

21-DAY FINANCIALLY FIT CHALLENGE

DAY 1

ADMIT YOU HAVE A PROBLEM

We've all been there (I was once in \$5000 of credit card debt!) but before you can expect to make major changes you need to admit there are things about your life and spending behavior that need changing. So, repeat after me: ADMIT YOU HAVE A PROBLEM.

DAY 2

WRITE DOWN YOUR 1-YEAR GOALS FOR THE THREE F'S (FINANCE, FUN, AND FAMILY)

Write down your 1-year goals for the Three F's (Finance, Fun, and Family). Goals are important, but they come with price tags and we need to make sure you have enough money (or a plan to make enough money) to make those dreams a reality. Are your goals in sync with your bank account?

DAY 3

WRITE DOWN YOUR 3-YEAR GOALS FOR THE THREE F'S (FINANCE, FUN, AND FAMILY)

Write down your 3-year goals for the Three F's (Finance, Fun, and Family). We're now into more speculative territory but don't worry—you reserve the right to adjust your goals time and again as your career, relationship, and of course financial situation change. Want a raise or a steady relationship? Jot that down here.

DAY 4

WRITE DOWN YOUR 5-YEAR GOALS FOR THE THREE F'S (FINANCE, FUN, AND FAMILY)

Write down your 5-year goals for the Three F's (Finance, Fun, and Family). Do you want to get married someday? Have children? Those life decisions can have a major impact on your finances and career so you want to start factoring them in now. After all, money is

about so much more than math and numbers; it impacts our lives and our relationships, too, and your goals should reflect that.

DAY 5**WRITE DOWN YOUR 7-YEAR GOALS FOR THE THREE F'S (FINANCE, FUN, AND FAMILY)**

Write down your 7-year goals for the Three F's (Finance, Fun, and Family). Do you want to start your own business? Make a career move or go back to school? We need to make sure you have at least 6-9 month's worth of savings squirreled away before you take this career leap.

DAY 6**WRITE DOWN YOUR 10-YEAR GOALS FOR THE THREE F'S (FINANCE, FUN, AND FAMILY)**

Write down your 10-year goals for the Three F's (Finance, Fun, and Family). Whether you want to become the head of your company or put a downpayment on a house, jot down these major moves so you can align your day-to-day finances in that direction. This is more than a wish list; think of it as an actionable to do list for the future You!

DAY 7**TREAT YOURSELF TO YOUR MORNING LATTE CHALLENGE**

Treat yourself to your morning latte. It will get you into work on time, if not early, and make for a more productive day—which might just lead to a bonus at the end of the year! Week one is over and you did it. Get it, girl!

DAY 8**GATHER THE RECEIPTS**

Gather the receipts from the bottom of your purse and the shoebox on your desk. Uncrinkle them. Gather or print out your most recent bank and credit card account statements and lay them out next to the receipts.

DAY 9**ORGANIZE YOUR RECEIPTS INTO 3 CATEGORIES: ESSENTIALS, EXTRAS, AND ENDGAMES**

Organize your receipts into categories: Essentials (Housing, Food, Gas, Transportation—70% of your budget should be going to this); Extras (the fun stuff like your mani/pedi or yoga class—15% of your overall monthly budget); and Endgame (savings—15% of your monthly budget). Think of it as a Spending Plan to care for present and future You, and allow you to live a “rich” life in every sense of the word.

DAY 10**CREATE YOUR LBD (LITTLE BUDGET DIARY)**

Create your LBD—Little Budget Diary. Assets on the left, liabilities on the right. We need to get an accurate picture of everything you’re spending so we can see where you can cut back (and, hopefully, where you have a little wiggle room for FUN!).

DAY 11**ORDER YOUR CREDIT REPORT**

Order your credit report and check your credit score at www.annualcreditreport.com. 720 and higher = A+! Keep up the good work. Any lower than that and we should spend a little time on rehab. Your credit report is like your financial report card, and you need a pretty solid one to apply for a loan or take out a mortgage.

Day 12**SWITCH ONE MONTHLY BILL**

Switch one monthly bill, like cable or utilities, to your credit card and set it to autopay each month to rehab your credit score. This will show creditors that you are consistent and reliable with paying your bills on time, and increase your score.

DAY 13**REVISIT YOUR LBD**

Revisit your LBD to calculate your net income. You need to know your worth so we can grow your worth. Simply calculate assets – liabilities = net worth. Voila!

DAY 14**TREAT YOURSELF TO A YOGA CLASS OR MANI/PEDI**

Treat yourself to a yoga class or mani/pedi. A financial diet is like a regular diet: you need to allow for these small indulgences to keep yourself (and your budget) on track. Plus, you crushed week two! Well done!

DAY 15**CALL YOUR MAIN SERVICE PROVIDERS**

Call your main service providers (cable, cell phone, credit cards) to negotiate a better rate. Make sure you are using the services you're paying for (goodbye, bundle programs!) and threaten to leave for a competitor. Most providers will throw you a bone versus losing you as a customer.

DAY 16**CALL AND NEGOTIATE ANY OUTSTANDING MEDICAL BILLS**

Call and negotiate any outstanding medical bills. You shouldn't pay sticker price for anything, not even your health. Inspect bills closely to ensure that you're not paying for any services or medications you didn't receive, and do some research into what treatments in your area typically cost (Healthcare Bluebook is a good resource to get started).

DAY 17**LOOK AT YOUR MONTHLY PAYMENTS**

Look at your monthly payments like gym membership, Netflix membership, and magazine subscriptions. Cancel any you're not using or look for cheaper alternatives, like a 10-pack of gym passes so you're only paying for the days you actually go to the gym.

DAY 18**CHECK IN WITH YOUR LBD**

Check in with your LBD, minus the extra spending we've eliminated. See where you can reallocate some funds. For example, if you're saving on gas by taking public transportation, can you move some of that money over to make a dent in your rent, or put it toward your Endgame?

DAY 19**IDENTIFY ONE CREATIVE WAY TO MAKE MONEY ON THE SIDE**

Identify one creative way to make money on the side (like selling your stuff on eBay or joining a site like Elance for small freelance jobs. After all, the more you make, the less you have to save (hello, Captain Obvious!).

DAY 20**REVISIT YOUR 1, 3, 5, 7, AND 10-YEAR GOALS FOR THE THREE F'S**

Revisit your 1, 3, 5, 7, and 10 year goals for the Three F's (Finance, Fun, and Family). How's everything looking? Are your goals and finances more aligned than they were three weeks ago? Make any necessary adjustments now that you are back in control.

DAY 21**21 DAYS - YOU'RE FINISHED!**

21 days—you're finished! Invest in yourself as a reward for kicking week three's butt. Subscribe to a trade magazine or sign up for a class in order to get ahead at work and expand your horizons. It's a small investment in yourself that will pay dividends down the road.