spend mindfully means using money as a tool to buy things that bring you freedom, fun, and joy. It's okay to treat yourself once in a while, especially when you've worked hard for it. After all, you've earned it! The key is to find a balance between saving for the future and enjoying the present. When you spend with intention, you can enjoy your hard-earned rewards and still make smart choices for long-term goals. That way, you get the best of both worlds!



Actionable Steps

- Create a Vision Board: Gather images, quotes, and reminders of your budget dream (e.g., a car, a trip, or a savings amount) and place them on a board or in a digital format. Keep this vision board in a place where you'll see it daily to stay motivated and focused.
- Set a clear deadline.

CHAPTER 8

UNDERSTANDING INCOME TAXES AND GOVERNMENT PROGRAMS

Starting to understand taxes? It's an important step in taking control of your money.

Taxes aren't just something you do to check a box — they're a key part of planning for your future. By learning about taxes and programs like the Canada Pension Plan (CPP), Tax-Free Savings Accounts (TFSA), Registered Retirement Savings Plans (RRSPs), and First Home Savings Accounts (FHSAs), you'll see how to fund things like retirement security and other important stuff.

Understanding taxes now helps you build a strong foundation for long-term financial stability — and could even unlock government benefits or rebates that help you keep more of your money.

By getting to know how it all works early on, you'll be better prepared to manage your finances and set yourself up for success down the road.



Actionable Steps

- There are programs to help you do your taxes, and they're not hard to use.
- Find free tax software by checking your government website.
- Be aware of due dates regarding taxes.

CHAPTER 9

SELF-CONTROL IN A WORLD OF TEMPTATION

With ads and marketing everywhere, it's easy to feel like you need everything.

Learning to control those impulses is key to managing your money and keeping your finances healthy. When you understand the difference between what you want and what you need, you'll be able to make smarter choices and focus on the things that really matter in the long run.

Practicing self-control helps you protect your savings and build discipline. Plus, it encourages you to value experiences and relationships more than just buying stuff. It's all about creating a life that's not only fulfilling but sustainable too.



Actionable Steps

- In real life -- when you buy things, check prices and quality.
- Online -- watch out for fraud by reading reviews.

CHAPTER 10

CREDIT

Credit cards can be a helpful tool, but they come with responsibility. When you use a credit card, you're borrowing money from the bank, and you'll need to pay it back later. If you don't pay off the balance in full, the bank will charge you interest — meaning you'll end up paying more than what you spent. To avoid that, try to pay off the full balance each month. Only spend what you can afford to pay back right away. Using credit wisely can help build your credit history, which is useful when you're ready to buy a car or take out student loans. If you don't manage it carefully, you can end up with debt problems.

Keep track of what you're spending and stay within your credit limit, and you'll be on your way to building strong financial habits for the future.



Actionable Steps

- Understand credit card fees and rates.
- Don't buy it if you can't afford it today -- next month won't better.

CONCLUSION

THIS IS THE BEGINNING OF SOMETHING GOOD!

Learning how to manage your money now sets you up for success in the future. Money management isn't just about budgeting — it's about building habits that will help you stay in control of your finances for life. When you learn how to budget, save, and invest wisely, you'll have the tools you need to reach your goals and deal with unexpected challenges.

Mastering these basics will help you avoid debt, overspending, and other financial problems. Plus, the sooner you understand how money works, the more confident and independent you'll be. By becoming financially savvy, you'll not only set yourself up for success but also help make society more financially resilient.



ABOUT THE AUTHOR



Jo-Anne Locke

With 30 years of teaching experience and as a parent of four, I know how important it is to guide you through the big stuff in life — like money, life skills, education, jobs, self-care, and staying grounded.

This isn't just about academics; it's about giving you the tools to grow, build independence, and handle what life throws your way.

I hope this ebook has sparked some meaningful conversations between you and your parents, and that the tasks inside help you both work together to build strong life skills.