

# Money Coaching for Individuals

***Dennis Harhalakis is a Certified Money Coach and founder of Cambridge Money Coaching. With over 25 years' experience in financial services, he set up Cambridge Money Coaching to help people understand and manage the money in their lives. Money Coaching is a framework that helps people to understand how they think and behave around money, so they can make better decisions, communicate in healthy ways, and reduce anxiety and other negative emotions. He works with individuals and couples, and professionals who handle client finances.***

## **How do we learn about money?**

Money runs through every aspect of our lives, but we are never taught how to develop our relationship with it. In fact, most of us have never been shown how to understand or manage the money in our lives. Instead, we muddle through life with a set of patterns and behaviours that originated in childhood as we absorbed money messages from the people around us and the broader cultural environment. Our financial lives have become increasingly complex and many decisions require thoughtful planning and consideration. But our behaviour around money is mainly sub-conscious and driven by emotion, and often we don't understand what is behind it. Without guidance, we make mistakes and we often ask ourselves 'Why is this so hard?' or 'Why can't I do this?' And sometimes we even think there must be something wrong with us.

## **What do you mean by my relationships with money?**

Most of the conversations around money and financial literacy are framed as issues of numeracy. If only there was more information or education, people would make better decisions. And while that's not wrong, it's only half of the story. Thinking about money can make people feel anxious, happy, guilty or ashamed. So, it's not just about the numbers, there is something else going on that causes an emotional reaction. Your relationship with something will determine how that thing will make you feel. A healthy relationship is associated with positive emotions and feelings; an unhealthy relationship is the opposite. Understanding how your relationship with money works is key to understanding why it makes you feel the way you do. It's also totally normal for money to produce reactions and emotions. As well as affecting our sense of security, money is also woven into our feelings of

self-worth. And so thinking about money can trigger feelings of fear and feelings of inadequacy.

### **How do I get better with money?**

In order to get better at something, we need to understand how it works and then practice. Money is complex because it's not just about numbers, there is an emotional side to it that trips us up. So, the first thing to know is that having money issues is totally normal. Don't judge yourself because you can't do something that you have never been shown how to do. Managing finances isn't easy and our brains did not evolve to handle money. But you can teach yourself to get better with money, and the four key components to having healthy finances are:

- Spending less than you earn
- Learning how the financial system works
- Taking responsibility for your financial outcomes
- Not being overly influenced by trends in consumer goods and services

Each of these has a numerical component and an emotional component. And often it's the emotional component that blocks us; how we feel about ourselves and how we feel about money affects our ability to get better with money. How we feel about something is based on our beliefs and the stories we tell ourselves. When things go wrong or we struggle with our finances, we may say we are not good with money or numbers.

### **Changing your money mindset**

But feelings are not facts. We have all learned how to do things that we didn't believe we could do. If thinking about money makes you feel uncomfortable, that doesn't mean there's anything wrong with you. There are plenty of other things that make us feel uncomfortable. Look to what is behind the discomfort and see if you can change the story or belief that is there. Ask yourself 'Is it true?' or 'Is it just something I believe?' The other question to ask is whether what you believe is helping you or preventing you from being good with money. Changing how you feel about money, and how you feel about money and yourself, will change your finances. Discomfort around money doesn't mean that you can't get better at managing your finances, but it does mean you will need to look at the emotional component as well as the numerical component.

### What help is available?

At Cambridge Money Coaching we help people to understand and manage the money in their lives. To find out more about how money coaching can help **you**, please visit us [here](#):

**Cambridge Money Coaching was set up to give people guidance on all aspects of money and finding financial peace of mind. We help people and organisations to develop behaviours that support understanding and healthy communication around money and create financial wellbeing.**

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