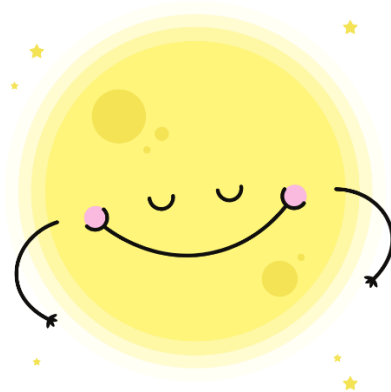


Cover Page Suggestion 1

I'M SMILING. ARE YOU?

32 INSPIRING STORIES OF
FINDING TRUE JOY IN LIFE.



Dr. Celso Fernandes

Cover Page Suggestion 2

I'm Smiling. Are you?

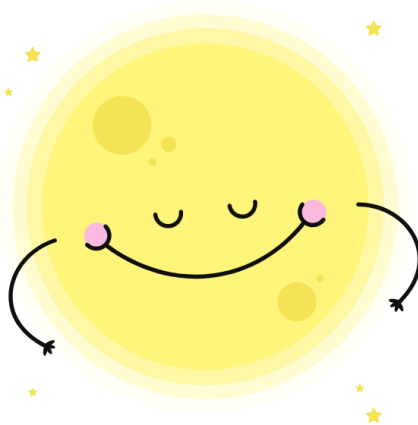
32 STORIES OF FINDING LIFES'S TRUE JOY



Dr. Celso Fernandes

I'm Smiling. Are you?

32 STORIES OF FINDING LIFES'S TRUE JOY



Dr Celso Fernandes

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Foreword

In your hands, dear readers, you hold a compilation of real-life stories shared by people who have opted for the path to attaining financial independence. These personal accounts reflect the journeys of those investors who have shown extreme resilience and determination in the face of challenging times, without deserting their pursuit for a better future. And as they say, ‘To the victor belongs the spoils!’

In my long experience as a financial independence activist and mentor, I have had the good fortune of meeting many people from various professions and socio-economic backgrounds, while doing my bit in helping them strive for a financially secure future. Out of these, many have left an indelible mark on my memory, and their persistence and discipline have time and again strengthened my faith in the mission of spreading financial literacy. This compilation encapsulates the indomitable spirit of human effort to seek better prospects, and above all, peace and harmony.

Like the set of pearls that form a perfect smile, these 32 stories have been handpicked to bring hope, ambition and smile to all readers.

I sincerely thank my dear investors who took the pain to share their stories with me for a greater cause of inspiring hundreds of others from their success and learnings. I am also thankful to the Decision Tree Consulting team for editing and embellishing the stories to perfection.

This is the tenth book being compiled and published by me with the contribution of our ever-growing team at Nave Marg Foundation (select books are available for free download at www.navemargfoundation.com). It gives me immense pleasure to announce that we have awakened and inspired thousands of people to find their way towards achieving financial independence in the past decade. To add to this mega success, we have mentored several ambitious and forward-looking youngsters in becoming millionaires – the first and the most challenging step towards creating a self-sustaining wealth.

I sincerely wish that those reading the stories featured in this book would get inspired to take the reins of their future into their hands. To them, I say, ‘Anything is possible if you put your mind to it.’

Dr Celso Fernandes

The Freedom To Make Life Choices!

-- Valentina E. Colaco

Nobel laureate Malala Yousafzai said, “One child, one teacher, one book, one pen can change the world.” I entirely believe in this saying, and being a teacher myself, I am always aware of my responsibility to prepare my students to live a happy and progressive life. I feel lucky to have the gift of acknowledging the various talents my students have – from music to logic to art to technology. I also know that they all can live up to their potential and choose their passion as their vocation only when they become financially independent.

From my personal experience, I can vouch that a person is left to the mercies of fate without financial security. Having lost my father just as I came of age, and soon after, my mother, I was financially vulnerable. Thanks to my caring maternal family, who not only took care of me while I completed my master’s degree but also shouldered my wedding expenses.

People usually say that ‘Money cannot buy happiness,’ but I believe that it can certainly buy things, like a comfortable lifestyle and a secure future, which are essential to living happily.

Just before I was about to get married, I was anxious about my finances. Being a homely person, all I needed to be happy was a loving husband and family. But I had seen a lot of my friends live alone for months at a stretch. Their husbands sailed for most of the year to earn a handsome salary but I wanted a different life for myself.

It is a fact that there aren’t many job opportunities in Goa, but people have always been content in the sunshine land. However, increasing inflation and high cost of living have pushed many people into exploring opportunities farther from home to earn a decent income for furnishing their needs and wants. But I didn’t want this for myself. I wanted my husband to stay with me, which meant we needed strong financial planning to meet our present and future goals.

Fortunately for us, as part of the church’s marriage course, we came to meet a renowned financial advisor in Goa, Dr Celso. On the day of the meeting, Dr Celso took us through the basics of financial planning for couples. Soon, my husband and I were able to pen down our life goals, and working together to achieve these goals was the only way forward.

For example, we both wanted to be debt-free, buy a car and own a decent house. Besides, I had borrowed some money from friends for wedding preparations, and I wanted to return this money as soon as possible.

After going through a summary of our income and goals, Dr Celso suggested that we start investing in mutual funds regularly to build an automatically growing pool of money. But even the term, mutual funds, was enough to scare me. After the session, I discussed this with a few relatives, and they all told me that mutual fund investments were a risky choice. Yet, Dr Celso’s calculated advice and years of experience made me rethink my choices. I decided to meet him again and share my concerns with him.

The kind doctor sat me down and explained to me how markets are cyclic in nature. Besides, historical trends show that equity investments yield better returns than most other investments, even property and gold, over an extended period. While I understood what Dr

Celso explained to me, I was still confused about whether to go ahead or not. The doctor understood my confusion and told me about Systematic Investment Plans or SIPs, which are groups of mutual funds managed by an experienced person on your behalf.

As I processed this new information, I decided to take the plunge. The number of millionaires he has created through his Nave Marg foundation inspired me. My husband and I soon opened a joint account and started investing 25 per cent of our income in SIPs, as suggested by Dr Celso. Initially, we found it difficult to set aside money. Still, we learned some golden rules – to service needs before wants and pay ourselves first, that is, make investments before going ahead with other expenses.

Today, after a few years of investing, we have been able to divert a higher percentage of our income towards SIP investments. A few months back, we also withdrew a considerable sum from our SIP pool to pay back all our debts. Miraculously, the money is quickly getting replenished, thanks to the magic of compounding and disciplined investments.

Today, I feel immense gratitude towards Dr Celso for getting us started on this journey of wealth creation and financial planning, which is essential for a happy marriage and secure future. I think everybody should invest their money wisely to start living instead of slogging their entire lives, whiling away several precious moments in the bargain. I sincerely urge parents and the academic stakeholders to teach financial literacy to students, so that they can pursue their passions in life without having to slog to earn a living.

Turning The Tides Of Time In My Favour

-- Tanvi Audi

It was a pleasant February day when I began my journey to wealth creation eight years ago.

A determined and forward-looking person, I had always dreamt of living a comfortable life. You see, when you are a child, the world seems to be your garden. However, as you grow up, you face the harsh realities of the material world. As you struggle on in life, you realise that there are no free lunches, and every penny has to be earned with sweat and toil. While I have never backed out of a challenge, it did seem daunting to realise my dream of becoming rich until I met Dr Celso Fernandes all these years ago.

A postgraduate in commerce, I was aware of various financial concepts; however, I lacked clarity about creating wealth. There were several investment options available in the market, yet I could not fathom which one would be the best for investing across asset classes. I guess I was subconsciously waiting for a mentor to guide me through the labyrinth of investing options and suggest a customised investment plan.

During a casual interaction with a friend, I came to know about Dr Celso Fernandes and the remarkable work done by his charitable organisation, Nave Marg Foundation. My friend told me that Dr Celso is committed to the cause of spreading awareness about financial independence, and he mentors people towards getting rich. To be honest, I could make very little sense out of it all at first, yet something made me decide to meet the 'Financial Doctor of Goa.'

My meeting with Dr Celso was a success. He made me feel comfortable talking about my financial situation and life goals. He inspired me with success stories and facts and instilled in me the confidence to invest in mutual funds. However, I was still confused as I knew that investing even a little sum from my meagre income would be impossible. But Dr Celso chalked out a neat investment plan for me. I was amazed to see how many wasteful expenses I incurred each month! I realised that by stopping these extravagant expenses, I had ample room to start monthly investments. And I did just that!

In the beginning, despite my determined efforts, there were times when I doubted my capability to carry on with regular investments for a long period. Low income and rising expenses played a double whammy, weakening my resolution for regular SIP investments. I am thankful to Dr Celso, who motivated and guided me through these trying times. When I look back now, I am glad not to have given up on paying my SIPs.

After the initial lurches, things got better. My Kraft paper dealership is doing well, which helped me in increasing my SIP amount significantly. I continue to be efficient in spending my money. Today, my portfolio is growing better than my expectations, and I am on track to achieving all my financial goals. My husband and I have also chalked out an investment plan for our little daughter. We are sure that by the time she becomes an adult, she would already be

financially independent. The mere thought that my daughter could choose her profession based on her skills and interests, without having to worry about the paycheck, makes me proud and content.

Going with the wave, negotiating the ups and downs faced during the last eight years of wealth creation, I learned an important lesson – it is not enough to create wealth, one must also ensure protecting it. That's why I invested in insurance – both personal and medical to safeguard myself and my family members.

By taking the necessary steps towards creating and protecting my wealth, I can say that I find myself closer to being financially free and experience an improved quality of life. I recommend that everyone must work towards attaining financial independence because it truly sets you free.

I have been lucky enough to get Dr Celso's guidance and mentorship early in life. I wish that those reading this story might get the inspiration to embark on their own journey to attaining financial independence.

Setting Sails For A Golden Future

-- Maria Melcia M. Gama e Rodrigues

There's a famous saying that if you want the rainbow, you have to put up with the rain. Unfortunately, in my case, even after putting up with driving rain for years, I was no closer to seeing the rainbow – until recently, when I decided to take the wheel in my hands and steered my life to calmer waters. At last, I can now see the rainbow adorning the clear blue skies!

Born and brought up in Uganda, East Africa, my life perhaps would have been very different had it not been for the abrupt and violent expulsion of Asians by the dictator Idi Amin. Returning to our homeland, the only valuables my family could bring back were our precious lives. And thank God for that! But our troubles were far from over. Owing to the lack of a regular income and the absence of any wealth to depend upon, we experienced severe financial constraints. I wouldn't have my family fall into abject poverty; so, taking matters in my hands, I took up a secretarial job in Mumbai. Whatever little I earned, I ensured that I sent a major portion of it to my parents. Living paycheque to paycheque for years, there was never enough money to save or invest. Meanwhile, as years passed, I got married and brought two beautiful sons into this world.

For all these years, my husband and I worked hard to ensure that our children got the best of everything and gave little thought to our own retirement planning. I am thankful to the almighty that we were able to raise two gentlemen who carved stellar careers for themselves.

Life had been a mixed bag. There were times of utter despair and abundant joy. Both my sons are married (the younger one civilly married via Zoom meeting during the lockdown!) to beautiful women and lead a happy life. My husband and I now look forward to a peaceful and affluent retired life.

However, a few years ago, thinking about a comfortable retirement was like a fleeting dream for us. The bitter fact was that there was little in the way of saving or investment for us to rely on for our retirement days. Then one fateful day, my brother came home with a thin, oblong book. The title of the book instantly caught my eye.

'Who Says Money Doesn't Grow on Trees?'

Intrigued, I read the book from cover to cover and was fascinated to learn about Dr Celso Fernandes and his wealth creation journey. My brother gave me a bit more context. He told me how Dr Celso helps people create self-sustaining wealth through guided and disciplined long-term mutual fund investments.

Now, there are times in life when you have an inkling that something good and significant is about to happen – meeting and listening to Dr Celso in person was one such moment in my life. He asked me about my life and dreams before we discussed finances. Methodically, he helped me prepare a sort of a balance sheet, which, to my surprise, revealed several monetary leaks – which means things I was simply wasting money on. Almost miraculously, Dr Celso created room for investing from my seemingly tight monthly budget. I was quite impressed with the numbers that he predicted I could earn by investing dedicatedly.

It's been over five years since I started to invest under the able mentorship of Dr Celso, and my portfolio is already showing significant growth. My husband, too, invests in mutual funds through SIPs and has got a swelling portfolio.

Meeting Dr Celso and learning about financial independence through mutual fund investments was nothing short of a silver lining. I am thankful to him for showing us a path that leads to a more secure and comfortable future. Inspired by Dr Celso and his Nave Marg team's selfless mission to spread financial literacy, I, too, take the initiative to teach people the ways to achieve financial independence.

The Power Of Guided Investing

-- Dr Edgar Bosco Vas

I believe in the proverb, 'Work is worship.'

An ENT surgeon running a busy practice, I hardly find any time for anything else. Needless to say, thus, that I never had time to look after my finances. This negligence towards monetary inflow and outflow proved to be expensive. I always had the assumption that owning a good practice would automatically create lasting wealth for me. This bubble burst when, through an acquaintance, I got hold of Dr Celso's autobiographical light read, 'Who Says Money Doesn't Grow on Trees?'

The book was a revelation to me. Reading it felt like reading my own story. What Dr Celso had already tried – expanding his dental practice in order to create wealth only to realise later the futility of it – had been my plan to grow rich all along!

Immediately after finishing the book, I contacted Dr Celso for a brief appointment. To my surprise, he readily agreed to meet me at his office. I found the brief conversation over the phone to be warm and concerning.

I will ever forget my meeting with Dr Celso the following day. Congeal and respectful, Dr Celso won my trust as soon as I sat facing him in his office. He patiently heard my background and financial concerns, post which he guided me in listing down my income and expenses. I was surprised to find him belligerently striking down several expense heads, terming them unnecessary. He gave me a moment to realise that what he said was absolutely correct. There were several expenses that I had been incurring for no apparent reason! Like a magician, Dr Celso conjured funds for investing from my monthly budget.

Next, he whipped out a pen and drew an investment plan for the next ten years. To be honest, I felt a bit overwhelmed initially and expressed my concerns about investing for such a long time. However, the astute doctor related several stories and instances where people made massive wealth through gradual, steady investments for a decade or more.

"Now, it may all sound like hokum until you know how mutual funds work," said Dr Celso with a laugh.

I was relieved that I spoke to a person who understands the fears that assail a new investor.

"It isn't rocket science," he said, "the Indian equity market has consistently given high returns over a longer period. When you invest in mutual funds through systematic investment plans or SIPs, you earn compounded interests on your investments, which in turn grows your portfolio in leaps and bounds."

I sat in amazement with only one question in mind. 'Is it that simple to become rich?'

The wise doctor must have read my mind, because he added, "It sounds simple, and indeed, it is simple. However, to achieve success, one must be disciplined and patient. Those who panic when the markets crash or get carried away when the stock market touches a new peak find it difficult to maintain their portfolio. You need to have trust and patience, and more importantly, a farsighted vision to build lasting wealth."

From that day on, I have placed implicit trust in Dr Celso's hands, and I am happy that I did so!

Although, it's been only a few years that I have started my journey to wealth creation, and already my portfolio is slowly but surely growing. And this is when we have faced the unprecedented market crash during the height of COVID-19 pandemic.

Many of my friends advised me to withdraw whatever I could when the markets crashed last year – however, I listened to Dr Celso and invested more in my funds! My friends, they thought that I had gone senile, but now when I tell them about the phenomenal growth my portfolio has achieved, they all regret missing such a ripe opportunity to invest.

I feel relieved knowing that my financial mentor is giving me the best advice and that my money is making more and more money for me. I now have the freedom to get immersed in my work without worrying about my future financial security.

Building The Castle Of Fortune

-- Lisette Camara

Patience and time are the two most powerful warriors in a person's life. I had read this quote from Leo Tolstoy ages ago and found it resonating with my own life. Time is not the same, always. And sometimes it tests you, your tenacity, and your strength to no limit. What I have learned in my life is that with tons of patience and the right planning for the future, one can still change the tidings of time to her favour.

I work as an Assistant Physical Education Officer with the Directorate of Sports and Youth Affairs, Government of Goa. Since the untimely demise of my husband, I am raising my son, single-handedly. I work hard to ensure that my child gets the best opportunities and a good upbringing to realise his full potential in life.

Of course, planning for my and my son's future is an essential part of securing a better future for us. For years, I had been looking for ways to ensure financial security – an asset or investment that keeps providing me with adequate returns to meet our monthly expenses.

Around six years ago, I came across a large hoarding on my way to work and was surprised to see the picture of my old friend, Dr Celso, on it. Intrigued, I called him up, and he invited me over to his office to tell me about what he and his charitable organisation was busy doing.

Meeting Dr Celso that day was life-changing for me. He told me about his financial literacy campaign, and the social work his foundation (Nave Marg Foundation) was doing for the betterment of Goan students.

I asked him what he meant by financial literacy.

"We encourage youngsters and adults to make regular investments in mutual funds through Systematic Investment Plans for a very long period," Dr Celso explained, "The Indian Sensex has been giving consistent high returns for long term investments. These mutual funds are managed by a highly qualified Fund Manager, who strategically invests the pool of investor money in various stocks, and the investors reap good returns over time."

Sensing that I was still not clear about the security of investment, he smiled and said, "All investments are transparent and regulated by the Securities and Exchange Board of India. And you can invest or withdraw funds anytime by simply tapping a few buttons over your smartphone. It is secure and safe."

Hearing my trusted old friend, I started to think. I had been looking to invest in something that would give me good returns after I get retired. However, I lacked funds to invest in gold or property. Fixed deposits were an option, but the interest rates were being slashed mercilessly. In such a situation, investing in mutual fund SIPs seemed like a brilliant idea!

I immediately decided to invest for the long term and create wealth for my retirement and my son's higher education. Dr Celso was most helpful in drawing out an ideal income/expense sheet and asked me to invest before spending – a bit of advice that every new investor must follow.

Over the years, I have seen my portfolio grow – gradually at first, and then in leaps and bounds.

“This is the magic of compounding that is making your portfolio grow faster,” explained Dr Celso. Monthly SIPs ensure that my portfolio gets compounded returns, that’s why I kept increasing them every year.

Today, I am well on track in achieving my financial goal much before the expected timeframe. I am free of the stress that is usually borne out of financial insecurity. With peace and calm in my life, I can contribute better at work and at home.

Planning for the future is an important task that most of us shirk from. We do not want to consider the possibility of challenging, trying times in life, and don’t want to prepare for them. Having faced financial troubles in life, I know how important it is to start preparing for the future well in time. That is why I encourage my friends and colleagues to adopt the teachings of financial management and work towards attaining a financially independent future.

Investing for The Sunny Days

-- Vallinadh Karamcheti

Some people talk about change, and some bring change. I identify more with the latter category. Hailing from a traditional, middle-class family, I followed the well-trodden road to 'settling down' in life. Armed with a postgraduate degree in management, I took up a job in the beautiful state of Goa, earning a basic salary. Living away from my family meant that I could indulge in extravagance; however, my rational upbringing didn't allow it. And I saved up to Rs 5,000 each month, even after paying a high cost for accommodation and food.

I love bringing a smile on my parents' face and making them feel proud. So, I started to spend my savings on buying items of comfort and luxury for my family. This cycle of spending practically eliminated my effective savings, yet I continued to save every month.

Gradually, my income improved, yet I could save the same each month. All my life, I had thought that working hard and saving money would guarantee that someday I will become rich. However, a simple calculation revealed that it would take me nearly two years to accumulate just a lakh of rupees at the current saving rate. With the increasing inflation, and dwindling fixed deposit rates, I knew that I needed to do something different to realise my dream of getting rich. Honestly, I was a little stressed about this, and the fact that my marriage was on the cards didn't ease my troubles.

But as they say, when there is a will, there is a way! I was lucky to attend a session by Dr Celso Fernandes at my office, who showed us how to attain our dream of creating wealth.

In his comprehensive session titled, '5 Golden Rules to Become Rich,' Dr Celso explained revolutionary insights on practices for growing rich, such as paying yourself before paying others, creating a passive income source, choosing investments that gave returns above the inflation rate, and the need for having a good financial coach. Listening to Dr Celso, I realised that I was not following even a single practice to grow rich! I grew up in a society that barely speaks about investment. People from middle-class families are always told one thing repeatedly – 'Study well and earn a good job so that you can get respect in society.' Dr Celso was right in saying that to grow rich; people should choose a wise financial mentor who could handhold them to the path of wealth creation.

Later in the session, Dr Celso showed us how investing in traditional instruments such as fixed deposits eroded our funds in the long term. With the help of many charts and real-life examples, he showed how significantly the equity market investments grew over a period of time.

"Long term investments in mutual funds through monthly Systematic Investment Plans is the only and the most transparent way of accumulating vast wealth for people with limited income. The little investments you make each month – without faltering – grows into a healthy portfolio over time. You don't need any large one-time investment, as is common in purchasing real estate or starting a business. Commit to the goal of regular savings for the next ten years, and I guarantee you that you all will be millionaires and multi-millionaires," Dr Celso said with confidence and sincerity.

The presentation blew my mind, yet I had age-old lingering inhibitions.

‘Aren’t stock market investments risky? What is the guarantee that the markets won’t crash and I will lose all my hard-earned money?’

I had studied stock market investments and mutual funds while in college. Also, I had watched the adverts promoting mutual fund investments. However, I had always focused on the warning that mutual fund investments are subjected to market risks.

Post the session, I chatted with a couple of my colleagues, and they revealed that they had been investing in mutual funds for a long time and their portfolio had earned returns in double-digits. One of them, in fact, was investing under Dr Celso’s mentorship.

When I expressed my doubts about instances when the markets crashed, and people lost money, one of these gentlemen laughed and said, “When the market goes down, you must rejoice!”

I was quite befuddled. He then explained that volatility is an inherent nature of the stock market. And when markets are down, it is a good time to invest more to earn better returns, because sooner or later the stock market will go up again – as it has always done since its inception.

My overly timid and rational mind still had a perverse question. ‘How will the financial expert benefit from coaching or helping people like me in growing rich?’

My colleague put my mind to ease by telling me that Dr Celso doesn’t charge a penny from the investors.

“He is on a mission to spread awareness about financial literacy; a campaign for which he works and travels tirelessly. Not only this, his charitable trust runs several other social programs,” my colleague explained.

Finally convinced, I approached Dr Celso, who very graciously accepted to meet me in his office. He told me that I could undoubtedly become rich by investing just Rs 5,000 initially, and later increasing the SIP amount as my income grew.

“However, before you begin investing with Nave Marg, my firm, you need to commit that you will not withdraw from your portfolio before achieving your financial target,” Dr Celso forewarned me. I appreciated his straightforwardness and promised not to withdraw funds before attaining my goals.

Assured, he set a target of Rs 10 lakhs to achieve in the next three to five years. And that’s how I began my journey to wealth creation in the year 2015.

Starting with INR 8,000 per month in SIPs, I had hoped to increase the investment amount periodically. However, after getting married, taking out the eight grands alone became a problem. The expenses were mounting, and I didn’t want to deprive my wife or family of any material comfort, which put pressure on my savings.

But again, Dr Celso came to my rescue. He reminded me of one of the key golden rules to grow rich; invest before you spend. I took his advice and started to spend from whatever was left after investing. This small change brought a big transformation in the way I managed my household budgets, without feeling the pinch.

My portfolio kept growing over the years, despite the market movements. I remember panicking the first time the markets went downhill. All my funds showed negative returns, and agitatedly, I called Dr Celso Fernandes. He warned me not to do the foolishness of redeeming my holdings. Later, during a presentation, he showed us his own portfolio, taking us through major market crashes since 2008 when he started investing. Instead of bailing out of the market, he had invested more money when the markets were at the lowest levels. At the time of my attending that session, Dr Celso's portfolio – having gone through the ups and downs of the bear and bull market phases – was over a crore rupee.

Inspired, I increased my monthly investment amount to Rs 15,000. Dr Celso suggested increasing it further to achieve financial freedom early, but I couldn't do so due to rising family expenditures and the liability to pay off my loans.

Since 2015, events such as GST introduction, Demonetisation, Recession and COVID have impacted the markets; however, they corrected each time, growing handsomely with each major fall.

In October 2020, when the world reeled under the financial pressure caused by the pandemic, I achieved the 1 million mark (Rs 10 lakhs) - exactly five years from my first SIP. It felt surreal.

Now I'm on my way to achieving the 50-lakh mark by 2026. I am sure that the way the markets have been performing, I will achieve my new target sooner than expected!

I Have A Cake, And I Can Eat It, Too!

-- Julian D'Cruz

‘What’s my purpose in life?’ This is a question I encountered at various phases in life; like many of you would have, I am sure. As a child with many dreams in my eyes and innumerable possibilities, I had imagined myriad ways to lead my life with abundant joy. As a young starry-eyed student of journalism, I mulled over ways to put my education and skills in bringing out the truth in front of the people. And many years later, I am well aware of what I want in my life – to give love to people close to me, which includes my family and friends and help those in need. This clarity wouldn’t have come to me if I hadn’t chosen to tread the path to attaining financial freedom.

I am a journalist with over 22 years of experience in the field. Born and raised in Goa, I moved to Pune after my marriage and led a comfortable life with my family. As a couple, my husband and I saved regularly, but we hadn’t ever paid attention to investing our money. However, with increasing salaries, our tax slabs also grew, and very soon, like most other professionals, we started looking for investment options that gave decent returns along with tax benefits.

Around the same time, my mother, who was based in Goa, took ill, and I had to return to the state to look after her. Here, I was able to secure a senior profile in public relations, which helped me maintain my standard of living. Of course, the hunt for tax saving plans continued until a relative referred me to Dr Celso, a renowned financial advisor in Goa.

My relative was full of praise for the Doctor who had been guiding his investments for many years. Motivated, I booked an appointment with Dr Celso and was pleasantly surprised to find out that I knew the Doctor for many years. I remembered Dr Celso as a shy, young doctor many years ago. And today, I had a confident and experienced mentor in front of me who had taken it upon himself to spread financial literacy in Goa.

After exchanging pleasantries, I informed Dr Celso what I wanted, and soon he had me immersed in a long and exciting conversation. Dr Celso introduced me to Equity Linked Saving Schemes or ELSS, a mutual fund investment scheme with a three-year lock-in period. ELSS gives you a chance to invest your money in equity for capital appreciation while also enjoying tax benefits. For example, I am entitled to a deduction of up to Rs. 1.5 lakhs from my gross income for the amount invested in Equity Linked Saving Schemes (ELSS) under section 80C of the Income Tax Act, 1961. He also told me how to use ELSS to build wealth by staying invested for a long time without dipping into my savings. When I asked him about the risk associated with mutual funds, he explained to me that long term mutual fund schemes are averse to market conditions owing to the cyclic nature of the market. What goes up must go down and vice-versa. So, if we have enough patience and discipline, we can continue investing in low periods and reap higher financial gains when the market is up.

Soon enough, I started investing in ELSS through SIPs (systematic investment plans). This was in 2014, and today, my portfolio has already crossed the one-million-rupee mark. Besides helping me grow my savings, Dr Celso also taught me how to manage my money better. He helped me differentiate between needs and wants and develop the financial discipline to ‘cut

the coat to the cloth' than the other way round. Despite reduced income during the initial phase of the pandemic, Doctor's advice helped me sail through and continue investing without any additional burden on my pocket.

Thanks to Dr Celso, I have successfully created my own money bank that I manage effortlessly with patience and discipline. The same knowledge I have passed on to my close relatives and friends to help them spend wisely, invest abundantly and enjoy a stress-free life.

A Fool's Paradise Is Never Real

-- Virusha Almeida e Souza

A fool and his money are parted soon, the famous proverb from the AESOPS fables holds true even in today's time. People don't get rich by sheer luck – they may come by some money by chance, but to sustain wealth, one needs to be smart in managing their funds.

I am relating my story here with an objective of making people realise that no matter what their financial situation is, they can still work towards creating a more financially secure future. Like I have. All one needs to do to completely transform his or her fortune is to take the first step—seeking advice from a professional.

At the age of 39 years, I was earning decently well but had zero savings to my name. My peers and elders had often advised me to set aside some money each month as my savings. Still, with mounting expenses and a growing family, there was never enough to fulfil everybody's expectations and also save for the future.

Yet, I often heard stories of people who had amassed wealth by investing their money smartly. One such example that inspired me was of Dr Celso himself. He had a flourishing dental practice several years ago in Goa, and he had worked hard to build his clientele. But returning from a short break, he realised he had to work every single day to keep his practice running successfully. But that meant he would always be a slave to money with little time for himself, his family, his hobbies and the charity work that he aspired to take up. Soon, the Doctor started investing his money through systematic investment plans (SIPs). By staying invested and topping up his payments regularly, he built himself a self-sufficient portfolio that eventually converted into a passive source of income. In some of his books, the Doctor has earnestly shared his story and explained how it is not enough to rely on just one income source. You also need a second source that grows without any effort on your part.

Well, it does sound odd that you can earn money without working for it. But isn't that the whole premise of financial freedom?

My brother realised this truth much sooner than I did. Several months ago, he got in touch with the Doctor and started investing according to his advice. The Doctor taught him three fundamentals in life:

Nothing is impossible when you set your mind to achieving it.

Saving is easy...what is difficult is to resist the temptation to spend.

Discipline is the key to happiness in all aspects of life.

Inspired by Dr Celso's real story and my brother's financial discipline instilled by his meetings with the Doctor, I also decided to mend my ways and look at my finances from a fresh perspective.

A cheerful and affable person by nature, Dr Celso took me through several financial concepts in a fascinating manner. He also told me about his NaveMarg Foundation and his goal of imparting financial literacy to Goa's youth. He aims to create multiple millionaires in the state

at a young age. The reason behind this noble cause is simple. When youngsters find themselves financially secure, they can focus on their passion and contribute to the economy better. Also, when one is confident about their own financial future, it is easier to give back to society to improve others' lives.

As the good Doctor told me about several youngsters on the brink of turning millionaires even before 25, I felt I was too late to start my journey. But the Doctor said it is never too late to start. And soon enough, we were discussing my monthly income and expenditure. After going through the figures shared by me, the Doctor chalked out an investment plan for me. He helped me trim down the unnecessary expenses to easily invest a decent sum of money every month without feeling the pinch on my pocket.

It's been several years now that I have been investing on Dr Celso's advice and I am proud to say that I finally have a growing portfolio of money that will take care of my needs in the future. I am no longer worried about retirement because I know how to make my money work for me. This has also given me the confidence of sparing some time for myself to take care of my health and family and spread the message of financial literacy to others.

Based on my experience, I have also inspired my colleagues and their families to start investing their money in time. With proper guidance from Dr Celso – which came to me without spending a single rupee – I started to see opportunities where I used to see only excuses for not working towards a prosperous future. Dear friends, it is time that you, too, take your financial destiny in your hands and stop being slaves to money. Take the first step to a glorious future!

The Gift of Financial Freedom

-- Joanne Lopes

Life is not always the same. Sometimes it is full of fun, laughter and comfort, and at other times it could be grim and gloomy. For me, life was a perpetual spring as I spent my childhood showered with love and care from my parents. They taught me a great many important things in life and helped me articulate a confident personality and a kind disposition. Unfortunately, I lost my father to cancer a few years ago, which made a great upheaval in our lives. Post my father's passing away, we moved from Gujarat – where I lived all my life – to Goa to be near to our family. Adjusting to significant life changes isn't enough for a young person, but owing to a strong upbringing with an inclination towards spirituality helped me deal with the trying times.

Through thick and thin, my mother, my biggest inspiration, taught me many valuable lessons since a very young age in life. While I was still in school, she taught me the basics of budgeting, saving for emergencies and earning my pocket money through simple chores to make me independent. She also invested a small sum on my behalf, every month, so that I had a financial cushion at a young age to pursue my dreams freely. As grateful as I was to my mother, I also wished to be independent like her. I often told her that I wanted to take care of my own finances and start investing myself. At 21, my mother and I both knew I was ready to take my financial destiny in my hands. To ensure I get the right start, she took me to meet her old friend and classmate, Dr Celso, who's not only an acclaimed dentist but also Goa's very own financial doctor.

When I reached his office, I chanced on meeting two young kids like myself who proudly told me about their newly attained millionaire status. Millionaire at 25? I was astounded. Both of them were still in college and already on their way to financial independence. Excited, I beamed into Dr Celso's office and told him that I wanted to be a millionaire by 25.

“Uncle, how are you turning these young kids into millionaires? Tell me your secret so I can be a millionaire by 25, too!”

“Dear Joanne, anybody can be a millionaire. I have always told your mother. In fact, your mother has already created a handsome portfolio for you by regularly investing in mutual funds through systematic investment plans.”

“But Uncle, I want to start investing for myself. Mum's done enough and more – now I want to be independent.”

“I am glad to hear that...and I'd be happy to help you achieve your aim in every way possible,” said Dr Celso with touching sincerity.

Soon, I had a pen and paper in hand. I was jotting down my monthly expenses. I stayed in another city in a hostel and received 5,000 bucks as a monthly allowance. Like other kids of my age, I splurged it all on movies, coffee and shopping, saving just a little each month to be prepared for any emergency.

“Pay yourself first,” that’s the first thing Dr Celso told me. He asked me to set aside 2,000 rupees as soon as I received my allowance. “Now assume you only have 3,000 rupees to spend and see how your expenses will reduce magically,” he said.

Following his advice, I started investing a part of my pocket money in SIPs, despite not having any source of income. As I eagerly started paying myself through SIP investments, I also remained blissfully unaware of the ups and downs in the market - and that's what helped me grow my portfolio to where it is today.

It was only after a couple of years and many meetings later with Dr Celso that I started looking at my portfolio more closely. But, by then, I already knew the benefits of long term investing and even when the market crashed during the pandemic, It didn't hurt me a bit. On the contrary, I invested a large sum of money through top-ups. That was the best decision I made because the market was at its lowest.

Dr Celso also taught me another golden rule - that the only protection that my wealth requires is from myself. As long as my money is invested in mutual funds, it will keep growing. However, if I take it all out, it will stop growing. This simple idea has kept me from withdrawing any money at an early stage. Today, at the age of 23, I am nearing my mark of being a millionaire already. I have upped the ante and plan to have a portfolio of 15 lakhs or more by the time I turn 25.

Presently, even before completing my education, I know I am already accumulating wealth that will give me the confidence of pursuing my dreams without being a slave to money. This means I am free to choose a career of my choice and also give back to society without a worry. Financial independence is truly a gift that I wish to share with everybody. It can change so many things. When people are less worried about making money and making ends meet, there will be less poverty-related crimes. Professionals will work better, driven by passion and not out of compulsion, leading to higher GDP (gross domestic product) and GNH (gross national happiness) for the country. I earnestly wish Dr Celso more and more success in reaching out to people across Goa and beyond to create a financially-secure nation.

Small Actions. Big Results.

-- Dr Gautam Alias Vasanta Venkatesh Naik

I never wanted to work for money. For me, the only profession that is satisfying enough is one that I feel passionate about. Yet, only a handful of people I know have been fortunate enough to follow their dreams or pursue careers they are passionate about due to lack of financial security. But what about the others? Are all of us destined to live a life of servitude wherein we slog each day to earn money and build wealth, compromising on our health, family and personal time? And even if you do – there's always inflation that reduces the value of what you save today to a meagre sum tomorrow.

Musings like these continued to trouble me since adulthood. Growing up in a household where everyone around me was engaged in the family business, I have seen the uncertainties and the swing of fortunes at close quarters. I wanted to do something different. And that's what I did! I studied to become a doctor.

A reputable profession and a decent income, you may think that I made it in life. Yes, I fulfilled my dream of becoming a doctor; however, I still didn't have financial security. My finances were in complete disarray, and to be honest, I was in great distress. I realised that even though I worked hard and had a good income, I had no clue how to manage my expenses.

At that time, I always wished I'd cross paths with someone who could show me another side to this gloomy picture. Little did I know that soon my prayers would be answered through a close friend who introduced me to my mentor – Dr Celso, fondly known as Goa's financial doctor. On insistence from my friend, I attended a seminar on financial literacy by Dr Celso. The free event was attended by hundreds and, to my surprise, it turned out to be neither boring nor heavy. Putting his affable personality to perfect use, Dr Celso shared simple examples and anecdotes to drive home the point that investing regularly from an early age can beat inflation in the long run and also make one financially free. He also introduced us to the concept of systematic investment plans or SIPs that are ideal to invest small but regular sums of money in nurturing a large portfolio over a period of time.

Once I reached home, I decided to learn more about what the Doctor had said. A quick Google search led me to his website for the Nave Marg Foundation, and I soon realised the large impact Dr Celso has been making through his simple advice.

Motivated, I fixed an appointment with Dr Celso to discuss if financial freedom was possible for me.

During our first meeting, I told Dr Celso, "I had thought that with a decent income, I would be able to accumulate wealth faster. However, looking at things, I may not even save enough for emergencies and to pay for big events in my life."

Seeing me dejected, he said, "There's nothing to despair. All you need to do is to make small adjustments in your lifestyle and thought process to make a big difference in your fortunes."

He smilingly handed me a pen and paper and asked me to jot down my monthly expenditure.

Within ten minutes, he handed me another sheet and asked me to divide my expenses into needs and wants. And soon, everything was clear in my head. I was spending unnecessarily on things I did not need, which is why I barely had anything left to invest. With Dr Celso's help, we drew up a budget for me so that I could start investing as soon as possible.

"All you need to do now is," Dr Celso said with utmost sincerity, "stick to this investment regime for the next ten years. It may sound like a very long period, but like Rome, wealth also takes time to build. As your income grows, increase your investments."

With the Doctor's guidance, I gradually gained better control over my finances and have continued to increase my SIP investments ever since. It's been six years since I started on my journey to attaining financial freedom, and I am thrilled to report that I am in sight of most of my financial goals. The markets have soared and dipped, yet in the long run, my portfolio has been growing steadily. I now know why Dr Celso made me vow to diligently invest for a long period; the real magic of compounding kicks in when you are invested for the long term.

Last week, I made another momentous decision, thanks to Dr Celso. In my previous meeting with him, Dr Celso introduced me to an important financial concept – insurance. According to him, insurance is the bedrock of any wealth creation plan. Today, I am adequately insured, which ensures that in trying times, my portfolio doesn't get a hit.

Before I sign off, let me also tell you how this experience has changed me personally. Instead of slogging throughout the day, I have made positive life changes by keeping time for myself and my family as I am no longer worried about the future. With Dr Celso's guidance, my life has changed forever, and I wish everybody finds an angel like him to guide them on their financial journey.

Plan To Retire From Work, Not From A Good Life!

-- M.L. D'Souza

Planning for retirement starts with assessing your retirement goals and then identifying the means for achieving these goals. While everybody dreams of a comfortable retirement, not many understand the importance of planning their retirement from a young age to give their money enough time to earn handsome returns.

But I didn't always possess this wisdom.

In my late forties, I was working harder than ever to meet my family's growing expenses. Each day, I visualised myself at the beach, spending my golden days peacefully. Yet, my financial condition told me that this dream was far from being accurate unless a miracle took place, or I stumbled upon a treasure. But that didn't mean I stopped saving money. For many years, I had been saving a small percentage of my income regularly. However, with FD interest rates getting slashed every year, my worries continued to increase.

'With the fixed deposit interest rates coming down, how am I supposed to save adequately for my retirement? I had planned to fend my monthly expenses post-retirement through the interest earned from my fixed deposits!' I mulled on and on, feeling despair and helplessness.

And then, one fine day, I received a call from my brother, Luis, who excitedly told me about his decision of investing in mutual funds. I was shocked. Why would my brother want to put his money at risk? When I tried prodding, he handed me a book written by Goa's well-known financial advisor – Dr Celso.

I quickly started flipping through the pages, intrigued by Dr Celso's wealth creation journey. At the time of writing the book, Dr Celso was already a millionaire, and he said in his book that his portfolio was only growing. Reading through the book, I thought to myself – if he can grow rich, so can I. But how – that was the question.

Soon, I decided to meet Dr Celso. I was intrigued by his theory of wealth creation and within twenty minutes of meeting Dr Celso, I was confident that I could be wealthy, too. The doctor introduced me to the concept of mutual funds and how regular investments through systematic investment plans can help in building wealth in the long run.

As I was already used to saving a percentage of my salary, it was easy for me to channelise this money towards SIP investments. Mainly because I only had 15 years or so to retire, it only made sense that I invest rigorously and religiously in intelligently chosen funds to make my dream come true. Dr Celso also advised that I take a health insurance policy to cover any emergency medical expenses that could eat into my savings.

Today, I am five years into my retirement planning, and I can already see the fruits of my labour. A couple of years ago, there was a market crash, and some of the funds in my portfolio had plummeted. I saw red and decided to encash the remaining bits. Fortunately, good sense prevailed, and I contacted Dr Celso. He stopped me from making a mistake by giving me examples of several people who had held on to their portfolios through such events to reap great results later. Soon, everything was back on track, and my portfolio started growing again into a healthy plant, lush with money.

I only regret that I didn't have this vision earlier, but I have decided to make a change. Just like the good doctor is committed to spreading financial literacy in Goa, I have also started counselling children in my family on the basics of financial planning and how investing early can change their lives forever. Timely investments can make us financially free, so that we no longer have to work 9 to 5 but follow our passions while giving back to society, like teaching the underprivileged. Thank you, Dr Celso, for touching my life and helping me in changing the future of many.

Life's A Sweet Song!

-- Minguel Antonio Dias

“Minguell! Look at the poor child. He is clearly in need of nourishment and proper clothing.” I remember my wife pointing out to a scrawny child in the busy Panjim market, not far from my house. That day, we did go ahead and helped the poor child – like many others before and after that day. Helping people give us joy. My wife, Enola, a nutrition expert, helps people get more out of their lives by finding a balance in their diet and lifestyle. I support her in this initiative. Working in the exacting hospitality industry, I have been accustomed to honest hard work. My income is decent, which, if nothing more, helps us in living comfortably and also helping those in need. Until four years ago, my wife and I used to dream about ever-growing wealth that would allow us to help more people and live without any financial worries. Today, I am glad to say that I have progressed significantly on the road to creating wealth.

As a child, I always wondered why my father worked so hard. What was the point of slogging all day, throughout the week, when you couldn't enjoy the fruits of your labour with your family? As I grew up and took up a job, I found myself doing the same. Working hard, day in and day out, sacrificing my personal time and hobbies, neglecting my health and my family, only to earn more each month and grow rich.

Yet, the more I earned, the more I spent. Month after month, despite an increasing salary, my savings did not grow. If anything, they only dwindled each time there was an emergency or an unexpected expense.

But where was I going wrong, I wondered?

At this rate, I would continue working throughout my life, and yet, I'd never have enough to retire comfortably. Forlorn, I discussed my situation with my father-in-law one day. A wise man with years of experience, my father-in-law heard me out patiently and then narrated a story to me.

A few weeks back, he had been skimming through the newspaper when he stumbled upon an article on financial freedom written by a doctor. Amused, he read through the article and was stunned by the simplicity of the advice meted out by the 'financial doctor'.

In the article, he had written about his personal experience of building a passive source of income. He had explained how one source of income was not enough to be financially free, because you would always be working for money. However, by building a second, passive income source, you could make your money work for you to attain the coveted goal of financial freedom.

Narrating this story to me, my father-in-law urged me to attend an upcoming seminar on financial literacy by the good doctor to understand the concept of financial freedom better.

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I never believed money could grow on trees but do you know I have my own money tree that I have been diligently watering for the past four years?

Yes, that's true. It's been four years since I attended a seminar on financial literacy by the renowned Dr Celso. Until that day, I felt that financial freedom was a farce. However, the doctor changed my life forever by showing me the path to being wealthy.

No, he didn't ask me to slog or rob someone. He only asked me to spend my money judiciously and invest a fixed percentage of my income each month in high-return financial products like mutual funds.

At first, I was scared because everybody advises you to stay away from mutual funds. But the doctor introduced me to systematic investment plans (SIPs) where I could invest small amounts of money in select funds to get good returns in the long run, despite market conditions. He also made me promise that I would continue investing increasing amounts of my income in SIPs for at least the next 15 years, without withdrawing anything from my portfolio.

Today, four years down the line, I have learned to manage my money better because I am committed to keeping my promise to Dr Celso. I have been consistently increasing the amount of my SIP investments. My portfolio is growing, and I feel proud to have reached this stage from having zero savings a few years back. As a couple, my wife and I feel much more relaxed and happier now. We enjoy our work and continue to help people. Even during the time of lockdown owing to the pandemic, when my industry was one of the worst sufferers, I not only continued to live free of stress but also found the adverse market conditions as an opportunity to invest more. In hindsight, it was an excellent decision because my portfolio responded very favourably. I am confident to be able to create a self-sustaining and ever-increasing retirement fund in the next few years.

Thank you, Dr Celso. I wish I had met you many years back. But like you say – it is never too late to get started on the road to wealth creation.

A Lesson in Building a Better Life

-- Simran Andrade

“Do you wish to be a slave to money after leaving this college, or do you wish to become its master?” Boomed Dr Celso’s voice in our college auditorium. A third-year BA student, I had enrolled for his financial literacy class.

“You must be thinking of completing your graduation to be able to take up jobs to earn your living. Let me tell you a way by which after a decade you may never have to work to earn a living!” he said with a twinkle in his eyes. I remember the entire class gasping at such a possibility.

Dr Celso reminded us that as youngsters, we are the most valuable citizens of our nation. He said that by embracing the path to financial freedom, we take the first step towards nation-building, as the root cause of many problems in society nowadays is financial stress.

“Imagine a city full of financially independent people. All have more than enough to take care of their needs while living in luxury. Do you think there would be any thieves or corrupt people in that city? Will children be begging for alms or the poor exploited for two square meals a day?”

Dr Celso compelled us to see the possibility whereby investing regularly, anybody could be rich, which would mean that no one will suffer from poverty or financial stress, ever!

“Was it all a gimmick of some kind, or Dr Celso truly has a secret through which one can make a lot of money?” I wondered.

As the session progressed, I started to understand the simple logic behind his claim to getting rich by investing a little every month for a long period.

Still, there was something inside that kept saying that it was all too good to be true. So, I decided to speak to Dr Celso post the session.

“Sir, pardon me, please, but how can one become a millionaire by investing as low as a thousand rupees?” I expressed my concern after exchanging pleasantries.

He smiled and said, “Of course, you can be a millionaire by investing small sums of money. If you are looking for a catch here, the only one is that you have to invest for a long term – say, for ten years without withdrawing or stopping the monthly SIPs.”

“Ten years!” I was incredulous. Who has seen what’s going to happen in ten years?

“It sounds like a huge commitment, Sir!” I remarked.

“Hmm...well, Rome was not built in a day! Schemes that promise astronomical returns in a very short time are the ones designed to fool investors. I am glad that you are curious to know about this subject. Attend my next class where you will find all your answers,” he said with a smile and left the room.

In the next class, Dr Celso explained the working behind long-term investing. Using charts and tables, he showed us how the humble thousand rupees adds up each month and earns a compounded rate of returns, to become a massive sum over a long period. Regular investing

ensures that the returns grow higher and the portfolio gains through the volatility in mutual fund unit prices.

Convinced by Dr Celso's presentation of facts, I decided to act fast and begin my journey to wealth creation at the earliest. During the classes, Dr Celso had told us about the benefits of attaining financial independence. The idea of choosing my profession based on my passions and not the paycheck enthralled me.

My father runs a successful business and takes care of all our needs. However, I find it prudent to be financially independent. So, I decided to cut down my monthly expenses and started saving from my generous pocket money. I can't even describe the elation I got when I started my first SIP under Dr Celso's guidance. I knew I was taking my first step towards a financially secure life. My family, especially my self-made father, welcomed and supported my decision to start investing for a brighter future.

My journey to wealth creation has just started, and I can already see the positive changes in my life. With the awareness that I will achieve financial freedom much earlier in life has enabled me to make rational life decisions. I feel happy and light at all times. My sincere thanks to Dr Celso, who ignited in me this fire for attaining financial independence!

Setting Sights On The Big Picture

-- Glyn Lio Carvalho

We all go through a lot of things in our lives every single day. Dealing with everyday blues takes our sight off the bigger picture. We often think, 'Hey, why should I care about what will happen five years down the line? Let me deal with today's problems!'

The truth, however, is that when you have your eyes fixed on the goal, your everyday life gets sorted. You tend to become more resourceful, efficient and content.

A self-employed person, I have been in the health and life insurance sales for 15 years. I also deal in mobile recharging and satellite connections business. Working hard with integrity is the only way I had ever known to lead life. Like the proverb, 'drop by drop fills the ocean,' I had been labouring to create a pool of money to take care of my family and me after I retire from work. Things would probably have worked the same way had it not been for a close friend of mine who referred me to Dr Celso Fernandes.

I fondly remember my son Claude's 16th birthday. He was excited to receive Rs 2,000 from one of his aunts. While Claude was figuring out what to do with the money, a friend of mine from Mumbai, who works with the National Stock Exchange, dropped by and suggested that the money must be invested in mutual funds. He gave us Dr Celso's reference and spoke highly about him.

Later in the week, Dr Celso met us at our home in Vasco – travelling all the way from Margao – at our request. I was impressed by his commitment, considering the low amount of investment we were planning to do.

"I am not here just for this one investment. I wish to inform you all about the concept of financial independence that could be achieved through small, regular investments in mutual funds. If I could transform the financial situation of even one household, I will feel that I have succeeded in life," Dr Celso said with humility.

That day, along with starting the SIP investment, he also helped us rethink some of our previous investments. He showed how traditional investment methods such as fixed deposits ate up the principal amount in the long run, giving negative returns when inflation is factored.

It was impossible not to trust and admire Dr Celso. With abundant energy, he conducts a series of seminars and events to benefit people in their quest for creating wealth. Since our first meeting, we have been to several of his financial independence sessions across the state.

Tragedy struck us late in November 2015 when we lost our loving son to a road accident. Dr Celso was most helpful in this rough time, aiding us in allocating the life insurance proceeds in high-yield funds. On my son's first death anniversary, Dr Celso advised us to distribute 50 helmets to the youth to create awareness about safe riding. I was touched by his suggestion, and we followed what he had said.

Dr Celso continues to be our family financial doctor, consulting us on ways to achieve long term financial goals and sharing his wisdom when needed.

In the past six years of investing in mutual funds, my wife, Auria, and I have progressed a lot in our journey to creating a self-sustaining portfolio. I have also started mutual fund SIPs for my children, Hanosh and Marvin, as I want them to grow up into financially independent adults and live their lives without any financial troubles.

I still fight with everyday struggles and feel gratitude for the daily bliss my loved ones bring for me. Life is a big cycle of countless cycles of ups and down, yet having the bigger picture in sight helps me and my family find joy and security in all facets of life.

The Secret That Helped Me Put My Family First!

-- Prachi S Bhobe

My husband and I were both earning decently well, but the thought of investing money never crossed our minds. Things changed in 2017, five years after our marriage, when we became proud parents of a baby girl who will always illuminate our lives.

Following her birth, I took maternity leave for a few months when I realised I might not be able to work forever. When I spoke about this to my husband, he lovingly suggested that I must take as long as I want to take care of our baby.

"That's a fascinating thought, dear. But how would we manage the increasing expenditure and support our child if one of us stopped working?" My question hung heavy in the room and our minds.

Mulling over the subject, I realised that I needed a second source of income that didn't depend on me going to the office every single day. But that's not possible - is it?

Fortunately for me, my in-laws are exceptionally supportive.

"Prachi, don't worry. We know it is hard for you to leave this little angel and go to work. But rest assured, we will take good care of our darling granddaughter, and make sure she is happy and healthy at all times," my mom-in-law assured me with a warm smile.

Thanks to my in-laws, I was able to return to work in a few months, and they continue to take care of our daughter even today.

However, I can see that they are growing older, and I wish to be there for them and spend more time with them. Similarly, I want to see my daughter grow up and be a part of all the important moments in her life. Yet, I want to ensure the best education for her and give her a decent lifestyle.

So, even though I wish to work only till 40 and retire early to be with my family, I couldn't make up my mind because of our financial liabilities.

Every day, I read through stories of people who had turned around their fortunes through wise investments and wondered if I could do the same. Like an answer to all my prayers, a close friend told me about Dr Celso one bright summer morning. He informed me that the doctor could help me invest my money better so I could fulfil my dream of retiring early without any financial constraints.

I went home and quickly typed Dr Celso in the Google search bar to find out more about this magical person. Soon, I found out that the doctor was on a mission of creating hundreds of millionaires in Goa by spreading financial literacy and simplifying investing for the masses.

I also read one of his books and decided to grow my own money tree, as he had advised. Soon, I fixed a meeting with Dr Celso, and it changed my life forever. Dr Celso helped me understand my goals better and taught me how I could save for them. He also told me how important it is to have a second source of income and how I could build one through regular investments in mutual funds via SIPs or systematic investment plans.

It has been three years since that meeting, and I have already achieved my goal of saving ten lakh rupees through regular and disciplined investments. Besides investing monthly, I follow another strategy shared by Dr Celso. Instead of splurging, I regularly top up my portfolio each time I received my annual bonus, which has helped my investments grow exponentially. Today, as I am nearing forty, I am ready to invest more in a disciplined manner to build a self-replenishing portfolio of money in the next few years.

How I wish I had learned financial discipline and started investing much earlier in life. I feel overwhelmed at Dr Celso's initiative of spreading financial literacy among college students so they can make their money work harder than themselves, and focus on developing careers that they genuinely enjoy without being concerned about wealth generation.

Thank you, Dr Celso. Your advice has given me the confidence to continue investing and reap the results once my money plant is old enough, and my daughter really needs it.

Absolute Freedom Is Meaningless Without Financial Independence

-- Dr Gayatridas C Gauthankar

In today's times, being educated is not enough. You might be highly educated with a well-paying job, but you are only getting paid until you work. Besides, the recent pandemic has shown each one of us the fragility of what we tend to call normal. In the past year, many professionals, some extremely competent ones as well, lost their jobs and livelihood due to the financial strain on their employers. For me, this was an eye-opener. It also took me back to what I have always believed and was reiterated by Dr Celso – that investing your money is crucial for building your wealth.

To be honest, I have a lot of friends who invest in FDs. I often hear them cribbing about the reducing rates of interest. Fortunately, I am not affected because my savings are invested in better instruments designed to beat inflation.

As a veterinary doctor, I have always had good income flow. However, I wasn't able to save systematically owing to lack of guidance. My sister, who had been investing with Dr Celso for many years, turned out to be the primary motivation behind my meeting with Dr Celso. At the rate at which her portfolio is growing, I am confident that she will meet her goal of retiring after ten years with a steady income source provided through her SIP portfolio.

To emulate her success and put my money in the right place, I contacted Dr Celso and sought his guidance to start investing systematically in mutual funds.

"I want to build my wealth by investing in mutual funds," I said.

"But aren't you scared of the market?"

"No. I understand that mutual fund returns are market-linked, and patience is the key to success."

"That's great," said Dr Celso. "But what has held you back until today?"

"Lack of discipline and a clear road map."

My issue wasn't unique, explained Dr Celso. "Today, many people understand the benefits of investing in mutual funds, but they don't know how to get started. But I am glad we are meeting because I can help you get started. But first, what is it that you want to achieve through your investments," he added.

"I want to be financially free," I replied.

"What does that mean?"

"I want to pay off my existing debts, which is a major goal for salaried professionals like me. I also wish to create a relatively good back up that I can use whenever I need."

Dr Celso appreciated my clarity of thought and asked me to list my debts. Finally, he helped me figure out the minimum amount I must invest each month in meeting my goals. Additionally, he gave me a piece of advice that I have never forgotten and continue to follow:

He said, “Invest it and forget it, but keep an eye on the market occasionally.” Following his golden words, I never skipped an EMI and even increased my monthly SIP amount to Rs.16,000 from Rs.9,000 a month.

A couple of years back, I used money from my SIP portfolio to pay down my car loan. I also made an early repayment of about nine lakhs on my housing loan, bringing down my debts to around 11 lakhs. Despite dipping into my savings, I was left with about four lakhs in my kitty, which is again snowballing.

Thanks to Dr Celso’s guidance, I am inching closer to my financial goals, faster than I could have imagined. I follow the mantra of ‘set and forget’. Basically, all my SIP instalments are auto-debited, and I never think of dipping into my portfolio unless it is an absolute emergency. With these simple habits, I feel much more financially independent, which has boosted my confidence immensely. Personally, I think financial independence plays a significant role in your physical, mental and social states. With Dr Celso’s help, I have optimised these states through planned mutual fund investments, and I strongly advise everyone to follow suit to chart their way to financial freedom.

Financial Independence Sets You Free!

-- Jessica Sequeira

True freedom lets your spirit soar high and gives you eternal joy and peace of mind. I am lucky to say that I have found such a beautiful space in life. Having a successful career and a loving family is the icing on the cake!

Presently, I am based in Muscat and work as an inflight cabin manager at Oman Air. I am happily married and already a millionaire – with my portfolio galloping fast to achieve higher milestones in life - at the age of 28.

My journey to wealth creation was not a mere coincidence. It was well-planned and wrought with determined persistence over the years. It all began about a decade ago. I had just turned 18 and had grand plans for life. At that age, financial independence meant earning my own money and spending it as I pleased. Luckily, my dad had different plans for me.

“Jessica, you are officially an adult now. Celebrate the beginning of this new phase in your life by promising yourself to be financially independent before you turn 25 years,” Dad said one day.

I knew he was investing diligently for some time, but I thought only people with jobs could think about saving and investing. I was curious to know what my father meant by attaining financial independence at 25 or why it was important.

My father could tell that I had a lot of questions in my mind, so he took me to his financial advisor, Dr Celso Fernandes. To be honest, I was expecting him to talk about complex financial terms and concepts, which I would not understand. But to my amazement, Dr Celso spoke to me as a friend, using everyday analogies and exciting stories to explain the rudimentary concepts of stock markets, mutual funds, and compounding returns in mutual funds.

He asked simple questions such as, “How much money do you wish to earn in the next five years?” and “How do you like to spend your money? What value or satisfaction you wish to derive from your material purchases?”

These may sound like very simple questions, but they made me introspect and rethink my outlook on earning and spending money.

Dr Celso explained to me the concept of needs vs. wants and saving vs. investing. These concepts are so useful in everyone’s life, but unfortunately, no one teaches them at school! Thankfully, Dr Celso gave me a vision, a goal, and a path to tread on.

I had not even thought in my wildest dreams that I could be a millionaire by the time I turn 25.

Yet, I achieved this goal set by Dr Celso for me when I first met him!

Investing a little at the start, I increased the SIP amount as I started earning. However, it was not always as easy as it sounds. There were times when I had to suppress my compulsion to buy expensive things, which can be quite upsetting. It was my father’s and Dr Celso’s teachings of needs vs. wants that gave me the strength to continue investing at an increasing rate without

getting distracted or lured from my goal by meaningless extravagance. In hindsight, I am glad to have won over the compulsions; else, my portfolio wouldn't have been half of what it is now.

Today, I feel empowered and fiercely independent because of the security that my portfolio provides me. Trust me, achieving financial freedom gives a big boost to your confidence, dignity, and happiness levels. The journey to wealth creation has helped me in more than one way. Besides being financially secured, I have also been able to rationalize my spending decisions. Now that my money is working hard for me, I can take a few leverages to indulge in the finer things that life offers.

Over the past decades, a lot happened. Yet, the returns on my investments bounced back after every market debacle. And not just me, my father has also made good progress in achieving his financial goals. It is from him that I have learned that there is no substitute for smart investing for a brighter future.

I am glad that my success influenced my best friend who – convinced after seeing my money tree growing – started investing, too. I wish that more and more people are taught financial literacy concepts to make a positive difference in our society. I am confident that financial independence will help people have peace of mind and will live in harmony.

If it's true that money is the root cause of all evils, having enough money would naturally curtail crime.

The Guiding Light To My Financial Freedom Struggle

-- Rashmi Shetty

I have always believed that hard work and perseverance can take a person to greater heights in life. But I now believe that one also needs to make smart decisions to ensure a brighter future along with dedication and hard work. Unfortunately, it is not always possible to keep a keen eye on the future and make well-informed decisions in life – unless there is a coach or mentor to show the right path.

The story of my life would have been very different had I not sought the timely guidance of the wise financial advisor, Dr Celso Fernandes.

I am married to a wonderful man, and together as a couple, we find absolute bliss in raising our young daughter and taking care of my elderly parents. For me, life has been abundant with marital love and support from my family, and I am thankful to the almighty for that.

Working as an accountant for the past many years, I always had the inkling towards saving money to secure my future and that of my loved ones. Growing up, I have seen my father earning well and living a life full of convenience. While he lived well and made sure that his family got the best of things in life, he never saved or invested any money for the future. As a result, he lost much of his money soon after retiring from work. I didn't want the same fate for me and invested religiously in traditional investment options such as PPF and fixed deposits.

Since there was no one to guide me correctly, I thought that investments in mutual funds or any stock market-related investments would be too risky to try.

“Mutual funds! It's a lot of hokum. Invest if you wish to lose your hard-earned money,” people around me used to say whenever I tried to discuss the subject.

But as luck would have it, a colleague of mine indulged me in a discussion about mutual funds. She had done some research of her own and said that investing in SIPs don't sound as bad as people make them be. Trusting my colleague's instinct, I mustered the courage to go ahead. Refuting the naysayers' warnings, I started to invest a little amount in mutual funds through SIPs. We invested religiously for two years, and I was pleasantly surprised to see my portfolio growing. Still, I didn't know much about the funds to invest in and whether it was wise to increase my 'risk' exposure by increasing the SIP amount.

Around this time, another colleague mentioned that it is always better to invest in mutual funds under an expert's guidance. She suggested that we meet Dr Celso once – it didn't cost a thing, and he is very approachable.

One fine day, I visited Dr Celso, quite unsure if it was a good idea to discuss my financial background and investments with a stranger. However, I was soon put to ease when Dr Celso, very professionally, asked me sincere and pertinent questions about my investment goals. He listened to my story with genuine interest and expertly created an investment plan for me. I was quite surprised by his knowledge about the stock market. But more than that, I was surprised by his ability to listen to and perfectly understand my struggles and ambitions empathetically.

"Creating wealth and ensuring a financially secure future is within everyone's reach. It all depends how willing you are to pursue your dream to become financially stronger," he said earnestly.

Hearing Dr Celso's words gave me confidence, and I made a split-second decision to invest for the next eight years to reach a significant financial goal.

This was 2015, and I am pretty much on track to achieving my goal of touching three million rupees by 2023.

My portfolio has grown wonderfully over the years, and I now believe that soon I would become financially independent. However, several incidents in these five-odd years that rattled me to the core and almost derailed my plans of investing regularly for an extended period. Last year, the COVID-19 pandemic not only wiped the floor with all leading stocks, causing a global economic crisis, but it also left me jobless.

With the looming uncertainty and mass hysteria, it wasn't easy to remain calm and think straight. Losing my job and my only source of steady income came as a huge blow. I didn't know when the lockdown would end, or the economy would revive. I thought it could take years for the normalcy to regain. On such occasions, I used to feel tempted to sell off my mutual fund units – even at rock bottom NAV – hoping to salvage some of our losses.

And friends, in situations like these, you come to appreciate the value of having a supportive family and a concerned mentor. My family supported me emotionally while Dr Celso dispensed practical advice.

"Do not, I repeat, do not redeem your mutual fund units. If you trust me even a bit, then mark my words. Your portfolio will not only bounce back but will also earn extra to cover up for the loss of your income."

I did as he suggested, and although it was tough to continue paying SIPs without having any income, I kept investing and didn't redeem a single penny from my portfolio. It took only a few months for the markets to revive, and in the past couple of months, my investments grew significantly – despite the ongoing pandemic and global economic slowdown!

The pandemic has taught us some grave lessons. One of which is to have a passive income to support yourself in adverse times. I am still not financially free, but I feel more secure and confident. My commitment to attaining financial independence has given me a new purpose, and I think I have done something in life. Now, I keep advocating long-term investing in mutual funds to my friends and relatives. I want them to experience the elation that I have felt. I am thankful to Dr Celso for illuminating my world with the wisdom of financial literacy.

Time, Tide And Money Wait For No One

-- Suvarna Bhosale

Imagine being at the beach to build a sandcastle. At first, you do what you know; collecting sand from all around, staying away from the sea, carefully sculpting the towers, and digging the moat. But it gets dark too early, and you need to leave. If only you started earlier, if only you asked someone for help, maybe you could have the castle done in time. My journey to wealth creation has been somewhat similar, except that I eventually asked for help and completed everything I set out to do.

I took the very first step towards wealth creation around five years back. Savings until then had always found the traditional route in my household. When I tried to discuss the possibility of investing in mutual funds, my parents said, "What's the need? We have our trusted saving avenues. Why would you want to risk your hard-earned money like that?" But, I knew better this time.

A year before this conversation, Dr Celso Fernandes had visited our office to take a session on financial independence. He talked about building one's savings by investing small amounts of Rs. 500 each month. The way he explained the different concepts with confidence, backed by years of experience, was inspiring, to say the least. Still, it had only been a year since I had started earning my own money. With my background, these kinds of risks certainly didn't fall in the comfort zone. So, even though I was convinced with Dr Celso's presentation, I couldn't muster the courage to start my SIPs then.

However, two years into the job, I realised that I could save only a little, and there was no real monetary growth or wealth to look forward to. That's when I finally decided to reach out to Dr Celso to begin a new chapter of my life.

I remember thinking after the first meeting itself, "Why didn't I do this earlier?"

Dr Celso heard about my plans and financial goals to create a systematic design for investments. He gave me multiple pathways to start building the castle I had in my mind. Together, we diversified my savings into bite-sized investments, aiming towards long-term progress.

While there were many options to get started, I chose SIPs. The decision was pretty simple, as an auto-debit feature meant I couldn't procrastinate even if I wanted to. Sometimes, we just keep waiting for a better tomorrow, which never really comes. I didn't want to be one of those people ever again.

Beginning with just 2 SIPs of Rs 2,500 each, today, I have charted the entire journey to becoming a financially independent woman. There obviously have been multiple ups and downs, but Dr Celso's guidance has always helped me stay on course and create a better future rather than waiting for it.

Now, I regularly attend the finance and wealth creation sessions hosted by Nave Marg Foundation. Not only that, but I also actively encourage my friends and family members to take the first step, much like I did. There are no words to express the gratitude I feel towards Dr Celso and his initiatives. With his work in the field of financial literacy, he is boosting people like me to become self-sufficient in every sense of the word.

Building money alone can seem daunting, excruciating and an endless ordeal. Like money, sandcastles are fun when made with the help of everyone around, especially if it is someone who has built an infinite number of them. I humbly urge everyone to reach out and ask for the hand that can shape their visions into the most beautiful realities. Let's not wait for the dark anymore.

Spreading The Joy

-- Shivam Naik

Sometimes we know the right path to achieve our dreams but taking that first step requires an external push. At times, even after we set out on our desired paths, some motivation and guidance from a trusted friend and advisor make the journey easier and more fruitful.

Even while I was in college, I would often accompany my elder sister to Dr Celso's office in Goa called Nave Marg. I always wondered why my sister trusted a stranger for advice on how to grow her money but meeting Dr Celso for the first time changed my thinking forever.

Born to teacher parents, my sister and I were blessed with good education and access to several opportunities for professional growth. However, schooling in India does not cover financial literacy, which is why we never received the coveted lessons in financial planning to kickstart our wealth creation from an early age.

My sister was introduced to Dr Celso during a financial literacy seminar while she was in college. A few years down the line, I saw her emerge not only as a competent professional but also a champion advocating financial literacy for students. It was her growing portfolio, which she showed me consistently, that urged me to start investing in mutual funds as soon as possible.

Yet, I breezed through college without investing any money but building on my list of dreams I wanted to achieve. Soon, I landed a job in Mumbai and shifted to the city to live independently. Within a year of my job, I saw my expenses mount, and suddenly I felt worried about the future.

'At this rate, I'd never be able to fund any of my dreams,' I thought.

All this while, I had procrastinated the idea of investing, and now my expenses were so high that I barely had enough to spend. Resolute to not fall into the debt trap, I decided to fix an appointment with Dr Celso and seek his guidance on managing my money better. As my goal was already evident, Dr Celso helped me list my expenses and divide them into various categories to identify the areas that could be trimmed. Accordingly, we planned a budget to start investing about 20 per cent of my salary in mutual funds. Thanks to the doctor's help, it became effortless to begin investing, and stories of his students gaining financial freedom and meeting their goals always excited me.

To motivate me further, Dr Celso set short term, and long-term goals, for me and I think I am on track for achieving them on time.

"Results come from consistent performance. Your money will work for you only when you are focused on regular investing," he advised.

Thank goodness! I followed his lessons closely and kept investing, no matter what happened. Today, I feel a sense of achievement when I see my portfolio grow through in small amounts – and that encourages me to continue investing consistently to reap more significant rewards in the future.

Furthermore, I feel delighted about encouraging my friends to start investing.

As Dr Celso says, the riches must be shared between everyone. Instead of keeping the secret to wealth creation to herself, my sister chose to share it with me. Similarly, I want to share this secret with all my friends and loved ones to help them achieve financial independence in time. Recently, I convinced a friend of mine to start investing in SIPs.

All this while she would draw my attention to the red marks in my portfolio, warning me against losing my money. However, I explained to her that changes in the market impact your portfolio, and for the same reason, your portfolio goes through fluctuations. Today, my portfolio amount is growing positively, and my friend is also impressed by the growth rate. She has committed to investing a small amount every month, but I am sure she will grow her investments once she sees the results.

I feel truly blessed to be a part of this life-changing journey, and like my mentor, I too wish to spread the knowledge of financial literacy among the youth. Our destiny is in our hands - we only need to realize our potential and work diligently towards making it the way we want it to be.

How Money Doesn't Have A Retirement Plan

-- Martha Braganca

There are a fixed set of reasons for someone who is working towards financial growth. It either is taking care of your loved ones, kicking off your bucket list or wanting a comfortable life. While these goals are never mutually exclusive, tackling each and every one of them at the same time is usually the most daunting aspect of money. Being a teacher by profession, I always knew that what goes around definitely comes around in multiples.

A middle-class background taught me to always plan the necessities first. I remember hearing, "Get your ducks in a row; everything else shall happen eventually." Hence, I was focused on educating my children, putting a permanent roof over our heads and planning the occasional leisure trips to keep the clock moving. There wasn't much else to think about with a contented lifestyle except, the big ol' retirement.

I first heard about and from Dr Celso during his seminar at our school. He touched upon topics like safe and piecemeal savings in the form of SIPs and mutual funds, saying, "Forget the concept of going all-in. Real growth is the dividend of incremental investments." The way he spoke about creating financial independence and the compounding effect of money really struck a chord.

It isn't that I didn't know about the existence of the stock market. But, after investing since the 1990s, I turned a blind eye to it, moving my attention towards family and career. The stock market crash bolted me back to life, leaving only the bottom of the barrel to be scraped off.

A bit hesitant at first, I reached out to Dr Celso in the hope of reviving my finances and recovering the deep scars from my prior experience in the field. He patiently gave an ear to my whole story and explained how we could start small, given my apprehensions. A comfortable salary made it possible to put out a few funds towards an investment plan.

The difference in approach was very palpable. While I invested in a haphazard manner, Dr Celso laid out a strategic plan by tapping on multiple MFs. Instead of hoarding all eggs in one basket, he explained to me how the market works diversely.

Fortunately, it played out better than my expectations. Dr Celso helped me overcome my fear associated with equity and its offerings. With new-found confidence, I increased the sums a little by little, creating a whole and fulfilling portfolio for myself. I even invested a lump sum amount, keeping in mind the 4-year retirement plan.

One of the most important lessons that Dr Celso taught me about money was that it never stays the same. The increasing inflation rate shall always leave you less than what you started with. Therefore, I have made sure that even after my retirement, my money never stops working. A portion of the benefits is already planned for investment in various mutual funds.

It came as a revelation when Dr Celso said, "We don't just need to earn money, but also protect it." To lock-in the earnings in my pocket, we shifted to a balanced fund that plateaus the risk and rewards. At this moment, I understood the real value of having a financial advisor by your side.

Building a portfolio of random investments is easy. The tricky bit starts when you need to gain consistent returns over it. My background taught me to choose my needs over my wants, but thanks to Dr Celso, I found both with the right amount of savings.

A simple conversation led me to live a post-retirement life where I can sit back and relax. I thoroughly encourage everyone, especially the young and uninitiated to take their first step towards financial stability and long-term planning. With a financial advisor like Dr Celso, you can find the perfect balance between income, expenses and savings. No one knows what tomorrow holds. So, the sooner you begin, the smoother it would be.

Why You Should Stop Saving And Start Investing Your Money

-- Laxmi Pilgaonkar

Saving is not the same as investing money; though, it is a precursor to investing. You might have heard many times that smart people spend what is left after saving while those who are broke tend to save what is left after spending. However, there's something that's often missed in these famous lines. What is it that wealthy people do to build their riches? Nothing very different - instead of saving, they tend to invest their money before spending what is left with them.

Now, what you read above will sound very simple, but trust me that this simple mantra by an established financial advisor is what set me on the path to financial freedom.

As a government employee with a regular nine to five job and consistent income, I have always had a comfortable lifestyle and a consistent saving habit. But a few years back, I realised that merely saving my money wasn't going to be enough to fund the kind of retirement I had envisaged. Besides, I wanted to pay off my debts and other liabilities before I retired, but inflation was only eating into my savings and growing my worries.

Furthermore, I had taken a home loan a few years back to purchase an apartment. While I had been repaying the loan comfortably, the thought that my home loan repayments would continue into my retirement had always been a cause of concern. Yet, even if I applied my entire savings to pay off my loan, it wouldn't have been enough.

Distressed, I soon found myself thinking and talking about my financial concerns often. Fortunately, through one of these conversations, I was introduced to Dr Celso, my financial mentor, who turned around my fortune with practical and straightforward advice.

"Would you laugh if I told you money grew on trees," remarked my cousin, an ardent follower of Dr Celso's financial philosophy.

"Ummm, to be honest, I'd love to agree with you, but I guess that's not going to happen."

"Dear brother, I am not kidding. I can tell you that I have my money tree that's growing rapidly through the peaks and troughs in the financial market and soon it will be mature to bear fruits of wealth."

"I don't know what to say to you. I guess you'd better hand me over some seeds in that case so I can also grow my tree and clear my housing loan before I retire," I laughed.

"Sure, give me a minute." Saying this, my cousin scribbled something on a piece of paper and handed it over to me.

I unfolded the piece to find the phone number of a doctor.

"What kind of a joke is this? I think you need a doctor, not me!"

"Brother, this is not the phone number of a regular doctor. Dr Celso is a financial doctor. Go to him with your money problem, and you will be amazed at the efficiency of his cure. Thank me later!"

Intrigued, I dialled the number to fix an appointment with the doctor. On the day of the meeting, I arrived at his office, confused and excited, wondering what cure would be found to my malady.

However, soon enough, I was drawn into the doctor's charm, opening up to him about my worries and concerns. The doctor then asked me to list my financial goals, which were paying down my mortgage and securing my retirement, in the same order of priority.

Going step by step, Doctor Celso asked me to start investing a sum of Rs 25,000 in a dedicated systematic investment plan or SIP, and use it to pay down my mortgage in the next five years.

As home loans are long term debts, one ends up paying a large amount of money in interest. Paying down the loan early not only makes you financially free but also saves hundreds of thousands in interest payments. The idea is to start investing ten to twenty per cent of the monthly EMI amount in mutual funds through SIPs to grow a corpus for prepaying the loan.

Following his advice, today, within four years of my investment journey, I have accumulated a substantial amount, and I am confident that I'd be able to repay my home loan much before I plan to retire.

Under Dr Celso's guidance, I also channelled my savings into SIPs through regular top-ups to grow my portfolio faster. Thanks to his brilliant strategy for wealth creation, I feel much more confident about my future. I have been able to relax mentally after meeting Dr Celso, and it has also improved my health being stress-free. In my opinion, financial literacy is the biggest gift, and Dr Celso is doing a terrific service for the community by imparting this knowledge to the public. I have already encouraged my sons to start investing in SIPs to begin their wealth creation journey much sooner and start enjoying the fruits of their money tree as quickly as possible.

The Grass Is Greener Where I stand

-- Gargi Gurudas Borkar

Our journey as a couple was almost like everybody else's until we landed up taking a home loan in 2013, and the burden of EMI started. In fact, after taking the loan, we regretted, as we had lost all our savings in paying off our margin money and we were at the pavilion from where we had started just eight years back.

To our good luck, we got a chance to attend an orientation - Five Golden Rules to Grow Rich - conducted by our beloved Dr Celso Fernandes. We were impressed by his ideas and those small tips on investing money - especially the concept of 'Investing before spending.' As a couple, we tried hard to save more each month, however, the mounting expenses didn't allow us to do so. Dr Celso's words were like a revelation to us. I thought to myself, *If we invest before spending the money, we will ensure that we save regularly and limit our expenses, too!*

Attending the session was a turning point in our life. Our journey towards financial freedom had begun. We decided to meet Dr Celso as early as possible.

Before meeting Dr Celso, we always considered saving in fixed deposits, postal schemes and insurance endowment plans. My husband and I, we didn't understand the difference between savings and investments. We always thought that the equity market was reserved for the rich – little did we know that it was disciplined investments in the equity market that had made them rich.

But everything changed after meeting Dr Celso. He got our wealth creation journey rolling, and how!

We had found our mentor – Dr Celso Fernandes, and the beautiful journey of wealth creation had begun. What also impressed us was his methodical yet friendly approach. After taking into account our goal of building up our cash reserves again, he taught us the meaning of financial freedom before charting an investment plan for us.

In the last six to seven years, we have been investing according to his plan, and we are glad to say that we are meeting all our financial goals. The best part is that Dr Celso has never left us alone on this journey. Though the plan was lofty, he made the journey more comfortable with his timely advice and mentorship. He introduced us to the concept of SIPs or systematic investments into mutual funds as we couldn't afford to invest a lump sum amount due to our ongoing housing loan. Thanks to SIP, we Sleep in Peace every night when we see our portfolio grow.

Dr Celso also helped us understand our inflows and outflows, so we could cut off our expenses and focus on increasing our SIPs. As and when there was an increase in income, without wasting any time and with the help and guidance of Dr Celso, we topped our portfolios and continue doing so.

Soon enough, as we started seeing green in our portfolio, the doctor introduced us to another critical concept that most of us don't know of or neglect. He taught us that insurance is the bedrock of wealth creation. With an insurance plan to cover for emergencies, our wealth is always exposed to immense risk. He also taught us that insurance and investment must never be

mixed up. Insurance never helps in multiplying one's assets. Its only job is to cover risks and unforeseen calamities.

Like us, many people make the mistake of investing in insurance endowment plans. But term insurance is different from an endowment plan. Based on our learning, we cancelled all our endowment plans and topped this amount to our portfolio. We also bought a good term plan to cover our housing loan's liability and Mediclaim for our family's health.

Besides setting us on the path to wealth creation and giving us the confidence that we can be financially free, Dr Celso also inspired us to be better people. We have learned from him that all of us owe something to society, and must contribute a part of our riches to the public. Whether it is spreading financial literacy or donating to charities, financial freedom equips us to be better people with better lives. Thank you, Dr Celso, for building a more beautiful world for everyone.

Empowered To Serve And Live Better

-- Dheeraj Punjabi

I am a dentist in Mumbai and practice together with my wife, Dr Poonam. We both belong to business families and have grown up listening to talks on financial literacy, wealth accumulation, profit and loss, and more.

But listening and acting are two different things. And, like most youngsters, we heard, nodded our heads in appreciation and moved on each time such advice was dispensed to us.

However, things changed after we married and started our practice. My wife and I suddenly found ourselves dealing with profit and loss in addition to tending to our patients and providing them with the best possible care.

That's when we realised the problem. The expenses of managing a dental clinic coupled with expensive equipment meant we had to scale our practice. However, as doctors, we believe in giving the best possible care and time to our patients. Our profession focuses on patient care and not wealth management, which we followed and didn't want to change.

We soon found ourselves running a no profit, no loss practice, which was good enough for us till the time our patients were satisfied. But we also wanted to enjoy our personal life together. I wanted to take my wife on a foreign vacation on our tenth anniversary. We wanted to buy certain assets. And, most of all, we wanted to secure our future.

One fine day, at a dental conference in Mumbai, I noticed a well-dressed man who looked like a king. I was immediately drawn to him and went ahead to introduce myself to him. The man turned out to be no other than our beloved Dr Celso - the man with the Midas touch who is on a mission to eradicate poverty and create numerous millionaires in Goa.

He went on to share several stories of the financial change that he has been architecting with me. He also handed me a book before leaving the conference - Money does grow on trees.

Captivated by the title, I finished the book in one go on reaching home and re-read it the subsequent day.

I knew I had found my answers. Investing our money wisely was the solution to securing our future.

I soon fixed an appointment with Dr Celso to chalk out an investment plan. I identified three goals - getting life and health insurance covers, building a retirement fund and a foreign trip in the tenth year of marriage.

With faith in the doctor's advice, I started investing regularly. I have already achieved my first goal, and I am making consistent progress on the second and third goals.

But why I didn't start investing earlier is what I ask myself at times.

The answer is lack of financial discipline.

My wife and I always tried to save what we could after spending. But that's not right. According to Dr Celso, we should first invest a fixed amount of money before spending the remaining on other things. To make sure I follow this rule of paying myself first, I have set my

mutual fund investments through SIPs on auto-debit. Now, I only have as much money in my account that I can spend, and my investments are growing seamlessly.

By following this simple habit and investing in SIPs suggested by Dr Celso, I am confident of a bright financial future for my wife and me. The best thing about the doctor is that he regularly reviews my goals and investments with me. His suggestions on switching funds are excellent, and I couldn't have asked for better guidance in life.

In the end, I'd just like to thank Dr Celso for taking up the mission of spreading financial literacy and eradicating poverty for the masses. More strength to you, doctor.

Are You A Slave Or Financially Free?

-- Andrea Brito

Financial literacy is an essential aspect of education that is missed out in the regular school curriculum. However, even in my limited experience, I can say that it is imperative to know how to make money work for you.

Financial literacy is the cornerstone of a happy life, and one can be financially independent at a young age. My personal journey started in 2018 after meeting Dr Celso. I always wanted to be independent and fund my education and expenses without asking anyone for help. My idea was to grow my very own money plant that I would nurture with regular investments and reap the benefits later. Though the goal sounded lofty, Dr Celso made it the easiest thing to do.

Committed to spreading financial literacy amongst the youth of Goa, Dr Celso congratulated me for taking the first step towards financial independence at a young age. He told me that I must start investing systematically, each month, in mutual funds through SIPs. Over time, I could increase my SIP amount as my earnings increased to build a burgeoning portfolio.

“Andrea, put your trust in the power of compounding returns, which you earn through regular SIP investments. The longer you invest and stay in the market, the faster your portfolio will grow,” he explained.

In the doctor’s words, you will never board a train without knowing your destination. Therefore, it is vital to have a financial goal before you start investing. For me, Dr Celso asked me to set a target of Rs 10 lakh before I turned 27 in March 2021.

For a young student, even conceiving such a high amount was difficult. When he saw me in doubt, Dr Celso boosted my morale by saying that only those who have the courage to look beyond their circumstances can create a new world for themselves.

“Learn to believe. What seems impossible today will seem like a norm tomorrow,” he said.

Dr Celso also taught me two golden rules:

1. Pay yourself before everybody else
2. Set and forget

Furthermore, while he got me started with just two SIPs, he asked me to top them up regularly whenever I had additional cash at hand. Whether it was gift money received on my birthday or anniversary, instead of buying clothes or jewellery, I directly invested it in my portfolio. My friends sometimes sneered at this habit, but today, I have already crossed my 10-lakh target, well before time. My next goal is much higher, but I am confident I can achieve it with Dr Celso’s guidance.

Besides teaching me the basics of investing and chalking out a plan for me, Dr Celso also taught me about financial discipline. He told me the difference between needs and wants. He also asked me not to dip into my portfolio, except for meeting my predefined goals or during an

emergency. He taught me how to manage cash at hand and grow my investments without feeling a substantial pinch on my pocket.

I was never a spendthrift, but I was not even an investor. Thanks to Dr Celso, I learned vital lessons in financial literacy at a young age, but not everyone is as fortunate as I have been. By sharing my story, I want to call upon all the readers to step back and rethink their finances.

Ask yourself: Are you free, or are you a slave to money?

And if you answered the latter, fix an appointment with Dr Celso asap to change your status to financially free forever.

Are You Old Enough To Know About Money?

-- Dr Sneha Pai Kakode

Money and societal pressures are two peas in a pod. Both come across unknowingly, set their own timelines, and expect you to deliver, especially if you're a woman in this country. If you want to beat one, you have to ace the other. Even as a young – 20-year-old girl studying to become a doctor, I understood the power of being financially independent.

It went a step ahead than having the resources to buy anything I wanted. Finances were always a gateway into gaining the freedom of choice. There is only so much one can be if everything is moving at the same time. It would help if you had some stronghold, some foundation to fall back upon should things go south someday. Money helped me find a serene sense of stability to experiment and be myself in every walk of life.

Entering the 20s, my goals were set, but the path to achieving them was somewhat missing. After all, it's not like financial planning was a major subject in academics. My mother truly understood my passion and inspired me to take the first steps towards what would be a lifetime of contentment.

She knew Dr Celso Fernandes from his time as a dentist. The Nave Marg Foundation was making serious strides in building the financial architecture for people in Goa. Dr Celso was famous as the 'Financial Doctor of Goa,' helping spread awareness about financial independence and the effect of portioned investments. That's when she said, "Why don't you have a word with him? A little bump could go a long way."

What truly astonished me was how little I knew and how much there was to know. Dr Celso talked to me about financial literacy and the power of compounding. There is something he said that still sits with me to date, "Investment is not about searching for one big payday. It is a continuous effort in building your worth, little by little."

Being in college at the time, I didn't have all the money in the world to invest. So, we started small. Although the growth was slow, we did have time by our side. My focus was to be financially independent by the age of 25. The long-term goal helped me stick to the investment plans even in the face of challenges. Dr Celso's constant motivation and guidance was an added benefit. To keep the growth coming in, he ensured that I didn't withdraw the money unnecessarily.

Today, at 26 years of age, I've completed my doctorate in dermatology and am working at the Goa Medical College. At this point, I can irrefutably say that I am financially independent and a woman empowered to make her own choices. There is no better sense than being responsible for yourself and then making it count.

Dr Celso and the Nave Marg Foundation played a crucial role in helping me move out of the directionless plans I had in my mind. They taught me how to achieve what I had set out to do while holding my hand if I ever swerved from the path.

Financial literacy and independence are a call of the times. Every single person out there should gift it to themselves as an accolade for living life itself. In the end, it doesn't matter how old you are, what you do, or what you want to become, finding the right people to push you

forward shall be all that you need. Thanks to my mother's rationale and Dr Celso's knowledge, I have found a place in society to call mine.

I assure you that a single step will make the journey seem easier. It all starts with taking one today.

ARE YOU A DAILY WAGE EARNER, TOO?

-- Melchiades Furtado

Are you a daily wage earner, too?

I never realised I was a daily wage earner until I met Dr Celso.

Imagine, all those years of education and all the hard work, yet, all I was but a daily wage earner.

But don't be surprised. Like me, many renowned people and some with lavish and enviable lifestyles are also nothing but daily wage earners and slaves. Slaves to what we call money – a concept that's so elusive that we continue running behind it, day in and day out, forgetting to enjoy our lives and the beautiful things that surround us. Many of us also tend to live paycheque to paycheque, making it all the more difficult to follow our dreams or even switch to professions that actually provide some satisfaction.

But why does this happen with every second person we know? How is it always the same old story – grow up, work, pay debts, continue dreaming and living an unfulfilled life?

That's probably because nobody tells us the secret to financial freedom. We are taught to be daily wage earners, be it in any profession. But nobody tells us how to make our money work harder than working for it yourself.

Don't think I was any different. I have had my shares of ups and downs. I worked in the corporate sector for 25 long years, making ends meet but struggling to save even small amounts owing to the cost of living in Mumbai.

My family, we are not spendthrifts. We enjoy a good lifestyle, but we never waste money – also because we have never had so much excess to squander it on what we didn't need.

So, my corporate rigmarole continued for 25 years when the company I was working with started to face some difficulties. All this while, I had been toying with the idea of starting my own business but never took the plunge because of the insurmountable financial challenges that would crop up. However, my company's situation pushed me towards my dream, and I finally quit, setting up my own business.

Fortunately, I already had a trusted client base, and even though I started from scratch, I didn't face any financial troubles. Yet, I knew I needed a contingency plan for the future. No business can survive without back-up, but I didn't know how to go about creating one. While I figured for a way out of my predicament, I chanced upon meeting Dr Celso at one of the business group meetings.

From there, one thing led to the other, and I found myself sitting in his office one fine day, discussing my financial situation.

And that's when the truth of the matter dawned on me.

"Am glad you started your venture. But you do realise you are a daily wage earner, right? Like you have always been?" the doctor chuckled.

"What are you saying, doctor? I'd like to call myself an entrepreneur!"

"But you are nothing but a slave."

"Why would you say that doctor, I am the owner of a startup and not answerable to anyone."

"Well, are you sure? Aren't you answerable to those cash registers that must ring in certain numbers every day to ensure there are no losses? And what would you do if there were losses? If tomorrow you stop working for a month, is there anything you have created that will take care of your expenses?"

Suddenly, I was jolted to reality. Until that day, I had worked every day of my life to manage my expenses. But what if I couldn't work or didn't want to work anymore?

Dr Celso explained to me that the solution was having a passive source of income. Something I could nurture now to reap the benefits later.

He introduced me to the concept of mutual funds and encouraged me to start investing small amounts through systematic investment plans or SIPs. When I told him how hard I found it to save money, he drew up a budget for me and helped me identify the areas where I could save money and invest it wisely.

He also told me an important lesson of protecting my wealth. If tomorrow, my business premises are burned down, or I meet with an accident, all my investments will be washed away to make good the losses. To prevent this from happening, on the doctor's advice, I have bought life and health insurances to take care of my family and me in an emergency. This is very important, and I recommend that everybody should take a suitable insurance plan to protect themselves and their families.

Today, I am glad that I am progressing swiftly to achieving my financial goals. There is yet another reason for me to feel proud and happy – my son has also started his journey to wealth creation. I feel much relaxed and happy to think that by achieving financial independence at a young age, my son would not have to face the same grind and financial troubles that I had to endure.

In the end, I'd like to repeat what the doctor said to me: Save it till it pinches you a bit. That's how you'd stop being a daily wage earner when you start investing to continue earning even when you stop working.

Cruising Towards a Financially Secure Future

-- Oliver Fernandes

There are moments in your life when you sit down and contemplate what you have gained in life. For me, such a moment came several years ago, when after years of working, I still had an unimpressive bank balance.

About that time, I had switched jobs and changed sectors. I would have certainly felt more confident about my professional move had my bank account mirrored a figure I'd been desiring. Well, ruminating about the past is not in my nature. I have been reasonably adventurous and straightforward all my life. I call a spade a spade. And when I realised that I needed to strengthen my financial position, I acted at once.

I have known Dr Celso Fernandes for many years. I remember the time when he embarked on his journey to spreading awareness about financial literacy way back in 2007. What I like about Dr Celso is that he doesn't mince his words. He is polite and friendly but is also blunt and straightforward. If he sees that you have bungled up your investments, he will say so matter-of-factly.

It was in the year 2008, just after the global economic meltdown post the subprime crisis in the US. At that time, no one would touch a stock market instrument with a ten-foot pole.

"If there's ever a great time to enter the market, it is now! You get to invest at rock-bottom prices. Soon enough, the markets would bounce back, and you would be pocketing mind-boggling returns."

"But what's the guarantee that the markets will recover soon and in a manner that I will not lose any money?" I thought aloud.

"When you invest in mutual funds, your investments are managed by a highly qualified fund manager. The fund manager diversifies your investment, minimising the risk. And about the markets, well, they never remain at one level. If that were true, then all of us would go back to the stone age and barter our goods. Till the time there is trade, the markets will prosper and crash. It is like surfing on the waves. You must know when to enter the market and when not to invest," Dr Celso explained.

It took us only a couple of meetings to come up with an investment plan for me. Dr Celso chalked out a long-term investment regime for me, which involved significant monthly SIPs. We agreed upon achieving several financial milestones over a period of time. I am glad that I have already crossed the millionaire mark and am racing towards achieving most of my goals.

I am single and have limited financial responsibilities. Having said that, running a business comes with its own ups and downs. There are times when investing regularly seems like a tough task, but I am proud to say that I have always met my investment targets and never redeemed any units from my portfolio. And my discipline indeed bore fruits. My portfolio has been earning a steady two-digit return – despite periodic dips and setbacks, my funds have managed to yield higher results after every crash!

It is good to know that while I take risks in my entrepreneurial journey, I have my passive income to rely on during adverse situations.

In my view, financial freedom should be a fundamental constitutional right with a plan and governance around it. Sadly, schools and colleges do not have it as a core curriculum around financial literacy. Hence, the onus of educating people lies with distributors of financial instruments and financial advisors. Those who are lucky to find the path to wealth creation lead a far elevated life than those who do not. I am fortunate to have a 'second cake,' in Doctor's words, with my money working for me. This gives me a sense of encouragement to take bold steps knowing that there is a safety net getting put in place.

I am always curious to learn more about avenues of progressing further. In my experience, I have learned that nothing beats aggressive, emotional goals and a disciplined approach towards achieving them. Beyond a certain point, diversifying into new financial instruments is prudent. While all this happens, focusing on the primary source of income and keeping track of the latest updates in the financial world is paramount.

If society understands the need for early and disciplined investing in inflation challenging instruments, we would have far happier communities, which would have a 'butterfly effect' for ages. Families and individuals would know well that their retirement is taken care of so they can enjoy their present. Seeing a significant corpus building, people can take far bolder decisions to elevate their family's happiness quotient. Also, there would be an obvious transfer of this investment bug to the next generation early on, ensuring that they contribute actively towards creating a corpus even before they graduate. Having a large portfolio will ultimately allow youngsters to follow their dreams and passions. Wouldn't it be wonderful if everyone has the freedom to pursue their interests in life, without the need or grind for money? I believe such a scenario will make our society harmonious and peaceful.

Building a Better World Starts with Financial Literacy

-- Srimati Yeshwant Naik

It was a busy day at the college where I teach. The renowned Dr Celso Fernandes was visiting our college to conduct a class on financial literacy to benefit our students. Always keen on making my future better, I decided to join the session. Things have been pleasantly different for me since that financial literacy class!

As a teacher, I love my job of working towards transforming the lives of my students with knowledge and a progressive vision towards the future. I hail from the quaint village of Dabal, from Dharbandora Taluka, where I live with my loving and caring family. My father, who has greatly influenced my younger siblings and me, taught us how to lead a disciplined life. A retired businessman, he places a lot of significance in a minimalistic living with high moral standards. It is from him that I have learned to live in limited means and save regularly.

About a year ago, just before the COVID-19 outbreak, I heard Dr Celso's motivating speech at my college.

"It is your choice, whether to be a slave of money or to become its master and let it work for you," I can still recall his booming voice in the college auditorium. This thought was revolutionary for me. I had never thought I was a slave to money, but hearing the stories and anecdotes from Dr Celso that day, I realized that it was true!

We work all our lives, continually trying to increase our incomes to lead a better life. In reality, all we do is work harder and harder to retain our job or run our business, hoping to get rich someday. Dr Celso told us that the wealthiest people in the world don't work for money. They make money even while they are sleeping.

He then told us about various asset classes and the advantages and disadvantages of investing in them. At that time, I had been saving in traditional investment options such as fixed deposits and pension funds. Dr Celso showed an interesting slide indicating the rise in inflation against the fixed deposit interest rates after tax. I was astonished to see that my fixed deposits were actually eroding my principal in the long run as the returns after tax were lower than the rise in inflation.

By the time the session ended, I had made up my mind. I approached Dr Celso and sought his advice on investing in mutual funds. He was kind enough to spare his time and make a personalized investment plan for me.

"You are young and have little responsibilities. You must aim at reaching the one-million-rupee target in the next two years," he suggested.

Honestly, I didn't believe that I could be a millionaire in just two years, especially in the wake of the pandemic, but I had the good sense to do as my mentor said.

So, my wealth creation journey started at a time when the world was fearing the total extinction of the human race. No one believed in my decision, and often, though subtly, my move to start investing in the stock market-related instrument was ridiculed by many. I am grateful to all the people who doubted my decision because it only made me stronger and more persistent.

It turned out that all my initial SIPs were made when the unit prices were at the lowest in years. And when the markets bounced back within a couple of months, I reaped the benefits – earning returns people usually earn after a few years of investing.

“Your trust in me and yourself made a significant impact. Your portfolio has skyrocketed. Now keep investing with the same passion, and you will not be far from your million-rupee mark,” Dr Celso ecstatically shared the news with me.

It is true; I am on track to becoming a millionaire in a year from now.

I am grateful to Dr Celso and his team at Nave Marg for spreading financial literacy across age groups in my beautiful state. I wish our education system adopts financial literacy as a mandatory course program in schools and colleges. When I see bright, young students around me, I can't help but think – will they grow up to live a fulfilled life? I don't know the answer to this question, but I know that by adopting financial independence, these students wouldn't have to be a part of the rat race.

Finding The Reason To Smile Everyday

-- Dr Nadia Pinto De Souza

'Risk comes from not knowing what you're doing.'

-- Warren Buffett

It is four years of my financial journey with Dr Celso at Nave Marg, and I can still hear the words of his talk I attended in 2016.

I am a dentist and orthodontist by profession, running my own dental clinic since 2007. Happily married to a Physician, Dr Lloyd, I have two lovely daughters, Athena and Annalise, both in school.

Like any prudent adult, I had been saving for the rainy day since establishing my clinic; however, wealth-creation and investing were unknown concepts to me. My previous financial advisor tried hard to explain the benefits of investing, but he could never get around to instil the importance and ease of wealth creation. So, I continued to save. Had I realized the might of the market back then, it would have been a different story.

Well, as they say, better late than never, I did get the opportunity to learn and understand the key concepts behind investing, albeit almost a decade after starting my dental practice.

A casual talk with my fellow dentist, Dr Celso, changed all my perspective about investing. Over the years, I had invested haphazardly, mostly as a part of tax planning.

Convinced with his sound knowledge about stock market investments and mutual funds, I moved all my investments to him and sought guidance on investing for key life events.

I have always admired and looked up to Dr Celso as he is one of the state's most renowned dentists. I have seen him working with infectious zest, and his thirst for perfection inspires others in the field. So, armed with him as my new financial advisor, setting and abiding by the monthly investments is I took up the challenge of being financially independent.

From Dr Celso, I have learned three very important things about investing; accumulating vast numbers of mutual fund units for better profitability, investing for the long term to ensure maximized returns, and protecting the wealth with insurance.

During the pandemic, when the markets crashed, I felt uncertain about the future of my investments. Though my portfolio nearly doubled in the past three-and-a-half years, I got discouraged, and half suspected that I might never see my money back again!

Avoiding the clamour on news channels and mass panic, I continued to rest my trust in Dr Celso, who warned me against withdrawing my funds from the portfolio and book heavy losses. Instead, he explained how we should capitalize on the market crash. Reaching out to all the clients on online platforms, Dr Celso and his team did a marvellous job of contacting panic-stricken investors in time and reassuring them about the market's potential. He looked at my portfolio and made a few rearrangements of funds, which miraculously helped my portfolio bounce back and grow at a faster rate in a matter of a few months.

Initially, I was reluctant about buying insurance. I used to see no value or distinction between various kinds of insurances. I thought them to be an unnecessary product thrust upon polite, unsuspecting buyers by untiring and pushy agents.

But Dr Celso explained to me the benefits of having adequate insurance.

"Insurance schemes are not investments. You must expect insurance to cover for your damages during a mishap, and not a rate of return for a period of time," explained Dr Celso.

Today, I act as a goodwill ambassador for Nave Marg and Dr Celso as I firmly believe that he and his team have the right insights and experience to help people attain financial independence. I also share his vision that a financially independent society would be free of corruption and scams.

I do my bit in realising this vision by advising my patients, family, and friends to invest with Dr Celso. Thankfully, following my lead, many of my young friends, both of age and heart, are on their way to achieving wealth creation. In a very short time, since the beginning of the lockdown, they have earned significant results and are excited to see how their portfolio grows in the long term. I have even got my mother-in-law to invest and take a substantial monthly benefit so she can enjoy the fruits of her hard work and still have the markets create wonders on her capital invested.

Many people think that investing is easy and they can manage it on their own. This might be the case, but only if one has time to study and analyse the markets. In my experience, having a good financial advisor on your side makes a huge impact. Just like when one falls ill and tries everything in his or her power and still does not get better until a doctor is consulted, wealth creation is a difficult journey without a financial expert's help. Dr Celso, the Financial Doctor of Goa, is the perfect mentor to guide one on his or her quest for attaining financial independence. He has given me the gift of financial freedom, and with that, a reason to smile every day.

The Importance Of A Mentor For Wealth Creation

-- Dr Safira Da Costa

Today, we hear a lot about women empowerment. Across the globe, there is a demand for equal rights and status for women to end the sexism in society and create a culture of equality. Even the stereotypical gender roles are also slowly changing. Many men choose to stay back home while their respective wives work as primary bread earners.

However, in India, many women continue to depend on their fathers or husbands for their financial needs, which requires urgent attention to bridge gender disparities in the country.

I am a lecturer of homoeopathic medicine in Goa and currently pursuing my MD. I am also a home baker, a hobby that doubles up as a career to create a second income source. Ever since I was a child, I took pride in paying for myself. While I was a kind of spendthrift before meeting Dr Celso, I was always conscious of buying things with my own money rather than having someone else pay for me.

Coming from a well-off family, I also have the ardent desire to be rich. I want money all my life, but I don't want to be a daily wage earner forever - the exact words that Dr Celso used to describe my situation. But how do you go about being rich is not something you are taught at school. For me, I was lucky to meet Dr Celso at a felicitation ceremony where he handed me an award for excellence in academics. I also happened to stay back and hear his speech, where he simply asked - who wants to be rich?

I was instantly drawn at those words. I mean, who doesn't want to be rich. Soon enough, Dr Celso shared his story of how he bought a luxury car without spending anything extra by using his money tree. He also told the gathering about the millionaires created by him across Goa by imparting key financial literacy lessons.

Impressed, I booked an appointment and went to meet Dr Celso the very next day. I clearly told him I wanted to be rich and that I needed to control my expenses. Dr Celso started by explaining the difference between needs and wants to me. He said if I spend all my money on what I want, I may not have anything left to buy what I need.

He also recognised my desire to be financially independent and set a goal for me to accumulate ten lakhs in my portfolio by the time I turn 28. He asked me to start investing 3000 rupees in mutual funds through a systematic investment plan each month and forget about that money for a few years. Today, I can proudly say that I am very close to reaching my goal within three years or so.

But all of this wasn't possible without Dr Celso's guidance. In 2020, the doctor had asked me to increase my SIP amount to 6000. However, my baking business took a hit during the pandemic, and I couldn't raise my investment amount. In fact, I wouldn't have been able to pay my ongoing instalments as well, but Dr Celso helped me out by giving me orders for Christmas hampers that helped me meet my financial commitments.

At this time, I also found my portfolio dwindling. Scared, I thought of drawing the money out. But thankfully, I chose to trust Dr Celso's advice of turning a blind eye to the downturn and left my investments intact.

"What goes down must come up, " said Dr Celso. He added that the market downturns are the best times for purchasing new shares because of their low market price.

Today, I can finally see the graph going up, and my investments have started growing again at a fast pace. As I see it, my success is not only a result of my discipline and determination. It is also a result of my mentor's guidance - Dr Celso, without whom this journey wouldn't have been possible. I could have started investing on my own, but whether I would have been this successful or not remains a question mark. In my opinion, it is essential to be guided by an expert like Dr Celso to propel your wealth creation journey and avoid expensive mistakes that can set you back by thousands and even break your confidence at times.

A Rewarding Journey to Attaining Financial Freedom

-- Yogesh Sawant

‘Pay yourself before paying others.’ These words from Dr Celso changed the way I looked at life.

It was five years ago when I first attended Dr Celso’s seminar on financial independence. Hailing from an educated middle-class family – my father worked at APMC, and my mother was a primary school teacher – I had always harboured a dream of having enough money to meet all my requirements in life. However, as I grew up and started working, I realized that life was not a bed of roses, and I had to work very hard to make ends meet. In such a situation, my dream of becoming wealthy was dying a slow death.

Thankfully, in the year 2015, I attended Dr Celso’s seminar. Hearing Dr Celso speak about creating substantial wealth through financial discipline and long-term mutual fund investments; I saw a glimmer of hope.

My wife, Priya, and I are both working professionals. We had been saving in traditional investment schemes such as fixed deposits for a long time. However, falling interest rates forced us to reanalyse our investment strategy. To build a retirement corpus, we were looking for investments that give us nothing less than 8% in returns. We also wanted the returns to be tax-free. My wife and I found out that investing regularly on a monthly basis was far more achievable than investing a lump sum towards the end of the year.

While I was pondering over this problem, I came across an ad announcing a free seminar on financial literacy and financial independence by Dr Celso Fernandes. Curious to know what financial freedom meant, I enrolled for the one-hour session.

“Anyone can become wealthy. Yes, anyone and everyone in this room can be rich. It is rather simple. All you have to do is to invest regularly, without faltering, for a long period,” Dr Celso spoke with passion.

I was intrigued to know if I, too, could grow rich. So, setting up an appointment, I met him at his office.

Dr Celso listened to my predicament with deep interest. Like a physician trying to make the right diagnosis, he asked me several questions about my background, life goals, household income, and expenses, among others.

Right from the time I sat opposite him that day, I knew that I had finally met someone who could mentor me correctly.

Dr Celso instructed me to divert most of my traditional savings to mutual funds. He calculated the approximate loss I was incurring every year by parking my savings in fixed deposits. I was shocked to see this. I had always thought that fixed deposits were a safe and effective way of accumulating money. But the calculations were in front of me. The rising inflation had made the returns on my FDs insignificant.

“You must put your trust and time in mutual funds. Start investing every month through SIPs. But remember one thing, no matter what, never miss paying a SIP and do not withdraw from your portfolio until you reach your set target.”

We settled for a goal of touching a million-and-a-half rupees in five years, and I am proud to share that this target has been achieved.

Of course, there were challenges at the beginning. Although we earn a decent salary, we have several expenses and liabilities, too. Hence, paying significant amounts in SIPs was a bit daunting.

I remember Dr Celso’s words during such tough times – “Pay yourself before paying others.” With the standing instructions to my bank for SIP deductions, we gradually learned to live with limited income.

If my readers think that investing religiously means sacrificing simple cravings in life, then I would disagree. True, you plan your expenses more carefully, defer major asset purchase decisions such as buying a car, etc., and avoid compulsive buying; however, you still can create good experiences and memories by spending on things that matter.

Under Dr Celso’s guidance, my portfolio is growing steadily and surely. There are instances when the market falls several points in a day, and the funds reflect negative returns. But Dr Celso has advised us to see these market dips as good omens and invest more in our portfolios. I follow his advice and reap the results.

The new-found financial freedom has changed our lives in more than one way. My wife and I find the experience a heightened sense of self-confidence, positivity, and security in a world that is full of mayhem and crisis.

While my own journey to financial freedom has been nothing short of spectacular, I have been highly inspired by Dr Celso’s wealth creation journey, glimpses of which he keeps sharing with us from time to time. Financial independence is a very powerful concept for living a more fulfilling life. Pity, it is not taught in academic or corporate institutions. My wife and I do our best to help people around us adopt the path of wealth creation. In fact, we have already convinced our parents and other family members to begin their wealth creation journey.

Financial literacy has helped us distinguish between our needs and wants, taught us to budget our expenses, and most importantly, given us the tools to build a large retirement portfolio. I am sure that financial literacy is the only practical way of reducing income inequalities in society.

Treading on the path shown by Dr Celso, we have learned to be modest with our worldly expectations and to pay ourselves before paying others.