



HELPING HANDS



Financial Strategies for the Holidays

(excerpts from U.S. News, Geoff Williams)

Money can't buy happiness, but it sure can buy a lot of gifts. So if you're running low on cash and have a lot of family and friends to buy presents for, this can be a frustrating season. Here are seven strategies to help you combat financial stress.



Budget. Carefully budgeting for holiday gifts is an obvious strategy that isn't very satisfying if you're behind on bills, haven't bought anything and are panicking with Christmas and Hanukkah just weeks away. While your budget may not look pretty, do what you can. After you set a budget, aim to pay cash for your purchases, shop online to efficiently find sale prices and avoid applying for department store credit cards that can put you further into debt.

Avoid stressful shopping situations. Shopping during the holidays can be taxing even when you have money. Shopping on a deadline can make anyone stressed. Try to arrange things so that you never even encounter the actual stressors. Buy things well in advance of the deadlines, shop only when the crowds are small and buy over the Internet in the comfort of your own home where you can make good and well thought out decisions. Do whatever it takes so that you don't have to fight for a parking space or deal with a rude cashier. Fight stress before it starts. You may find that you make smarter budgetary decisions without a lot of stress and chaos surrounding you.

Don't keep your money woes to yourself. If you're truly down in the dumps and unable to cope with your financial situation, you need to find someone to confide in. If not a family or friend, consider contacting the National Foundation for Credit Counseling (nfcc.org; 800-388-2227), which can help you set up a financial plan. Get the whole family on board so that everyone feels comfortable with the idea of a holiday budget plan. If your kids are old enough to understand, tell them in advance that the number or quality of gifts will be modest. Recognize that you may be doing them a favor in the long run. Kids who really understand and internalize that message are far more likely to manage their own fiscal lives better than those whose parents never set monetary boundaries.

Remember what's really important. The best way to cope with a materialistic time of year is not to fall prey to pressure from the retail world and spend because it is what you do during the holidays. The holiday is about religion and family. Focus on that. That's easier said than done if you have kids with high expectations or materialistic parents, siblings, cousins and friends, but it's irrefutable advice.

Be creative with your gift-giving. If making, say, handmade soap and other crafts isn't an option due to your lack of artistic skill, you could always give someone the gift of time. Offering your time is the biggest gesture since it's the one thing everyone lacks during this time of year. Offering to babysit your sister's kids while they spend the day shopping for gifts or helping a good friend prepare meals for a holiday party is a very generous gift that costs little more than time.

Don't spend the holidays alone. If you're going to bow out of gift-giving, you may feel tempted to skip family get-togethers. Don't. The holidays are really about spending time with loved ones. Your physical presence means more than anything.

Don't blow things out of proportion. Yes, if you wanted to buy your children an iPad or Nintendo Wii, and they're going to have to settle for some board games and a Slinky, there's no way around it. The most spot-on advice, which every parent, (when they look back on their own childhood, will probably instantly see as correct) is: at the end of the day, most children don't remember many of their holiday gifts anyway.





Top 5 Personal Finance Resources Online

(excerpts from Shawnte Pierce, Woman's Day Magazine)

Many are looking for ways to better manage their money and save for the future. There are plenty of resources around, from books to seminars, providing assistance. However, who really has the time for either? Thankfully, there is plenty of help online. Discover what the top five personal finance sites can offer you.

1. Kiplinger.com provides resources such as financial quizzes, online forums and calculators. It contains the standard sections related to investment and retirement, along with a few more useful additions. First, for those in their 20s and 30s "Starting Out Resources" or trying to advance in their careers and next: "Spending Wisely" which has tips and ideas about how to maximize your dollar while shopping for homes, cars, even televisions, travel and entertainment.
2. Federalreserveeducation.org - site provides money management help straight from the Federal Reserve. When it comes to getting information on financial matters, there is no better place than straight from the horse's mouth.
3. Forbes.com - article-based information. Forbes.com provides guides for managing money and investing. It also offers plenty of useful tools and calculators to aid in establishing a workable budget.
4. ConsumerReports.com can help you make more informed spending decisions with various articles and tips available at this consumer-advocacy and -awareness site.
5. cnnmoney.com - the name is a little misleading as it is a combined effort of Fortune magazine, Money magazine and CNN. It contains sections for job seekers as well as detailed tax talk. It also answers questions related to debt, credit, money and employment.

IAM Peer Employee Assistance Program



The heart and soul of the District 141 Employee Assistance Program is the local lodge EAP peer coordinator. These dedicated men and women volunteer their personal time to assist other union members and their families who are experiencing personal difficulties. EAP coordinators do not make clinical diagnoses or clinical evaluations, however, they are trained to make a basic assessment of your situation and refer you to an appropriate resource for a more detailed evaluation. EAP coordinators will follow up to ensure you have been able to access services that addressed the difficulty you were experiencing.

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IAM EAP Calendar

2018

EAP Classes

William W Winpisinger

Technology and Education
Center

EAP I: February 18-23

EAP II: April 15-20

EAP III: June 24-29

EAP IV: Sept. 16-21

EAP I: October 1-5