

Freshening up your financial horizons

Spring is that lovely time of the year, lambs bouncing around, daffodils budding and the icing on the cake has to be when we can put our winter coats back to the rear of the wardrobe! Financially speaking, folks have been weathering many winter storms in recent times. Markets haven't performed to the level they did over the covid years, mortgage rates have risen, the cost of living has radically increased and I could go on and make us all depressed. However, like the season of spring – I am an eternal optimist, ultimately believing better times are coming and I wanted to give you a couple of things to be thinking about at this time of regrowth for exactly where you are now:

If you feel like you are just Starting Out, maybe you have recently joined the workforce, yet to get on the property ladder or still figuring out your financial goals and where you really want to be. In my humble professional opinion, your future depends on the financial habits you create now. Initially it will be a chore, start off by getting into the swing of looking at what you spend every pay cycle, know where your money is going and set up accounts aligned to your goals – be it to purchase property, invest or save for a major event. It's what you do consistently that counts, setting up regular payments towards your goals every time you get paid makes a difference. Living within your means is key and remembering doing something is always better than doing nothing.



The next phase you might identify with is In the Grind. You are literally in the thick of it, juggling mortgage payments and never-ending expenses and wondering when it will ever end. Often when I see clients who feel like it's one step forward and two steps back, it is a matter of coming up for air and reviewing your cash management, rather than ignoring it and feeling hopeless. Start to think in decades rather than days, look at your current financial position and talk to an expert about your next steps. Do you have equity to leverage for a rental to add to your longer-term retirement goals? Is there wriggle room to rapidly paydown your mortgage by doing a deep dive and reviewing your expenses? Organising your 'Plan B' in the worst case if you are unable to work due to a health issue or someone passes on, can de-stress the 'what if' thoughts that we often obsess over.

Finally, you take a moment and realise you are Financially Stable. You still may be paying a mortgage; however, you have a surplus and are saving regularly or you have retired comfortably. You are now in a financial position to think in decades rather than days. You now have the luxury to plan when you retire or how you will spend your retirement. Again, is there an opportunity to maximise what you have accumulated moving forward with diversified investments and organised estate planning? Know your time frames - what you will need and for how long and again you will benefit from engaging a professional to map out what you want. Too often people accumulate wealth and then fail to enjoy their efforts due to health reasons, don't let that be you. There is a balance, don't aim for perfection, aim for meaningful financial choices.

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