10 FINANCIAL COMMANDMENTS

Foreword:

Creating wealth is not rocket science. Anybody can become rich.

Helping people attain their financial goals as a financial consultant, I have noticed that people work all their lives to earn a living, becoming slaves to money. Yet, there are ways through which one can make money work for them instead of them working for money!

A successful dentist, I got interested in the art of financial management, and since a decade, I have been passing on my learning and insights to as many people as I can, with the hope of redeeming people from financial stress.

My insights are summarized in 10 Financial Commandments that I would be sharing with you through stories inspired by true events. Learn these financial commandments by heart, write them down and pin them to the drawing board in your office or home, and instil these in your children's value system, for these financial commandments offer a sure-shot way to redeem you from the tentacles of financial stress.

To grow rich, I only ask from you three things; commitment, discipline and patience. For the rest, you can turn to this book.

This book is a result of my strong desire to help as many people as possible to walk on the simple path of wealth creation. From childhood, we see the crucial role money plays in our life. From meeting existential needs to fulfilling big dreams and aspirations, money is needed on every step in our life. Even then, we don't teach the young generation about managing finances and making provisions for a perpetual source of income!

Contrary to that, our value system feeds us with a lot of myths about money, such as 'Money is the root cause of all evil'. In reality, money is just a tool for the exchange of goods and services. The societal teachings about money either pushes people into a money-making frenzy, or makes them completely averse to the concept of money. Those in between these two opposing poles, find themselves slogging hard to make money, like a rat on the wheel.

The truth, however, is that once you set your mind on becoming rich, and start following simple, logical rules related to handling money, no one can stop you from creating substantial wealth over time. And all this when you don't even pursue it actively!

I have learned from my personal experience, and also from the lives of the rich and wealthy around the world, that life is meant to enjoy simple things, to love, to create, and to give. It isn't meant to be ruined due to financial troubles. Through this book, I aim to teach you how to make money chase you instead of you chasing the money.

When I started my journey to wealth creation a decade ago, I had no doubt in my mind that I will attain financial freedom. I was in a positive state of mind, and I was ready to be disciplined and patient. The same I expect from you, dear reader, to entertain the idea that you will get wealthy.

So, dear reader, if, and only if, you are absolutely prepared to change your financial circumstances, if you truly wish to lead a life where your choices are not dependent on the availability of money, and if you sincerely believe in the possibility of a financially independent future where you don't work for money, let's move forward and learn how to turn your dreams into reality.

Credits

First and foremost, I wish to thank the thousands of people in and around Goa, who gave me the opportunity to listen to their stories and help them begin their journey to wealth creation.

Next, I wish to thank the whole team at Decision Tree Consulting, our long-time literary partners, for patiently and thoughtfully editing this book, making it a lucid and an engaging read.

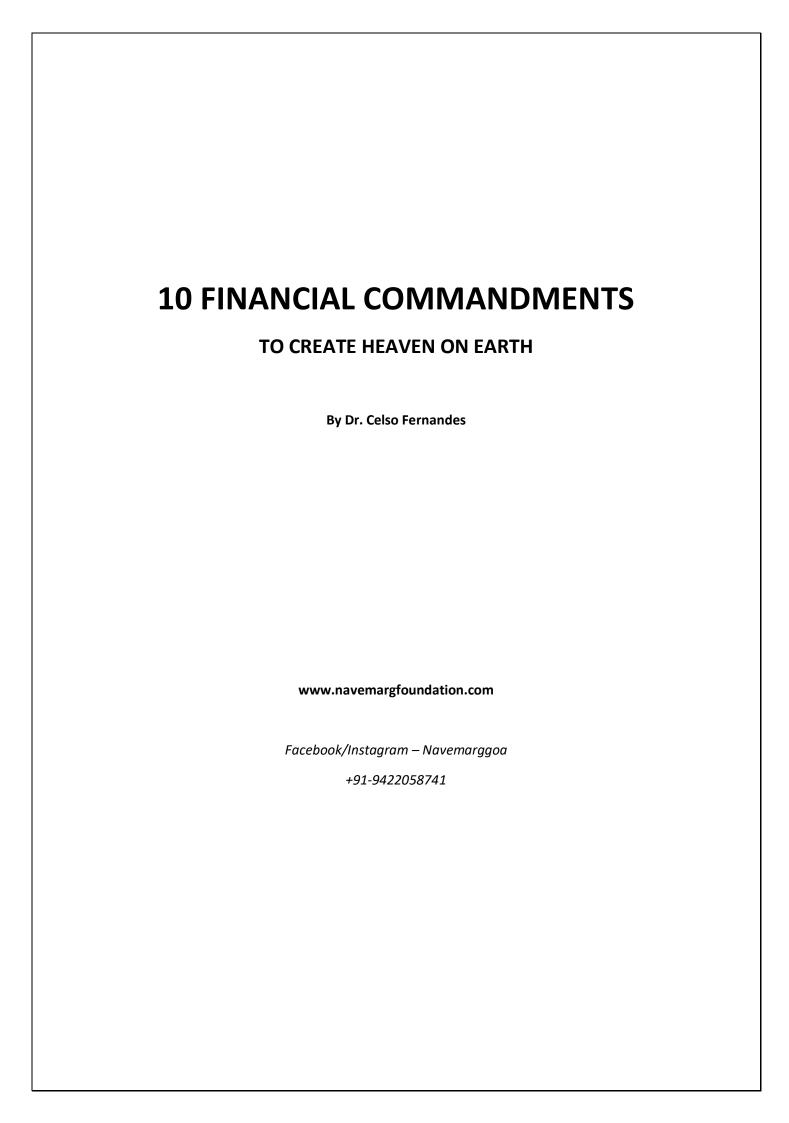
Also, I would like to thank LIC Mutual Fund for sponsoring the entire printing cost of this book.

I sincerely thank the zealous and ever-supportive team at Nave Marg Foundation for putting in their blood, sweat and toil in our common mission of spreading financial literacy across the country.

This book, like my other professional undertakings, would not have been possible without the caring support of my family.

And you, my dear reader, I wholeheartedly thank for having the courage to change the status quo and take your first step towards financial independence.

Dr. Celso Fernandes



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Happiness is the most sought-after commodity in today's time. And so is prosperity! We all wish to have happiness and prosperity in our lives. Yet, an increasing number of people are failing to attain both. A lot of this is because of financial stress. We all are in a race to live a better life today and build a glorious tomorrow, and in attempting to win the race, we court misery and distress. However, attaining financial stability is not as daunting as it seems. With Stacy's story, let's find out the first step towards financial wellbeing.



"Aww...my googly-woosh, Mumma will make all your dreams come true," Stacy promised her six-month-old son, Brandon, while playing with him in the nursery. However, as soon as she promised to ensure a bright future for Brandon, Stacy felt a bit queasy. She had a feeling that her promise was hollow.

Stacy and Kevin had met in college, and after their respective campus placements, they had said their 'I Dos,' five years ago. Ambitious, hardworking and intelligent, both Kevin and Stacy did extremely well in their careers. Kevin got a meteoric growth in the pharmaceutical company he worked, and in record time, was gearing up to be a part of the senior management team. Stacy, on the other hand, was already appointed as the Head of Marketing (India and South East Asia) for the wellness products company, where she had joined as an Assistant Marketing Manager. At present, she was on extended maternity leave.

The accelerated career growth also meant a sharp increase in the couple's monthly income. The combined salary was enough to buy the most exquisite and lavish things in life, and they lived in style. They shifted to an up-class neighbourhood, bought two very expensive imported cars and frequented the finest of restaurants in the town. Besides, whenever the two got time together, they travelled to exotic places around the globe.

Kevin loved Stacy and loved even more to pamper her silly. He often bought her outrageously expensive gifts. Stacy, too, loved the glamorous life; however, at times, she also had the nagging realisation that they were spending all that they earned, and not a penny was being saved.

Whenever she tried to discuss the subject of saving with Kevin, he would say, "We will save, dear, we will. My promotion is around the corner and we will religiously save the increment portion."

But that never happened. There were always EMIs and credit card bills to be paid, and international trips to be planned.

Now, cradling little Brandon, Stacy couldn't help but think of the millions they had spent on things that they didn't need. 'Only if I could get back all that money and keep it aside for my son,' She thought reproachfully.

A sudden thought brought Stacy to attention, and she dialled a number. Anita, her colleague, had long ago asked her to meet a well-respected financial expert to discuss savings and investments. Stacy couldn't visit the expert that time as they never had any savings! After taking the number from Anita, Stacy fixed an appointment with the expert. She also pursued Kevin to accompany her.

Hearing Stacy's concerns, the financial expert said, "You guys are making the classic mistake that most people make." He explained that the natural impulse is to pay off your expenses and spend on things you want as soon as you receive your salary. This leaves nothing in the end for savings. But if you save before you spend, you will learn to curb your expenses and save regularly.

"You two must save at least 25% of your salaries and keep the rest for spending. In fact, you must invest 25% of your salary," said the financial expert, who then explained Kevin and Stacy the concept of mutual fund investments through Systematic Investment Plans (SIPs).

"Instead of keeping your savings idle in bank accounts or putting them in traditional saving schemes, you can actually make your money grow at a faster rate by investing in mutual funds," he explained.

Kevin and Stacy followed the expert's advice and soon started to invest a big chunk of their salaries in mutual funds through SIPs. This small step changed their lives tremendously.

Ten years later, Kevin and Stacy were at the peak of their careers. They were earning fat salaries, yet they were not dependent on it for their survival. Investing before spending helped them grow a huge portfolio, which was self-sustaining and grew perpetually. On Brandon's 10th birthday, the couple took one more life-changing decision. Their ever-growing portfolio ensured a comfortable life for them, as well as, world-class education for Brandon. Stacy resigned from her job to spend more time with Brandon and positively influence his growth, while Kevin left his job to launch his dream social project in micro-financing for the poor of India.

We all dream of abundant wealth and riches. We toil hard, day after day, to improve our financial position. But is it enough to steadily increase your earnings?

In the previous story, Kevin and Stacy, despite their substantial income and hefty bonuses, kept failing to accumulate wealth. They learnt the lesson of investing before spending, which helped them create a flourishing portfolio and find their calling in life while providing opportunities for many others. The second financial commandment will teach you the importance of sensible spending.

Financial Commandment #2

If you buy the things you want but not need,

You'll soon sell the things that you need.

On a pleasant October morning, Professor Tracy was gearing up to conduct a 'Class without the walls' at the college. To get the attention of the young, chattering, squabbling college students, she raised her voice and asked, "Ok, who wants to listen to a story?" Several hands shot up, and the students settled under the old Banyan to hear an exciting story.

"But, before I start, I want to ask you one question; what are your plans for the future?"

Most students said that they were going to become rich and lead a luxurious lifestyle.

"Today, I am going to tell you the story of a boy, a former student of mine, who cherished the same dream of living a lavish life!"

Professor Tracy narrated the story of Shawn; a bright, ebullient boy with a zest for life. With extraordinary charm, a confident personality and great communication skills, Shawn was a popular boy at college. He compèred during the college fest and represented his college in debate and declamation events across the state. Everyone knew that a glorious future awaited Shawn.

As expected, Shawn bagged a lucrative job offer during campus recruitment and moved to a metropolitan city. He worked very hard at his new job and won a lot of appreciation from his seniors. He took up one challenging project after another, working relentlessly, collecting handsome bonuses that came with the projects. He was so obsessed with work and money that he even let go of an opportunity to pursue an advanced management program from a top college, sponsored by his company.

Shawn worked hard and partied harder. He liked being among the high-income professionals who lived in luxury. Only three years in his job, he had already booked a swanky apartment in an affluent suburb and drove an expensive SUV. He dined at the finest restaurants and wore designer clothes. As his income grew, his monthly expenses also spiralled up; Shawn was happy to be living a lavish and extravagant life.

Destiny, however, was weaving some other plans for him. A sudden acquisition of the company resulted in major job cuts. Shawn, too, had to face the axe. In a flash, he was forced to deboard the fast train to fame, success and riches.

Though, skilled and talented, Shawn found it hard to find another job owing to a looming recession. The few vacancies matching Shawn's previous role required a professional degree. With no savings to fall back upon, Shawn had no money to pay his EMIs and credit card bills. At 25, Shawn, dressed impeccably in an Armani suit and sitting in a top-line SUV, felt very poor. A rich poor.

Distraught and broken in spirit, Shawn visited his parents and told them about his situation.

"I am sorry, Dad, you had many expectations from me. I failed you," he said between sobs.

Shawn's father consoled his only son and told him that it was not his mistake that he got fired.

"But the way you lived was quite wrong," he said in a soft, yet firm voice.

Shawn's father told him how he worked hard and saved more as his income grew over the year.

"I made the right investments and followed the policy of 'earn more and save more', which helped me build a massive wealth over a period." He asked Shawn, "How could you ever hope to become rich when you blow all your money on things that you want but not need?"

As Shawn started to see his mistakes, his father added, "I always put my needs before wants, Son, and I want you to adopt this habit at the earliest."

On his father's suggestion, Shawn met a renowned financial mentor who helped him in finding ways to reduce his expenses and set up a series of financial goals for him.

Shawn took up a job in his home state, lived in his family house, and disciplined himself on putting his needs before wants. Even with a lesser salary than his previous job, Shawn saved more.

Under the guidance of his mentor, Shawn also started investing in mutual funds through SIPs (Systematic Investment Plans). His mentor told him that had he been investing while he took up his first job, he would have been a millionaire by now – thanks to the power of compounding in mutual funds, the longer you stay invested, the more you earn.

Shawn is now gearing towards making a financially independent future. The way towards the real riches.

"Wow, that was a good story," exclaimed one of the boys. "I never thought of the consequences of choosing an extravagant life," said a girl. "We will not make the mistakes that Shawn made. We want to save and invest and build wealth," declared another girl.

"Yes, you all can save and invest in SIPs, as low as Rs 500 per month. I will help you to start as early as possible," Professor Tracy said with a smile before asking, "And do you know how I know Shawn's story so well?"

As the class looked at her with anticipation, she smiled and said, "Because he is my son!"

Ancient teachings such as 'Saving for the rainy day' and 'Living within one's means' have a wealth of wisdom we often overlook and get entrapped in financial troubles, just like Shawn did. Financial stress is the major cause of unhappiness among adults in our country. Most of us find ourselves sticking to jobs we don't love, just to pay the bills. Securing the future is on everyone's mind today. We plan and save and invest in order to meet the rising expenses and future life events. But aren't we stressing ourselves too much today to make our tomorrow better? Many would say, yes!

What if you wake up tomorrow and don't have to work for a living! You can play a musical instrument instead of punching numbers or teach poor children instead of writing codes – whatever your heart pleases!

Remember how Kevin and Stacy found their calling in life, and Shawn geared up to build a financially independent future? They all committed to creating an additional, passive source of income!

Financial Commandment #3

Don't be dependent on one source of income, create assets that generate you a passive income.

'Rebecca the Rebel' her friends called her. At 17 years, Rebecca was trying to understand herself, the world around her, and nothing seemed to make sense! A perpetual rage burned inside her, and she questioned everything, challenging the traditions and customs and quashing stereotypes. Her parents loved her but were finding it increasingly difficult to calm her down.

While everyone saw Rebecca's rebellious nature, only her family and close friends knew that her heart was in the right place. Rebecca couldn't see the plight of the poor, especially children. After college, she often visited the slums, reading storybooks to the semi-clad, hungry poor children. She seldom ate her lunch, as she preferred feeding a hungry child at the footpath. Once, she caught a terrible case of pneumonia while helping a poor labourer family fix their roof as it rained incessantly.

Rebecca couldn't understand why the world was so partial, so blind to see the suffering of their own race! A part of her youthful rage came from the apathy of the rich towards the poor. If only she had the money, she would have tried to nurse every malnourished child to health and help every poor family to live with more dignity.

No one knew this, but she had resolved to dedicate her life in service of others.

'I will finish my education, get a job, and spend all I can on making the lives of the poor better,' she often told herself.

However, in her heart, Rebecca knew that even if she started working, she would only be able to make enough to meet her own living expenses and a little more to help, maybe a child or two. She had seen her parents slogging long working hours to make ends meet. And these thoughts frustrated her even more.

Little did she know that her life was about to change.

One nippy November evening, Rebecca accompanied her father to a charity award event in the city. Rebecca's father's childhood friend, Carlos, who ran an impactful program on enhancing the lives of poor children, was the Chief Guest at the function.

Rebecca was thrilled to meet and talk to Uncle Carlos. During their discussion, Rebecca told Carlos about her passion for social work, and also shared her predicament of not having enough money to help more and more people.

In response, the man told Rebecca his story.

"I worked in a bank, a regular 9-5 job for several years. My pay was decent, but not enough to pay for my family and take care of my social work. I, too, wanted to be rich so that I could help as many street children find a brighter future as possible. Yet, riches eluded me until I had a revelation."

Taking a sip of water, he continued, "I realized that to grow rich, you must not depend on only one source of income. You must have two or more sources of income so that with one income you take care of your living expenses and the other you invest to accumulate wealth."

Carlos further told Rebecca that he was introduced to the concept of mutual funds, where one could invest small amounts of sum — as low as Rs 500 per month — through monthly SIPs (Systematic Investment Plans).

"I started investing small portions first, and then, as my salary increased, I increased the SIP sum. Irrespective of the market condition, I kept investing in a few good funds, without withdrawing anything. In 15 years, I couldn't believe that I had created a portfolio, which was growing each month without having to invest anything at all!"

Carlos told Rebecca that while she was still at college, she can start building her passive income with monthly SIPs. And as she starts earning, after securing a job, she must increase her SIP amount and accelerate her wealth creation process.

That chance encounter with Carlos changed Rebecca's life. The very next day, she met Carlos again and started a SIP worth Rs 500. She studied hard and kept serving people and making poor children laugh and learn.

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"I can't believe it is the same Rebecca who was always smashing things and confronting everyone," her father said incredulously, while her mother nudged him to stop talking and to enjoy the moment.

It was an award night in Singapore, and Rebecca was being recognized for her contribution towards uplifting the lives of underprivileged children in India. She had also become a thinktank and a strategist in the area of access to education for every child. Her models and strategies had proven successful in India and other developing countries. The most remarkable thing about Rebecca's social endeavours was that they had all been initially funded from her pocket.

After gracefully accepting the award, Rebecca said a little speech:

"Ten years from a night like this, a wise gentleman taught me to be self-reliant and resourceful. He taught me to build more than one source of income, a piece of advice that enabled me to nurture my dream projects without seeking charity money. A little advice gave me the freedom to do what I

wanted in life. I thank you, Uncle Carlos, and my patient parents, for channelizing my emotions and rage into constructive, tangible solutions to help others. Thank you!" Rebecca walked through the dazzle of camera flashes to her parents and gave them a big hug.

Over the ten years, while Rebecca studied and later worked with UNESCO and World Bank, she kept building a passive income. Her focus towards her goal of creating wealth was infectious and her parents also started investing through SIPs. Having taken voluntary retirement from their jobs, they now work with Rebecca; their combined passive income is enough to meet their living expenses and to fund new social projects during initial stages. Together, the trio happily works towards giving wings to the dreams of underprivileged children.

You must work hard if you wish to earn more money and lead a better life.'

We all have heard this statement several times since a young age. But what if we flip it around? What if we make our money work hard for us! Sounds bizarre? Well, not really. The truth is that there is a way through which you can make money work for you instead of you working for it. Read the story of Sameer and Joseph to learn how NOT to be a slave of money.

Financial Commandment #4

Never work for money, make money work for you, giving more money.

At school, Joseph and Sameer bonded over sci-fi movie and their passion for the Universe. They were great friends; both were intelligent and charming. Nick-named 'Einstein Square' by their friends, the duo spent a lot of time in the Science labs, experimenting chemical reactions and exploding beakers. After school, Joseph and Sameer both got admissions in reputed engineering colleges.

Their stories, however, stopped being similar from thereon. While Joseph opted to pursue research scholarship at the prestigious university, determined to make revolutionary discoveries in the field of AI and machine learning, Sameer took up a well-paying job at a large IT firm.

Both the friends kept in touch for some time, but since they lived in different cities, they eventually lost touch. Sameer was clearly busier than his friend. His superiors at the IT firm thought that he would be good in sales and marketing. And they were right! Sameer, with his sharp mind, sound technical knowledge and excellent communication skills, proved to be a great business development person. Sameer's company paid him very well, and he spent it with zest. Memberships to the most elite clubs, leasing out a spacious apartment in a posh locality and two swanky sports cars were proof of the extravaganza that Sameer was enjoying.

But, while he cherished the riches for a few initial years, Sameer started experiencing an inexplicable void in his heart. He sadly found out that the things that his money could buy were giving him lesser satisfaction each day. He was also finding his job to be too hollow, devoid of the intellectual promise that he could offer. But most of all, he missed getting immersed in Science. Deep inside his heart, he still wanted to tweak emerging technologies and innovate cool gadgets.

One evening, alone at his expensively furnished apartment, Sameer looked out at the world from the glass walls. His gaze went up to the twinkling stars and the magnificent crescent moon. A shudder went through his body as he thought about the experiments in the Robotics Lab, the innovative projects he wrote down on a notepad; all seemingly a zillion years ago.

"Hello, Jo," Sameer stammered as the emotions chocked him. He had not called Joseph in years and had missed a few of his calls, without bothering to call back. 'There will always be time to catch up with him,' he would think.

"Hey, Sam, my man. Where were you all these years?" Joseph exclaimed chirpily.

Joseph spoke to him with the same warmth and fondness from the school days. Eventually, the two friends agreed to meet that very weekend.

Sameer flew early Saturday morning to reach Joseph's city and was delighted to find his friend at the airport to receive him.

Joseph took Sameer to his snug, little house that exuded sophistication, warmth and comfort. Sameer liked Joseph's home over his own expensively adorned apartment. After a sumptuous lunch, the two friends went for a short walk.

"Jo, I am so happy for you. I have read some of your journals and I know that you are on to some big innovation."

Joseph blushed, and said, "And look at you, a big executive in a huge firm. I am proud of you, my friend."

Sameer grew gloomy. He told his friend how he felt stuck in the wrong job.

"I am earning a lot of money, but I have created a lifestyle to match my earnings. My salary is grand, and so are my EMIs and monthly expenses. I want to return to a lab and tinker with technology, but I'm afraid that I will not be able to earn the same in a research facility or a tech startup. I see that you live in comfort, Jo, please don't think that I am being disrespectful, but how do you manage to live so comfortably in a small income?"

Joseph smiled and told Sameer that, on a wealthy uncle's advice, he had regularly been investing in mutual funds through Systematic Investment Plans from a young age. By the time he completed his graduation, he already had a significant portfolio that grew on its own, without the need for further investments.

"You see, I didn't have to choose my job on the basis of pay. My portfolio appreciated way beyond my limited expenses each month. Still, I continued to invest, and at an increased rate, after securing the job at the University."

Sameer was dumbfounded. He had always thought that securing a well-paying job is the only way to become rich. But Joseph had proved that living in your means, and regular investments over a long period ensure wealth creation.

'Am I really rich or I think that I am rich?' Thought Sameer. 'I earn well, and my expenses are almost equal to my earnings. If I leave my job tomorrow, I will be on the streets!'

Sameer left Joseph late on Sunday night with a lesson, 'Not to work for money. Let the money work for you.' He also took the contact details of Joseph's wealthy uncle and made it a point to meet him soon. It is never too late to take the right step!

Like Rome, wealth cannot be built in a day. Luckily, you don't need potions and charms to create wealth; financial discipline alone can help you grow rich. But only if you make your money work for you, and don't let it languish in your bank account.

In the previous story, you read how Joseph didn't work to earn a livelihood. He took up a job that gave him pleasure, while his ever-increasing portfolio ensured that he remains financially independent.

However, the way you employ your money is critical. The following financial commandment will change the way you envision your future and help you attain financial freedom.

Financial Commandment #5

Saving is good for the short term but bad for the long term, whereas investing is bad for the short term but very good for the long term.

Sejal had been excitedly waiting for the evening's school reunion. In the past 20 years, she had attended every school reunion with a lot of zest, but this year, it was special; she was going to meet her best friend from school, Gloria, after two decades!

"My God, you look just the same!" squealed Gloria as she came running towards Sejal.

"And you look the same, too. Only more gorgeous," screamed Gloria.

After college, she had married Brad and settled abroad. As the evening grew, Sejal stole Gloria away from everyone, and the two started talking. There was a lot of catching up to do for both of them.

Sejal told her story first. "You know, Gloria, how I had chosen Advertising as a field of study in college, while you studied finance? Well, I was able to get a very good break at a leading advertising firm after a little wait," Sejal paused to take a sip from her mint-lemonade.

"I got good exposure at the agency and earned a slew of promotions to be among the senior leadership team. Having worked for over 12 years at the firm, I decided it was time to start something on my own." Gloria listened attentively as Sejal told her about the initial struggles before her social-entrepreneurship startup found its feet, and eventually started getting a lot of global attention.

Sejal also told Gloria about her little family. Her husband, Ajit, worked as a banker for 15 years and was now fully engaged in hydroponics and organic farming. Her two sons are attending the same school where Sejal and Gloria studied.

It was now Gloria's turn to relate her story.

"You know how Brad swept me off my feet and we married after a brief courtship? Well, Brad had been working on a cruise liner earlier, but just as we got married, he got this lucrative job offer in the US, and we settled in this beautiful country."

Gloria continued, "We lived a cherished life in Boston. I took up a job in finance in a company not far from our house. We travelled around the world, lived in style, learnt new things, and raised our dear daughter, Sara. Life has been kind to us. We both earned well, but never indulged in spending more than required. We saved a lot of money ..."

Sejal kept looking expectantly as Gloria trailed off. After collecting her thoughts, she continued, "Brad always wanted to come back to Goa, and so did I. So, we took stock of things and left our jobs to return to Goa. Enough running around, it is Susegad time," Gloria laughed happily. Yet there was something in her eyes that reflected her worries.

It is true that friendships that run deep and old are unaffected by the passage of time or vastness of distances. Sejal took no time in understanding that something was troubling her friend.

A little prodding helped Gloria in expressing her growing worries.

"I am as much startled as I am worried, Sejal. We saved hard, and we saved for a long time. Yet, after all these years, Brad and I have only enough money to meet our living expenses in Goa. I am really worried about our future here, now that we both are not working and rely totally on our savings."

Sejal genuinely empathized with her friend.

There was something else that baffled Gloria, "Sejal, you said that you left your job several years ago, and so did your husband. You, in fact, fund your startup, whenever needed. How on Earth do you guys manage your expenses; where does the money come from?"

Sejal smiled at her friend and revealed that since early in her career, she, too, focused on saving money. However, about 15 years ago, she met one of her agency's clients, who was a leading financial consultant. Working with him on an advertisement campaign, Sejal learnt that merely saving money is not enough, one must invest it to gain higher returns over a period.

"Sejal, saving for the long-term and investing for the short-term are both wrong approaches for creating wealth. You must make long-term investments in assets like mutual funds," the financial consultant had said.

Sejal told Gloria that she had been investing through Systematic Investment Plans or SIPs in mutual funds for a decade and a half now. Starting with SIPs as low as INR 500 per month, anyone can start on his or her journey to riches, she explained.

"My, and my husband's portfolios grow at a healthy rate and provide us with enough to meet our expenses and to fund our social and agricultural projects," explained Sejal. "Gloria, you and Brad did the right thing by saving money regularly. However, you didn't give it a chance to grow for you. While short-term investments may be risky, long-term investments have always given high returns," she added.

Gloria felt a deep pang of remorse for all those wasted years that her money languished in the savings account. Seeing her friend in a sad state, Sejal decided to cheer her up. "Don't you worry Gloria! You can start investing from now onwards. There is no expiry date for starting the right thing!"

"Is it possible?" asked Gloria incredulously.

"Of course, you have a long life ahead of you. Try to curb your expenses, focus on needs and not wants, and make some room in your monthly budget for small investments."

After a pause, Sejal added, "I have been looking for someone who could manage our finances. Since you are so experienced and talented, would you like to work with us? I mean, we can't match your salary in the US...." Sejal could not finish her sentence when Gloria threw her arms around her and thanked her. Tears of joy streamed down their faces, strengthening the bond of friendship that they shared, and cherished. *****

Often termed as the root cause of every evil, money can actually do a whole lot of positive things, too. You can follow the Financial Commandments featured here and change the world around you!

We have been dogged by the rising inflation ever since attaining independence. The prices of goods and services keep spiralling up, making any increase in income ineffective. Have you noticed how your expenses creep up to equal your income?

What if the same inflation helps you earn more money? Incredulous, are you?

While traditional investments such as Fixed Deposits punish you with inflation, equity markets reward you. Let's read Neil's story to unravel our sixth Financial commandment!



'Neil, I know you are devastated, but always remember, I am your friend and will always be there for you.'

Neil remembered how Joanna had pacified him when he had lost his father in an accident a few years ago. Childhood friends, Neil and Joanna, lived in the same neighbourhood, went to the same school, and later, the same college.

'You kept your promise, Joanna. I will never forget what a true friend you are,' Neil thought as he walked out of Joanna's home, feeling relieved, focused and positive.

After his father's sudden demise, Neil and his mother had found themselves in a financial quagmire. A small business owner, Neil's father had mortgaged their home to get some working capital for his business. Neil had never been interested in his father's business. He was a gifted musician and longed for a career in the field. The graduation that he was pursuing had been at his father's insistence. But now his shoulders were heavy with the burden of his father's debts. Surprisingly, his father had left little in the form of savings, and he had never believed in investing money.

Soon, the mother and son moved to a rented house as the bank took over the mortgaged property. Neil dropped out of college and started taking up gigs in the neighbourhood to support his mother. Although the financial struggle was taxing, Neil took some consolation from the fact that perforce, he was building a career in music.

Years rolled by, and Neil emerged on the local music scene of the state. He wasn't immensely popular, yet; but he had his hands full. Regular work meant regular income. Neil, having faced financial scarcity, wisely kept aside a portion of his income.

Meanwhile, Joanna completed her graduation and joined an MBA program at a reputed college. Her father had taken early retirement and was working on a hydroponics project of his own. An environment-enthusiast, he had a keen interest in farming and wished to come up with a sustainable solution to the burgeoning food problem in the world. All this while, Joanna and Neil continued meeting and remained the best of friends.

One day, Neil informed Joanna that he was planning to get married. While Joanna felt happy for her friend, she posed him with a practical question.

"Neil, do you have enough savings to fund the wedding? I know that Rose is studying, and she won't be able to support you financially."

"Yes, Joanna. I have thought about it. I have been saving a part of my income each month since the time Dad left us for his heavenly abode. I will dip into those funds for the wedding costs and will continue saving in the future."

"Neil, do you mean you are saving money in a savings account?"

"I am not so stupid, Joanna! I have my money in FDs – they pay you more than your savings account, I hope you know that."

Joanna burst out laughing.

"Why are you laughing?"

"Neil, I want you to come home with me. Dad has been saying that he wants to meet you."

"Okay, that's a sudden change of subject. I will accompany you, anyway."

Soon, they drove to Joanna's home in her car. Joanna's mom lavished Neil with some frothy coffee and homemade cake. Meanwhile, Joanna briefed her father about Neil's finances.

Joanna's father remained quiet for a few minutes. He remembered his dear friend and silently promised himself that he would not let Neil repeat the financial mistakes made by his father. He called out to Neil, lovingly.

"Son, I heard you are getting married. I am very happy for you."

"Thank you, Uncle."

"Son, as one of your father's closest friends, I want to share something with you that could potentially change your life forever."

"Tell me, Uncle."

"Have you heard of SIPs, Neil?"

"Yes, uncle. Systematic investments into mutual funds. But I hear they are risky. I don't want to put my hard-earned money on the line – who will take care of my family if all my money goes down in the market."

"Son, that's very thoughtful of you. But would you believe me if I tell you that I have been investing in SIPs for the past thirty years? Today, it is because of my swelling portfolio that I can follow my dreams and ensure a comfortable lifestyle for my family, too."

Neil thought for a few seconds and said, "Uncle, I still believe that I am not ready to risk my money to market movements. I would rather have my money safe and sound in Fixed Deposits where I get good returns, too!"

Joanna's father smiled and said, "Son, you are right in thinking that the returns on FDs aren't affected by market movements. But did you know that the inflation – the rate at which things are getting more expensive – is increasing every year, which effectively erodes your returns. What's more, you have to pay tax on the interest earned. No wonder people who put their money in FDs for a long time effectively get negative returns!"

As a perplexed Neil looked on, Joanna's father explained that inflation is an enemy when one invests in traditional schemes; however, when one invests in the stock market, inflation actually helps in growing the portfolio.

"Take my advice, son, and start investing 20 per cent of your salary in well-performing mutual funds. Over a period of ten years and more, mutual funds are known to outperform conventional financial instruments such as FDs and government bonds. In addition, get a comprehensive insurance cover – a small premium each year can be a huge source of support to your family in the future."

At this point, Joanna jumped in.

"Neil, do you know I am a millionaire?"

"What?"

"Yes, Neil. I have been investing through SIPs since I was a teenager. I started investing INR 500 from my pocket money each month when I was 15 and continued to increase the amount as my income increased. Today, I don't need any funds from dad to manage my lifestyle!"

"I don't know to say!"

"Well, don't say anything, Neil. I have fixed an appointment for you with our financial advisor. He has helped hundreds of youngsters manage their money better so that they don't have to work for money, but their passion!"

Neil was stunned. When he left for home, he couldn't stop dreaming about the future that awaited him. Finally, he knew what he had to do. They would not be struggling forever! Financial freedom had always been a dream for him – and now, it was about to come true!

Thanks to Joana's true friendship, Neil avoided the mistake that so many Indians make.

Losing someone in the family is always painful. And if that person is the sole provider, the family's prospects turn very bleak, as we read in the story of Neil and Joanna. Had Neil's father been insured, the family would have had avoided any financial distress. But is life insurance alone sufficient? Should we not protect our assets and wealth while we are still alive? Let's find out with Alvina's story.

Financial Commandment #7

Be adequately protected to face any untoward financial loss.

Prevention is better than cure.

'Alvina?' Angela hesitantly questioned the woman sitting sombrely in the waiting area of the hospital.

The woman took a few moments to recognize her childhood friend.

'Angela!'

As they hugged, Angela asked the inevitable question, 'What happened?'

Alvina noticed the nametag on her friend's white coat. 'Dr. Angela Fernandes,' it read.

'It is Nigel,' Alvina said with a long, sad sigh. 'He was involved in an accident...' Her voice trailed off. Angela clasped her friends' hands in hers in a comforting manner.

'It has been over a month he is in the ICU. I don't...don't really know what will happen,' Alvina said between sobs.

'Don't worry, Alvina. I have recently been transferred to this hospital. Let me look into this,' Angela patted lightly on her shoulder.

'Let me finish my rounds in the paediatric section and meet you for lunch. It looks like my childhood bestie can do with some food,' Angela tried to cheer Alvina, who managed a feeble smile.

The hospital cafeteria was full of tired relatives and attendants who milled about from one counter to another, swiping cards and carrying trays of coffee and snacks. Alvina, who ran a successful café in the beach belt, was now used to the tepid soup and insipid, doughy croissants.

'Hello dear,' Angela burst into the cafeteria and apologized for the delay.

Over the next half an hour, Alvina filled in the gaps for Angela. She told Angela how, soon after college, she married Nigel, who used to work on a cruise liner. For a few years after their wedding, Alvina joined Nigel on his sailing assignments to give him company.

About three years ago, Nigel and Alvina decided to take a break from sailing and anchored their ship in their hometown. The couple had earned good money, and they invested all of it in a beach-side

restaurant. Leveraging their exposure to world-cuisine, Nigel and Alvina crafted a unique menu, which became an instant hit. They worked very hard to manage ever-increasing patronage.

During the off-season, the duo would fly to exotic locations, attend international wine and foods festivals and learnt new exquisite recipes to add to their menu. Nigel and Alvina earned a lot and led an ultra-lavish lifestyle. They were both very happy and carefree.

'It all seemed like a fairy tale ... until Nigel got involved in this horrible car crash,' said Alvina ruefully.

Angela consoled her, 'I have spoken to the doctors and told them that Nigel is family. They have assured me that they are doing their best. It will take some time, but Nigel is out of danger.'

Alvina gave out a long sigh of relief. She looked gratefully at Angela.

'Thanks, friend. I know my Nigel is in good hands.'

After a brief moment, Alvina suddenly remembered to ask, 'Hey, where had you been all these years? I know you have become a doctor now but tell me all about you that I have missed.'

Angela smiled, 'I hadn't been anywhere, dear. It was you who set up the sails and went for a long voyage, leaving your friends behind.' Alvina gave a sheepish grin.

Angela told her that after school, she took some time to work with an NGO, working with children in slums and orphanages. It was then that she discovered her passion for providing medical assistance to poor children. As a paediatrician, she worked in several hospitals in Mumbai and also ran a free clinic in the Mumbai slums. Angela married a fellow doctor, and they had a two-year-old son.

'I have recently come back here as I wanted my son to be raised in cleaner environs. I work in this hospital and also do weekly rounds in the orphanages around here.'

The lunch hour was about to end, and Angela had to go for her rounds.

'Alvina, Nigel will regain his health sooner than you think,' Angela consoled her friend, 'Although, I must tell you that Nigel might have to undergo a couple of more procedures, which cost a lot.'

Alvina's face wilted. She looked visibly perturbed.

'Hey, don't worry, there is nothing that the insurance company wouldn't cover,' Angela said brightly.

Alvina stared at her shoes, unable to tell the truth.

Angela understood that her friend didn't have Mediclaim insurance.

'Alvina, dear, without a Mediclaim, you will end up paying a lot of money from your pocket!'

Alvina let out a sad sigh and said, 'I know. We never thought that we would be facing any situation like this. And we always thought that we have a lot of money. But now I know how wrong we were.' She knew that Nigel's treatment would leave them broke.

Angela didn't lose a second to fish out her cheque book from her handbag. She drew a cheque of Rs 3 lakhs in Alvina's favour and handed it to her. 'This is for now, if you require more, don't hesitate to ask,' Angela said lovingly.

Alvina was incredulous. 'I ... I don't know ... what to say, Angela. How can I take ... so much money? I don't want to eat up from your hard-earned savings,' she protested.

Angela smiled and said, 'What are friends for? This money would be best used in treating Nigel. You need it more than I do. And as a matter of fact, this isn't from my savings.'

Angela explained to her friend that she had been investing in mutual funds through SIPs since college time and now she has a large, ever-growing, self-sustaining portfolio.

'See, I don't have to work for money or save for occasions. And I can help any child in trouble or a friend in difficulty, thanks to my portfolio,' Angela beamed, 'Now, I will rush. Will check on you tomorrow morning.' And with that, Angela left in a jiffy.

It was all too much to take for Alvina, who stood rooted to the spot in the bustling hospital cafeteria, a hefty cheque in her hand.

'I might have travelled the world and achieved professional success, but I need to learn a lot more,' she thought, making a mental note to ask Angela more about investing and insurance the next day.

Alexander Graham Bell, the inventor of the telephone, famously said, 'Before anything, preparation is the key to success.' In the last story, we read how Angela had to bail out Alvina from

an impending financial disaster as the latter didn't have any medical insurance to fall back upon. Prevention is better than cure, both for your physical and financial health. Let's find out how to be truly prepared to face the financial ups and downs in our lives through Sophia's awe-inspiring story.

Financial Commandment #8

Grow your money plant and enjoy the fruits for life; but you need to nurture them till they attain adequate strength to bear fruits.

Ting! Sophia's mobile phone chimed.

She picked up the phone after a few seconds as she was buried deep in work. Her internship in the marketing function of the large conglomerate meant a lot to her, and she didn't want to leave any stone unturned in winning a full-time job at the company. Sophia yearned to build a stellar career in marketing.

Checking the message in a preoccupied state of mind, Sophia hurriedly returned to her work.

'But wait! What was that?'

She checked the message again. Yes! It was what she thought it was.

Sophia had just turned a Millionaire!

One of her life goals was accomplished. She was a millionaire at the age of 23.

Sophia couldn't help but think of that day, many years ago, when she stormed into her grandpa's house, crying dejectedly.

'I will never be able to learn gardening. No matter which plant I tend to, they all wilt and die,' Sophia cried hoarsely.

Her grandpa helped her calm down. A keen gardener, he wanted to teach her granddaughter how to grow plants and herbs of different varieties.

'Calm down, dear. Today, I will tell you a secret about expert gardening.'

Little Sophia beamed up instantly. 'Then I would also become as good as you? Would I win gardening competitions as you do?'

Grandpa chuckled and lovingly said, 'Oh, my little angel, you'd be a thousand times better than me.'

Then he became serious and looked around to ensure no one else was listening. Sophia was thrilled to be a part of a secret.

'Patience, discipline and perseverance,' he said in a conspiratory manner.

Little Sophia was bewildered. She didn't understand a word and vehemently expressed so.

Her grandpa took her to the garden and asked her, 'Sophie, can you tell me what the difference between the small plants and the big trees is?'

Sophia thought for a few moments and said, 'We only tend to the plants and not the trees. We pluck fruits from the trees.'

'Bravo!' Grandpa patted her back joyfully, making Sophia immensely happy.

'You are right. We need to tend to the plants until they grow big enough to take care of themselves. We can't expect plants to blossom flowers and grow fruits when they are young, so we need to keep looking after them till they grow big and strong.'

'Like I will become one day,' Sophia flexed her imaginary muscles.

'That you will, my dear. Now, like you need to be given meals on time so that you grow strong and mighty, these plants also need timely nutrition in the form of water and manure. And like you need to be groomed to stay hygienic and healthy, the plants also need pruning and weeding.'

That summer, Sophia grew five healthy plants. Her love for gardening blossomed just as the little plants tended by her, and she soon got to know a great deal about the plant species; thanks to her beloved grandpa.

Her grandpa also taught her something very valuable; the secret to growing one's own money-bearing plant.

He taught Sophia to start saving and investing little-by-little each month from her pocket money in mutual funds through SIPs (Systematic Investment Plans).

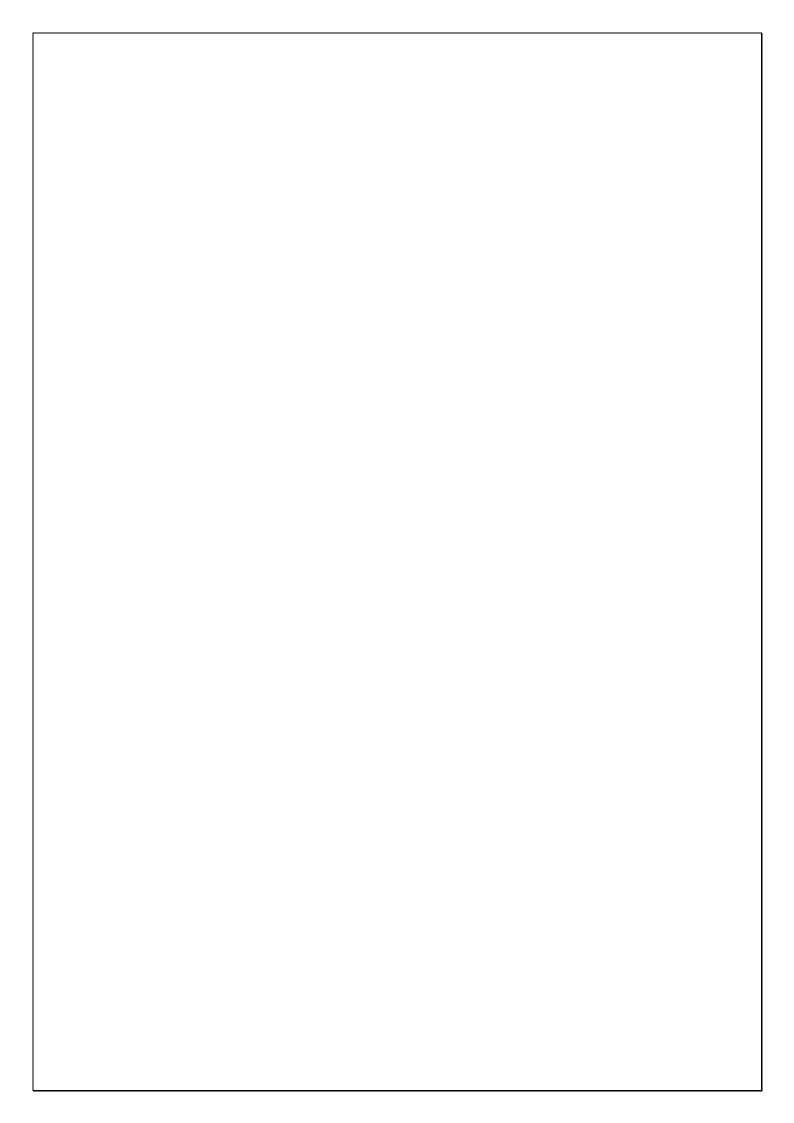
With the same patience, determination and perseverance she displayed in gardening, Sophia started to nurture her financial portfolio. Her grandpa kept guiding and encouraging her. Initially, it was difficult for Sophia to cut down her expenses and save money each month. But she soon learned to differentiate between her needs and wants and increased her SIP investment marginally. Her grandpa rewarded her with a 'top-up' in her portfolio, which soared the portfolio significantly.

Like her garden, Sophia meticulously grew her portfolio with a goal to be a millionaire before she turned 25 years. She achieved her goal two years earlier!

Ting! Her phone chimed again. It was a message from her bank. Her stipend was credited.

Sophia knew that her colleagues would stop working at that very moment to celebrate the salary or stipend credit; there will be hardly any work done for the rest of the day. They will make plans to spend the money on movies, eating out and other indulgences. They will blow it up and wait for the next month's salary or stipend to survive.

Thankfully, she was not bound to work for a living. Sophia loved her work, and that is why, after making a mental note to 'top-up' her portfolio with a major chunk from her stipend, she again dove into her work, smiling contently.



Parenting a teenage child is challenging as parents constantly worry about their child's future. The most important thing in any parent's mind during these agonizing years is the higher education of their children. From academic counselling to education fairs to scouting of universities, parents put all their strength in ensuring that their child gets admitted to a prestigious college. After all, a good education is insurance for a child's future success!

While it is true that a good education helps in landing a well-paying job, it is another matter how your child handles her money in the future. After all, the skill to earn money cannot negate the tendency to spend impulsively. Increasingly, youngsters are courting financial distress in the early years of their working life (remember Sophia's story?)

Nysa had been in a similar predicament. Let's see how she managed to get out of her troubles.



An intelligent and smart girl, Nysa was raised with love and care. Her parents saw that she gets everything she wanted and never shared their financial position with her. Soon after college, Nysa got admitted into a reputed MBA college, and subsequently, got a job in a large MNC. The job took her away from home to a different city. There, her living expenses were significant, but her fat salary covered them.

The trouble started when Nysa made a few friends from the office and would frequently go out with them to expensive clubs and restaurants, weekend trips and binge shopping. Soon, she reached a stage where the last penny from her salary would be spent days before the next credit. She used her credit card to cover up the expenses for those days. But soon enough, she was getting huge credit card bills that would take away a chunk of her salary, leaving her in a chronic cycle of debt. Her parents, too, were not able to help her as they had little left after investing in her expensive education.

Even with a fat salary, Nysa was unable to get out of the debt trap. At the same time, her childhood friend, Tanya, was not only planning her wedding but had also made the deposit on her new home.

But can this seemingly plausible future of your teenage child be reversed?

Well, yes, and that too, without much sweat!

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Let's look at what different happened in Tanya's life. Like Nysa, Tanya belonged to an educated, middle-class family with a similar economic background. Her parents, too, wished that Tanya received the best of education, and subsequently, a well-paying job (an engineer in an IT company, Tanya lived in the same city as Nysa and earned almost the same as her).

However, besides academics, Tanya's parents also stressed on financial literacy. They often discussed their financial position with Tanya and rewarded her for avoiding unnecessary expenditures and best utilizing her pocket-money. Tanya learned to distinguish between her needs and wants at an early age, which enabled her to make informed financial decisions. Tanya's parents played the parts of a life coach, a financial mentor and a guide in her life.

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When Tanya got to know about Nysa's financial crisis, she took over the situation. To begin with, she convinced Nysa to move out of the expensive flat and move in with her. This saved a lot of money for Nysa.

Next, Tanya apportioned a budget for Nysa's monthly expenses and asked her to stay away from impulsive online shopping. Within three months, Nysa's finances were back on track. Nysa sincerely thanked Tanya and asked her the secret behind living a financially independent life. Tanya told her what her parents had taught her when she was in school:

- Distinguish between Needs and Wants
- Invest before you spend
- Find a financial mentor

Tanya also told Nysa about investing in mutual funds through SIPs, where anyone can start investing from as low as Rs 500/- and benefit from the compounding effect and the volatile play of the market, provided the investment period is long (over ten years).

It turned out that Tanya's parents had started investing a little sum in mutual funds when she was just fourteen. Over the years, her parents increased the SIP amount and later, after getting the job, Tanya contributed an even higher sum each month. As a result, her portfolio grew handsomely, giving her the benefit of a second income.

To excel in academics or sports, we need a good teacher or coach. Similarly, to attain financial independence, students need a financial mentor. You could be the first financial mentor to your child and teach them the basic tenets of financial discipline.

In the previous nine chapters, we have shared with you the nine commandments to attain financial freedom through stories that many of you would find as your own. The last financial commandment deals with the rational, social and spiritual reasons behind wealth creation. So, let's discover with Travis why must one toil to create wealth.

Financial Commandment #10

Rich is not how much you have.

It is how much you give.

Travis stared intently at the spinning top whirling gracefully on his office desk. He used the top to calm his mind. Of late, there was something that perturbed him constantly; 'what's the end to accumulating wealth?'

At 45, Travis had a loving family, a successful business, unshakeable credibility and well-earned respect in the society. He also had about a billion rupees in his portfolio.

Uncle George, Travis' godfather, had started grooming him as his life coach and financial mentor when he was just ten years old. Much before his schoolmates began to speculate what their future would behold, Travis had already learned the tenets of financial discipline. He invested his pocket money in mutual funds through SIPs, and spent cautiously, always putting his needs before wants. Uncle George, who guided him financially, also contributed to Travis' SIPs.

Intelligent, hardworking and patient, Travis grew up with the rare privilege of choosing his career, as he did not need a salary to support himself.

Always fascinated with commercials, Travis opted for an MBA in Advertising from a reputed college and worked with top ad agencies before starting his own ad agency. His skill and love for his field helped the agency grow meteorically. All this while, he diligently invested substantial sums in mutual funds through SIPs.

Having nurtured the portfolio from a little sapling to a self-sustaining tree, Travis didn't stop investing. As a result, his portfolio kept growing at a remarkable pace and gave very high returns each month. The portfolio alone could have easily covered all of his household expenses had he decided to retire.

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Travis could see his portfolio growing exponentially, yet, it didn't give him a lot of pleasure. Having earned substantial wealth at a relatively young age, Travis did not know what he would do with all this money that he knew would keep growing!

Finally, to put his worries to rest, he did what he always did when in doubt. He called Uncle George.

Later that week, Travis drove to see his godfather, hoping to get the answers to the questions searing his mind.

'Uncle, you know how much my portfolio has grown. It is good, I know. But now that I am rich, I don't know what to do with all the money that keeps adding to my wealth,' Travis exclaimed.

Uncle George chuckled, hearing this.

'What makes you think that you are rich?' Uncle George smiled whimsically, clearly enjoying the session.

Travis was a bit surprised to hear the question. 'I am rich because I have a lot of money, Uncle. And I don't know what to do with more and more of it!'

Uncle George put an arm around Travis and said, 'Dear Travis, rich is not what you have, but what you give.'

Travis was befuddled, and he didn't attempt to hide his confusion.

Uncle George explained to him that having the resources to help others was a rare gift.

'Travis, long back, as a little child, you planted a money plant and took great care of it. Now it is a full-fledged tree that keeps bearing fruits. Of course, you don't need all the fruits for yourself or your family. They are simply too many for you!'

Travis nodded in comprehension as the wise old man added, 'Eating up all the fruits was never the plan! Being able to earn enough to freely help your community was the whole point right from the beginning.'

Uncle George told Travis that he had been contributing to key environmental and social causes without having to worry about his financial position.

'See, Travis, I live in style and have ever-growing wealth that not only takes care of my family but also allows me to give back to society and our nation.'

Hearing his mentor, Travis felt his mind widening its horizons to new possibilities.

'Yes, this is what my life had been building until now. How many times had I thought of helping others? Now, I can.'

Travis found his calling in life. As he hugged Uncle George before leaving, the old man whispered in his ears, 'Son, one man CAN make a difference.'

Now that you have learnt about the ten financial commandments, ask yourself if you 'want' to become rich or are you 'committed' to grow rich. Both phrases may sound similar, but there is a huge difference; if you commit yourself to a goal, there is no scope for excuses, whereas, if you merely want or wish something, you will always entertain excuses. Dear reader, if you are ready to commit yourself to financial independence and wealth creation, take the following pledge solemnly.

The Financial Pledge

I, hereby, take the pledge to contribute to my nation's progress,

By improving my and my family's financial standing.

I realize that no parent, teacher or government

Can provide me with financial freedom.

Only I, and I alone, would have to build and secure my fortune

Through financial discipline and regular investments.

I take the pledge to put my needs before my wants,

And commit to investing before spending,

Creating ever-growing wealth by investing little by little.

I take the pledge to attain Financial Freedom,

So that I never work for money, but let the money work for me.

I promise myself to be wealthy and financially disciplined,

And be worthy of building my nation and helping my countrymen.

Epilogue:

With money comes power. Yes, you, too, can become powerful by accumulating wealth using the financial commandments mentioned in this book. However, it is up to you how you utilize that power. Would you wish to use that power to satisfy your personal whims and fancies? Or would you leverage that power to help those in need and uplift the downtrodden?

The choice is yours. What matters the most is how the balance sheet of your life stands when it is time to say *adjeu*.

Ever thought what the balance sheet of your life says at this moment?

Let's find out with this simple exercise. In the table below, there are two columns; Assets and Liabilities. Write down all that is good in your life (cue: your health, love, family, good lifestyle, etc.) under the Assets column. Now, list down things that you find missing in your life under the Liabilities column. Give yourself half an hour to complete the exercise. And be honest!

Exercise:

Assets	Liabilities	

Are you done? How many items have you listed under Assets and how many under Liabilities?

Classify the items under the Liabilities column as *needs* and *wants*. Not having shoes to go to school is a *need*, not having a pair of branded sneakers to flaunt is a *want*.

Before we move forward, have a look at the Assets side once again and thank the person who has provided you with all the blessings in your life.

And that's how you say a prayer! Counting your blessings and being grateful for the good things in life fills you with positivity.

Try praying every morning for 21 days and witness positivity filling all aspects of your life!

Let's have a look at the liabilities side now. What did you find? Aren't more than 90% of your liabilities mere desires that you wish to pursue? Aren't most of the things that you *need* for a happy existence already in your life?

Count your blessings and thank the almighty once again.

You would have always heard how spirituality is different from materialism, or those who seek spiritual elevation must shun the material world and never think about worldly concepts such as money.

In my experience, I have found that the way to spirituality leads from the road of materialism.

You are well prepared to give only when you have!

Can you help a poor child in getting a good education and a dignified lifestyle when you are struggling to pay your bills?

Can you participate in dialogues and movements to better shape your nation when you slog hours to pay the EMIs?

Can you envision a bright future for your children when you are in financial shackles?

Take the reins of your life in your hands and begin your journey to wealth creation by taking sure steps. By growing rich, you not only make a difference in your life but also become capable of transforming the lives of many others.

And when others pray for you, that's when you experience heaven on earth.

About the Author Dr. Celso Fernandes is a prominent financial advisor and mentor known for his constant efforts in spreading financial literacy. Fondly referred to as the Financial Doctor of Goa, Dr. Fernandes has dedicated his life towards helping students achieve financial independence early in life. The author of much-loved books, 'Who Says Money Doesn't Grow on Trees,' 'Insuring Wealth & Peace of Mind,' and 'Don't Chase Money, Let Money Chase You,' Dr. Fernandes also helms Nave Marg Foundation, a charitable organization that works tirelessly towards improving the sanitation and infrastructure of schools, and conserving the environment.