

**Four Steps to a New (Money) Attitude**  
**By Tana Ackerly Gildea, author of *The Graduate's Guide to Money***

Perhaps *America Saves Week* is your inspiration for making some changes in your life and in your savings plan. That's awesome! I know there are a lot of tips and tricks for adding a bit more savings to your bank account, and I recommend that you find those and pick one thing that you can do today to increase your savings.

But beyond the tips and tricks is the emotional and mental money clutter that may be holding you back or weighing you down so as you look for practical ways to boost your savings, let's also look at four steps you can take *today* to sweep out some of your emotional money baggage.

**1. Tell the truth - to yourself and your spouse**

Now is the time to 'fess up and get it all out in the open. If there are bills and credit card balances, let's pull out those statements, log in to those accounts, and face the truth. You can't get to where you want to go if you don't know where you are. Admitting to mistakes and short-comings is the first step to healing, redemption, and a new action plan.

**2. Take responsibility for where you are**

As you look at your savings accounts and your debts, you just have to own where you are and what the situation is. Even if the other person did the spending, you did the avoiding, the looking the other way or the abdicating of responsibility. If you didn't take an active role, at least monthly, in reviewing and monitoring spending, account balances and debt, you abdicated, avoided or denied. You are still responsible for your inaction. If you fell asleep in the backseat, don't blame him that you woke up in Canada when you wanted to go to Mexico! Wake up! Look at the map! Help navigate!

This applies even if you are single. You choose to look the other way when the statements came or when the savings didn't happen. You choose not to actively make a plan for your financial life and you just "let it happen." You got in the car and just started driving without a map or destination in mind. That was then, and now you are awake and alert and ready to.....

**3. Forgive**

Forgive yourself for mistakes, bad judgment, ignorance, apathy, spending, ignoring, avoiding, materialism, greediness, and other grave financial sins. Forgive your spouse for all of the above. To paraphrase Maya Angelo, *when you know better, you do better*. You may not have paid attention in the past but today is a new day! Now you are ready to turn it around and seize control. You cannot move forward if you are anchored to past mistakes, so LET IT GO!! Forgive and...

**4. Change your perspective**

There is no more blaming - you and your spouse are one economic unit. You both have equal responsibility for your financial health and well-being. Instead of seeing your spouse as trying to control you, limit you, or take away from you, view your participation and "frugality" as a gift that you give to the person you love. There is no greater gift than financial peace-of-mind whether you have a partner or not. Everyone should be determined to chart their financial course, define their ideal financial life, and create a step-by-step plan to move toward that life.

View a spending plan as a framework *for helping you get everything that you ever dreamed of* and a way of eliminating all of the “trash and trinkets” that are taking away from your big dreams. Start seeing the shiny objects that are vying for your attention (and your money) as obstacles to what you truly want and create a plan to get those things out of your way so that you can focus on the big dreams – a home, travel, financial security – whatever the most important aspects of your life may be. Make a plan to fund the big goals, be willing to save for them, and have the determination to continue to move slowly, step-by-step, month-by-month, little-by-little toward them.

### **Then What?**

These 4 steps are not "one and done." It's not "paint the house;" pfew, that's done for 5 years. It's the laundry; it's done for today but tomorrow or the next day, sweaty, smelly clothes will reappear. You can't avoid the truth, the responsibility, the forgiveness, or the change in perspective any more than you can ignore those nasty workout clothes. If you do, you get the same result - a big smelly mess!

Understand that there will be mistakes and missteps so frequently tell the truth, accept responsibility, forgive, and think about the new perspective of embracing opportunities to save for the big, important things and push aside the little distracting things. Keep looking for those tips and tricks to save here and save there and keep revising, reviewing, and revisiting the plan. Old habits die hard so be gentle on yourself and your spouse and try, try again. Saving is a process that happens over time. Changing behaviors, habits and attitudes is a process as well. If you keep at it, you will find yourself with a healthier savings account and a new money attitude before you know it.

### **Author's bio:**

Tana has worked full-time in corporate American, in small businesses, and in the home as the mother of four as well as being a volunteer with PTA, Girl Scouts, and more sports teams than she can count.

She joined the partnership at Compass Financial Consulting, LLC in January 2014 and serves as the Chief Compliance Officer as well as managing the administrative aspects of the business. She is a CFP®, a CPA, and a Certified College Planning Specialist.

She wrote her first book, *The Graduate's Guide to Money*, in 2014 to pass along some money fundamentals to the next generation. The book was selected as a 2014 USA Best Book Award finalist, received a Notable Indie Book award from Shelf Unbound and an Honorable Mention Nonfiction General award from the New England Book Festival. Her website is [www.graduatesguidetomoney.com](http://www.graduatesguidetomoney.com).

Headshot available upon request.

Thanks,

*Tana*

My book, *The Graduate's Guide™ to Money* is now available.

*Building a Business, Building a Life* is also available and both can be purchased at

[www.graduatesguidetomoney.com](http://www.graduatesguidetomoney.com)

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