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I hate budgets

by *Kelley Keehn*

Kelley Keehn, lecturer, business coach, corporate trainer and author of three books, including The Woman's Guide to Money, uncovers "inner games" we play surrounding wealth. As a financial professional for more than a decade, she's developed a fun, practical guide to changing your money mindset at a fundamental level.

Personally, I hate budgets. Rarely do they work.

I know, not what you expected from a financial expert.

Bet you're pleasantly surprised, though.

Who needs more rigidity in their life?

We want to enjoy our money and have the freedom to spend as we wish; not a spouse or financial planner forcing our purchases into a pre-determined monthly amount.

As a former financial professional for more than a decade, and an author of several books on finance, I'm asked frequently about this financial imprisonment.

During my professional career, most of my clients fell into the category of ultra-wealthy.

As you might guess, this select group doesn't need to budget - they have more money than they could ever spend.

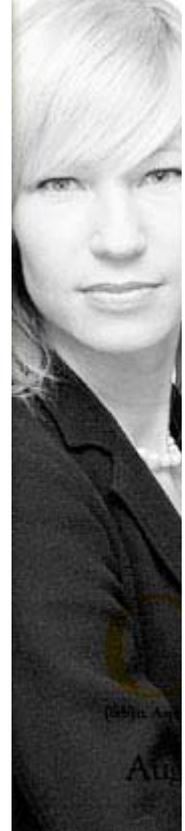
However, unless this group recently came upon a windfall, the majority of them did carefully analyse and were aware of what they spent each month.

How can anyone create a guideline of what they're going to spend if they haven't monitored what they typically spend?

For instance, I can tell you that you should spend no more than \$550 a month on groceries, dining out and lunches at work.

But if you and your spouse are currently dishing out more than \$900 monthly, a reduction of \$350 is unrealistic.

The key to enjoying your money while curbing unnecessary waste is awareness.



Start today and for at least the next 30 days, just write down every dollar you spend.

Purchase a small notebook that will fit in your purse or suit jacket (yes, write this one down, too).

Log every dollar spent, including pre-authorized payments and bank service charges. At the end of the month, tally up your expenditures.

Look for opportunities to cut expenses, such as ATM bank fees or late payment charges.

These can add up significantly and don't do anything to improve your quality of life.

After you've found patterns in your spending, determine if you can reduce areas 10% or save an equivalent amount by being creative, such as taking your lunch to work or purchasing flats of water for a few bucks.

I love spending as much as any Calgarian. I'm not going to tell you to give up the essentials, such as your morning latte or after-work cocktails.

Life is about savouring your hard-earned dollars, but also paying attention to the details.

Watch those wasted pennies.

They really do turn into loonies.

Happy anti-budgeting!

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The advertisement features a large, white, L-shaped sectional sofa with several pillows, set against a plain white wall and a dark floor. The text 'MONTAUK SOFA' is prominently displayed at the top in a bold, sans-serif font, with 'MONTAUK' in red and 'SOFA' in black. Below the brand name is the phone number '1327ninthave.s.e.t:+403.265.6777'. The phrase 'Let's tauk' is centered in a large, elegant serif font. At the bottom, a list of cities is shown in a small, lowercase sans-serif font, followed by '.COM' in a large, bold, white font.