

Financial Literacy In Schools And At Home

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Women in leadership have come a long way and today they have a voice in government, more equality in the workplace and hold positions as heads of corporations while still fulfilling their roles as mothers and wives. One financial educator said that when it comes to the subject of money it seems as if women retract into the dark ages.

Generally speaking there are three categories of women that quiver at the “M” word. First there are the ladies in waiting. They are looking for Prince “**deep pocket**” to sweep them of their financial feet. They believe that this generous man will fall on his knees begging to pay off their debts. Once the debt monster has been trussed up and ready for disposal and they will get married, live happily ever after-in a big house, with lots of money, with two kids half a dog and a cat.

Second, there is the newly wed who says, ***“I’ll tell you what - we’ll pool our money and you can give me an allowance. You take care of the bills and investments and I’ll...just concentrate on spending.”***

Lastly there are those ladies who have worked hard to get a career and in some cases may have even surpassed

their spouse’s income. But somewhere they have bought into the idea that the man in their life can do a better job. So he gets to play investor-investor with some doing a great job. But what happens if every time you accumulate some money he decides that he can’t possibly live with his old and decrepit two-year-old car because his image is suffering. So he convinces you to let him by the 4X4 because the boys at the club are feeling sorry for him. Say bye-bye to retirement and hello to the part-time sales job at the local clothing store. As the saying goes, ladies need to take control of their finances or be controlled.

I was even more surprised when talking with a teacher who is passionate about financial literacy; she gets the distinct impression from girls in school today that they still espouse some of the traditional thinking that someone will take care of them - daddy, husband, sugar daddy, or whoever. She said that she senses a very lax attitude that seems to say, ***“It will all be okay in the end since someone will take care of me.”***

Financial literacy is the one skill that affects all other areas of life yet it still receives too little attention in schools and in homes today. One highly skilled asset manager said to me that he believes children should not be asked to take scientific calculators to school but that they should rather get financial calculators. Working out the sine and cosine, square roots and tangents have only limited application



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in real life. Calculations which are far more relevant to the modern world and which will help people make more informed life choices are working out the repayment on a mortgage bond or hire purchase agreement, or calculating the compound growth on my monthly savings.

Working out the internal rate of return on your money and calculating how much interest you are losing by buying a doodad or gadget instead of saving the money is more important in the long run for a secure financial

future. Schools and educators have a huge responsibility for the future of our children, and since they have limited time resources, time needs to be spent on subject matter that is as relevant to real life as possible. Its good to see that classes and activities like entrepreneurial days are starting to cover financial literacy, but I believe that there is still room for improvement in creating an awareness and exposure on this subject.