Handling Financial Pressures

One of the most widespread issues of our times is the specter of financial pressure, which tends to affect everything else. While people have many reasons for joining The Masters Circle, it is a spoken or unspoken objective of each member to increase wealth accumulation, even among those already well on their way to financial security and independence.

The law of attraction shows us that in order to create sufficient wealth, you must generate a vibrational pull that brings opportunity and assets toward you. You must also develop sufficient capacity to hold what you attract, and the dance that ensues between attraction and capacity dictates the rate and magnitude of your growth. We have been trained to think that this should happen in a straight line, but more often, the path to prosperity is tortuous and convoluted, and filled with valuable lessons and growth experiences we may not necessarily enjoy at the time, but which are essential to our development and maturation.

It's important to realize that financial challenges are very common – in fact, literally every person and every business goes through something like this at some time or another. Indeed, didn't Hillary Clinton just have to put $5 million of her own money into her campaign? I assure you she would have preferred not to have to do that, and granted that she has resources few of us have, but it just shows you that this can happen to anyone, and those who get through it are those who understand how to show up in the situation and how to orchestrate their resources to handle things in the best way possible. Even McDonald's went through rough financial times in 2002, when they realized they had gotten away from their fundamental values and qualities, yet today they are as successful as ever, because they retraced their steps and re-established their attention to detail.

I have arranged the subject matter for this article into four sections, designed so that you can take great strides toward handling this significant challenge and establish a foundation of financial wisdom underneath your wealth accumulation strategies.

While this work will apply to anyone regardless of current financial status, it will be geared toward those who are not yet financially secure, which includes most of us, so fasten your seatbelt and let's go.

The four topics we'll be addressing are:

the psychology of getting through the stress of money problems

practical tips on organizing a spending plan around limited resources

the mindset of building prosperity from modest beginnings

and emergency steps when things get really close.

Notice that this really isn't an article on wealth building, as much as it is designed to help you overcome challenging circumstances so you can resume or initiate your movement toward great wealth and financial fulfillment.

1. The Psychology of Getting Through the Stress of Money Problems

Let's get started with the psychology of getting through the stress of money problems.

The big frame around this is to remember to come from your cause, not some external effect. Your financial condition doesn't define you, you define your financial condition, and the moment you remember that, you start to regain control. You will need to perform well in challenging times, and if you let yourself be affected too much by your surrounding conditions, it'll be harder for you to do your best. So, learning to manage your state and bring your best game to the field of battle is a necessary precondition for success of any kind, and when the chips are down, it's even more important to stay as resourceful as possible.

So, first, how do you handle any kind of stress in the first place? Ironically, if you start by trying to manage your thoughts, it will actually be more difficult – Tony Robbins taught me to shift physiology first, and then it's easier for the mind to follow, so I recommend that you identify your physiological characteristics that lead to a feeling of being able to handle stresses in general. You can do this as a resource builder, and brainstorm out the ten steps for calm, focused, relaxed, quietly intense, or whatever you call the state you want to generate.

Let's experiment with this for a minute – think of something that stresses you financially, not the biggest nastiest one, something lighter weight to get started, and get yourself into an edgy place around money, just for the purposes of this exercise. Now, change your facial expression, or your breathing, or your posture, and see if that diminishes the discomfort. If you pick a step to shift your physiology that breaks the previous pattern of stress, you'll quickly feel a shift toward some relief. Now, notice that this doesn't fix the financial issue – it merely puts you in a better place to address it well. Something as simple as changing your facial expression from a strained grimace to a neutral expression or a slight smile will enable your resources to kick in, instead of being locked up by your frown.

Also, notice that this is independent of the magnitude or type of stress you're dealing with – state management comes from inside, no matter what causes the state you want to change. So, even with an issue as emotionally charged as finances, you must begin by handling your inner environment, necessary to deal with your outer environment.

Once you have your physiological patterns of stress altered, it will be easier and more productive to start modifying your patterns of thought. Obviously, you can use a resource building approach, and select the right combination of visualization, sounds and voices, self talk, feelings or sensations and reference experiences to access. This sets the stage for overall empowerment, not just preparing for dealing with financial stress.

Affirmation is also an important aspect of this state management approach, as is monitoring and refining your self talk along the way. If you're bashing yourself inside, how can you reasonably expect to show up at your best? So, it's important to establish a litany of constructive self-talk statements that guide your inner environment toward a more conducive demeanor for handling financial pressures.

Try saying stuff like, "I've gotten through problems like this before, and I'll get through these, too. I'm good at solving problems, I can solve this one. We get the challenges we can handle, and I can handle this one. Problems that can be solved with money are not big problems. I'm smart, I'm competent, I rise to the occasion, I like my chances to get through this, what doesn't kill me makes me stronger, I'm ready to tackle this with enthusiasm and passion, I understand the stakes and I'm up to the challenge, I can do this, I will do this, " or whatever, write your own in your own language and with your own emotion and emphasis – but managing your internal environment is the first key to getting through financial pressures. When you affirm, try visualizing what you are affirming, and it intensifies your imagination and amplifies the effect.

One final thought about managing your inner environment – if you need to, you can always default to values leverage, in other words, to identifying the benefits of changing your state, and the consequences of not changing it. Self talk like "I know why I need to show up great, and I'm determined to show up that way" or "What will I gain from being able to think and act clearly about this, and what will it cost me if I don't" give you tremendous control over your state that can be invested in the next section we're going to talk about, which is developing a strategy for organizing a spending plan around limited resources.

2. Developing a Strategy for Organizing a Spending Plan around Limited Resources

You may have heard the old axiom, you can't get ten pounds of potatoes in a five pound bag – actually, you may have heard a slightly different version of that saying, but the meaning is the same – you can only hold as much as you can hold, and this is a foundational element in understanding capacity technology.

Well, a corollary of this maxim is "You can't spend ten dollars out of five" – in other words, you can only invest resources that you have access to. This doesn't mean you can't project for the future, but remember the frame we're coming from here – if there is financial pressure, it comes from a feeling of having too much month at the end of your money, if you know what I mean. So, it is essential to overview your current financial situation, uncomfortable and disconcerting as it may seem at the time, so you can get a reality check on where you are, since only then can you plan a path out of the stressful situation and into a more desirable one.

Actually, many times it provides some relief to get such a reality check, even if the news isn't so good – at least you know exactly where you are, and from there, you can plot your course through relief to security and beyond.

So, let's look at this strategy. The first step is to get into the empowered state we worked on, so you are prepared inside to tackle this opportunity.

Next, you need to compile your current expenses, while maintaining the empowered state. This is very important, because you probably already have patterns of unhappiness, hostility, fear and distraction set up to keep you from extreme suffering when you have considered this problem in the past – that's why we started by accessing empowered states as a backdrop to this process, so you can begin to break down the faulty patterns of behavior and emotion that do not serve you.

Now, it's important to realize that in order to succeed, you have to start past survival, which is a slick way of saying aim through your target, not at it. Every martial artist knows that if you aim at a board with a strike, you risk breaking your wrist – you need to aim through the board, so your follow through takes you well past your target. It's the same with finances – if you just aim at breaking even, it may not propel you far or fast enough. But for this exercise, we're going to be talking about the break even point as an intermediate goal, a convention we'll establish as a milestone in your financial development. It is assumed that you'll be growing far past this point, but from a place of financial pressure, some retracing is necessary – as with physical or emotional healing, you don't usually go from unhealth to health, you go from unhealth to average to health, and it's no different with financial healing – you have to get even before you can get ahead, even though you'll be aiming past that break even point. We'll be using it as a reference, a defining point of the positive movement toward your financial dreams.

So, while remaining strong and centered, list your financial responsibilities in the following way. Start with your fixed office overhead, the expenses that happen cyclically like rent, utilities, payroll, supplies, the costs of doing business that you already know about. This gives you a target to aim at to get even in your office – don't worry, we're going to handle your home expenses and taxes and the money you owe in a minute, first we have to get a reality check on what it takes monthly for you to be on target in your office. Now, if you've done your financial master plan, then you already have a good idea about these monthly obligations – if they're still accurate, use those numbers, but it can be revealing to take a fresh cut on these numbers, some of them may have changed since you computed your last master plan.

So, once you have an office overhead number to aim for, you need a system to figure out what it will take for you to generate the income to hit this basic nut – the simplest way to do it is to take the number you need and divide it by your collected OVA – in other words, you can compute the number of visits you need by figuring out how many times your per-visit fee goes into your necessary target income. For example, if you need 20,000 to cover your office overhead, and you collect 50 bucks per visit, then you know you need 400 office visits to hit your office expense number.

Now, do the same thing for your home expenses and your taxes – figure out how much you need to cover those expenses. For example, if you need 6000/month to pay your household expenses, and owe 4000 in taxes, at the same 50 dollars a visit, you need 120 visits to pay your home expenses and 80 visits to pay your taxes.

Now, if you add up the numbers we just figured out, 20,000 in office overhead plus 6000 in home expenses plus 4000 in taxes means that this doctor would need 30,000 to be even each month. At 50 dollars a visit, 600 visits are required to stay even each month.

Now, one of two scenarios is true – either you are already seeing 600 visits, or you are not. Remember, this is a theoretical situation, you will fill in your own numbers, but the question remains, are you already seeing the volume you need to break even, or not? You will deal with these two scenarios somewhat differently, so let's look at them separately.

If you are already seeing the volume you would need to hit your expenses, but you aren't at or past the break even point financially, it either means you haven't accurately identified all of your expenses, or you are spending money on non-essentials, which is driving up your expenses. Double check your expenditures and be sure that you have included all pertinent expenses.

If you are sure that you have listed all the office overhead items, that means you are leaking money somewhere, and a cash flow analysis will be required to find out where the money is going. On rare occasions there's foul play, but the huge majority of the time it's small amounts being squandered along the way that eventually add up to a significant shortfall. Being willing to do the exercise of analyzing where the money is going will give you insight into the process of wealth accumulation, and help you understand why so few people end up financially free.

Spending above and beyond your needs isn't necessarily bad, and I don't want to suggest that we have to live a Spartan existence devoid of any frivolity. But in times of financial pressure, you want to be keenly aware of the amount you do this, not to shut down the flow of abundance, but to blend time and responsibility into the equation on an as needed basis. All of us need to spend a little on just whatever, but the blend may need to change depending on the financial overview of the particular time.

There are two broad types of patterns of spending above the break even point – one-time purchases and cyclical purchases. One-time purchases are usually impulse buys, either something you've wanted for a long time and finally said "what the heck," or something you see that moves you emotionally and makes your lust overshadow your economic reason.

Cyclical expenses, like petty cash repeat purchases like Starbuck's or snacks that would be more cost-efficient if purchased in quantity, or even reduced or eliminated, if the observation helps you realize the actual cost of that self-indulgence. For example, if you buy a four dollar Starbuck's once a day five days a week, that's twenty dollars a week or a thousand dollars a year. If you net $100,000, then that thousand dollars of after-tax income you're spending represents about one and a half percent of your take-home income. If you take out your usual home expenses, you may be spending ten of fifteen percent of your disposable income on daily coffee breaks – if you want to do that, fine, but first realize how this money adds up, and decide if this expense fits your values.

This is only one example, but many of us have repetitive expenditures, which like a repetitive motion injury, doesn't hurt much while you're doing it, but has a cumulative impact that takes you away from your objective. Analyze your spending patterns to discover money-wasters and avoidable expenses.

By evaluating your impulse buys and cyclical spending patterns, you can catch yourself in inappropriate buying habits and reclaim some of that discretionary income to re-allocate more consistently with your ultimate desires.

Now, in the second scenario where you are not yet seeing the volume you need to break even, you must still do the exercise we just described, but you must do something else as well – you must plan to expand your capacity and attraction to grow your practice volume to the necessary levels. By computing the break even point, you can choose a target to aim at, and by using the same kind of computations we described before, you can figure out how much you need to grow to get to that break even point.

To find out your optimal strategy for increasing your volume, you'll have to find the right balance between new patient flow, patient visit average and office visit average – in other words, you'll have to figure out how many new patients you need, each coming in a certain number of visits and spending a certain amount each visit. Doing this math gives you a reality check on what is expected of you, and to get to the point of reducing financial stress, you'll have to surpass that break even number, either by growing your volume or shrinking your expenses, or both, until you strike that balance.

By knowing what volume you need to practice at to hit these targets, you can assess your current situation accurately, and establish specific plans to get beyond the break even point. This certainty adds to your power, because you won't hallucinate exaggerated needs, which just makes it harder – you can focus on a pre-determined goal, so you can measure your progress objectively and maximize your movement.

Now, you have a state management strategy and a preliminary set of goals, with some basic plans to achieve at that level. Now, it's time for the third part of this financial pressure reduction system, to create the mindset of prosperity so you can blast past the break even point into abundance.

3. Creating a Mindset of Prosperity

They say that character isn't built in a crisis, it's just displayed there, and the same is true of prosperity consciousness. You must work at developing a mindset of prosperity in advance of the occurrence of material wealth. This is not so much a factual statement as an observation on my part, but I have tested this in myself and others over twenty years, and I find no downside whatsoever to thinking prosperously, and a large detriment to not doing so.

Understanding the mindset that leads to prosperity is as much a shedding process as a building process – we too often default to feelings and thoughts of lack, like I can't afford that, that's too expensive, I could never live there, why would anyone want to spend that on a car, and other subtle evidence of lack thinking. I'm not advocating frivolous and wasteful spending, I just recommend that you find better ways to express such sentiments – the same thoughts mentioned above could be expressed like, if that was important enough to me, I could make it happen, or even, if anyone can manifest such wonderful goals, then I could do it too – opening the door of possibility is one of the first ways to set your mind for prosperity.

Next, you must consider modeling the values and beliefs of the affluent, who have left clues for you. Read books on prosperity, from the traditional, like "Dynamic Laws of Prosperity" by Catherine Ponder and "The Abundance Book" by John Randolph Price, to the modern, like "The Seven Spiritual Laws of Success" by Deepak Chopra and "The Secret" by Rhonda Byrne. You'll also want to fill in your knowledge base with books on money, business and investment, like books by Michael Gerber, Robert Kiyosaki, Peter Lynch, John Templeton, Paul Zane Pilzer, and many others. By feeding both your right brain and your left brain, you will feel more confident and secure in your understanding of things financial, and this leads to the mindset of prosperity.

You can reference your Masters Guide to write and refine your own belief structure and values hierarchy around finances. Those of you who have taken the Yellow belt Identity module already know what I'm talking about, but for the rest of you, read pages 100-107 and identify your constructive and limiting beliefs around money and success. Use your constructive beliefs like affirmations, and use some of the techniques listed on page 105 to 107 to break down your faulty beliefs and install constructive ones in their place.

For example, what if you have a belief that you're just not good with money? This is a common default position for those who seem to find that money slips through their fingers – changing that pattern of behavior usually requires a shift in the underlying beliefs about yourself and about money in general. The first and simplest technique you could use to begin breaking down this limiting belief is a counter-example – in other words, find a time, place or situation where you did manage money well, to make that belief seem less true. What about the time you saved for a car when you were younger, or for an engagement ring or a new dining room set – most of us have a reference experience where we performed well in the area that we've been doubting ourselves, and by bringing that reference to consciousness, it begins to weaken the limiting belief.

Next, you can decide what's missing that is preventing you from breaking down this poor belief – do you need more confidence, more focus, more passion? Do you need better systems, more advice, or more experience? Identifying what you'd need more of or less of and working toward that shift helps you to break down the faulty belief.

How about values leverage? Recognizing what the faulty belief costs you, or what you would gain from eliminating it and replacing it with a better belief, goes a long way toward reshaping your belief structure. Acknowledging that maintaining the belief that you aren't good with money could prevent you from ever reaching your financial potential, or seeing yourself as financially free upon the choice of a better belief system, can be all you need to develop this prosperous mindset.

Once you break down faulty beliefs, you need to replace them with powerful positive beliefs that move you toward success. You can install constructive beliefs with affirmations, by proclaiming them as true until you develop a new mental habit. You can rehearse better self talk, and create an inner backdrop of prosperous thinking. You can use an anchor, by creating a conditioned response to a signal you establish within yourself. Or, you can go back to values leverage, still one of your most powerful personal change tools.

Try this – think about what you gain from seizing control of your finances, and what you lose by not doing so. Think about what you'd be able to do for your family, for your patients, for your friends, for yourself when you create success. Think about the pain of not accomplishing these things, when you know you have the talent and intelligence to do so. By focusing on your values, you generate tremendous leverage that gets you to take action you might not otherwise take, even when it's uncomfortable, because you have a good enough reason to follow through.

Now, we've spoken about getting into a favorable resource state for financial problem solving. We've spoken about how to set up the basic system of getting control of your finances. We've spoken about the identity work necessary to advance into prosperity consciousness and wealth accumulation, and suggested some resources to help you learn about business acumen, investment and money management.

But what if you're in a rough spot right now, what do you do? What if you've slipped into a near emergency, or worse? Here's where you really get tested and also have the most to gain from going through this set of experiences.

4. Emergency Steps for When Things Get Close

Once again, you can't spend ten dollars out of five, and that means in rough times, you must remain resourceful so you don't lapse into a fear response. You'll need all your resources to get through tough situations, so start by accessing your inner strength, using any of the techniques we've discussed here or whatever has typically worked for you. Once you are feeling empowered, it's time to write your strategic plan to get out of financial pain as soon as possible.

Analyze your expenses and see where you may have some flexibility – if you have any creditors who may give you a broader time frame for payment, call in those favors and ease your burden, while working your plan to build volume and streamline expenses to get beyond that break even point. You'll be surprised how supportive some people can be, since almost everyone has been through it. Realize that this is not designed to relieve pressure without some passage of pain on your part – you must perform well enough to catch up, but the well-handled confrontation with those you owe will build your character and also help those people to feel they have a stake in your success. You and they will both remember that they were good to you in time of need, and this will actually enhance your relationship going forward, as long as you make good on your promise.

You also have to kick your production into a higher gear. Sometimes this involves speeding up, sometimes it involves slowing down and being more intense in the focused actions you take – it varies with style, but whatever you've been doing, shift something that takes you in the direction of increased productivity. Take specific action on your plans, whether to increase new patient flow, improve compliance, or generate increased profitability.

You may also want to examine your fee policies, and see if either your fees or your collections need review. You should be collecting at 90% or better, and if not, you are leaving money on the table – your money. If it requires some resourceful and well-managed confrontation to collect on monies that you are owed, then you get a bonus, not only the money but also the opportunity to grow yourself in those ways.

If your fees are too low, it makes it harder to get beyond the break even point, because you need more visits than someone charging a more substantial fee. Yet, you don't raise your fees to make more money – you raise them when you feel your service warrants an increase. Be careful not to fall into the trap of charging more when you don't feel great about yourself and your services – that usually ends up with finding another way to the same level, with fewer patients paying you more for each visit, but without significant overall growth.

You may want to add some back end items that add value for the patient and contribute to your profitability. Putting in a FootLevelers scanner and testing people for orthotics can be a great solution, or doing nutritional consultations and recommending Biotics or other nutritional supplementation is good for your patients and good for your bottom line – but energically, you must always make sure only to recommend what you know the patient legitimately needs, not based on your desire for additional income.

You may also need to call in some favors and borrow some money from family, friends, or if you can arrange it, lending institutions. Some collections agencies are willing to give you an advance against your accounts receivables, a process known as factoring. You may even be able to take out a line of credit or a business loan. None of these strategies solves the underlying problem, but it may give you the time you need to work the process we just described, where you manage your state, assess your current financial status, develop a mindset of success and learn about business, money and prosperity to create that experience in your life.

If you are in an emergency situation, then you may need some additional coaching, both to manage your state and to write your strategies to get beyond the break even point. That coaching will begin now, with some question and answer, but you can also call into open consulting, or schedule visits to talk with your coaches about your particular situation, and I assure you, it's unlikely that your circumstances are insurmountable, even though they may feel that way at the time. Use your resources, you are made to be successful, and you can do it, as long as you use what you have to work with.