



GUIDE FOR MONEY MENTORS – USING “MY MONEY STORY.”

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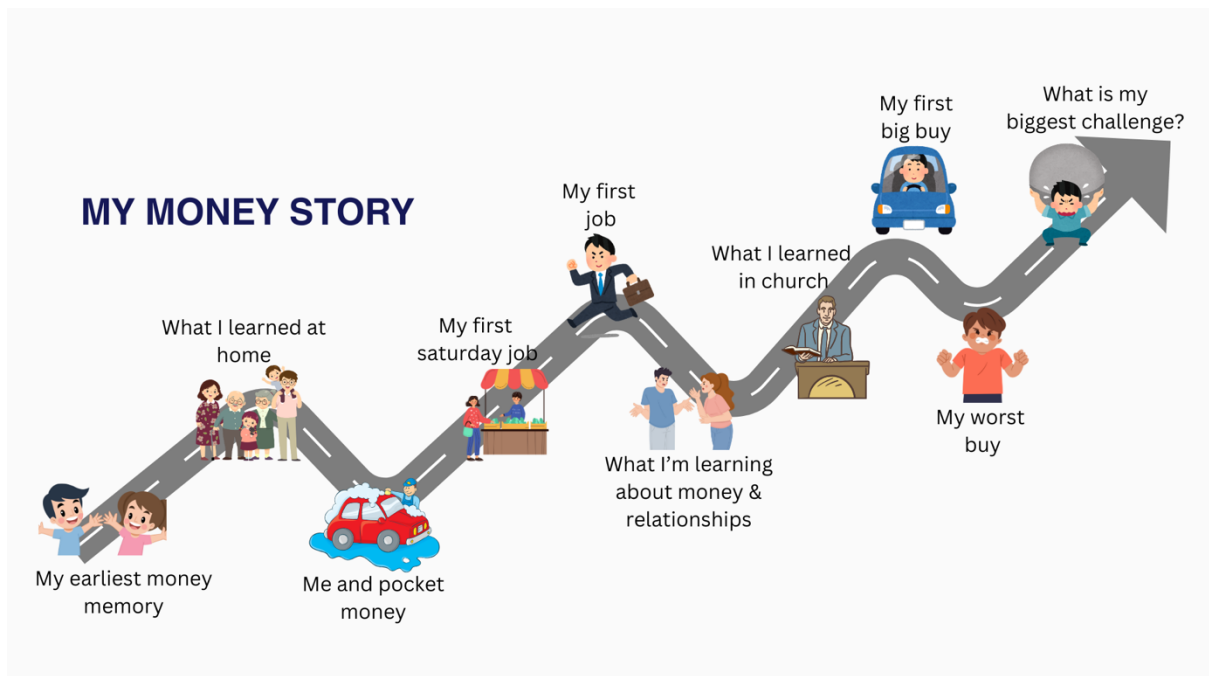
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Writing “My Money Story” is a valuable tool for self-discovery. It offers insight into how our past experiences, emotions, and family influence our financial habits. By reflecting on this narrative, individuals can better understand their relationship with money, identify unhealthy patterns, and create a more intentional and balanced financial life. This exercise helps people manage their money better and enables them to understand themselves more fully, paving the way for personal growth and financial empowerment.



1. Why Write “My Money Story”?

Whether we consciously realise it or not, we all have a story with money. Our financial journeys are filled with moments that shape our attitudes, whether it's the lessons we learned from our parents, the stress of financial struggles, or the satisfaction of achieving financial milestones. Yet, many people never take the time to pause and consider how these experiences have influenced their financial habits and mindset. Writing your money story brings those experiences to the forefront, helping you create a story that can guide your future financial decisions with more intention and awareness.

1. Uncovering the Root of Financial Behaviours

Every action we take with money has an origin—whether it's an impulsive purchase, a strict savings habit, or the anxiety we feel when thinking about our financial future. Writing down your money story allows you to trace back the origins of these behaviours. For many, their relationship with money is formed in childhood, influenced by their family's financial situation, cultural attitudes, or early experiences with earning and spending money.

For example, someone who grew up in a home where money was scarce might develop an unconscious habit of hoarding money or fearing financial instability, even when they are doing well financially. On the other hand, someone raised in a more affluent environment may not have learned the discipline of saving, believing that money is always available. Reflecting on these roots through storytelling can help us understand why we handle money the way we do.

2. Identifying Emotional Triggers

Money isn't just a neutral tool for transactions; it's deeply tied to our emotions. Writing “My Money Story” helps uncover the emotional triggers that influence financial decisions. These triggers can range from feelings of guilt when spending on oneself, anxiety about bills, or even the rush of excitement from making a large purchase.

When we pause to reflect on why we feel certain ways about money, we start to understand how emotions can steer our financial decisions in both positive and negative directions. For instance, someone who feels deep anxiety about debt might avoid looking at their bank account altogether, leading to financial neglect. Conversely, someone who ties their self-worth to their income may be overly focused on earning and spending, sometimes at the cost of personal relationships or health. Writing down these emotional responses and exploring their origins provides clarity and helps us manage our feelings more effectively when making financial decisions.

3. Understanding Money's Role in Personal Identity

Our relationship with money is closely tied to how we see ourselves and our identity. For many, money represents more than just a medium of exchange—it can symbolise success, security, freedom, or even self-worth. Through writing “My Money Story,” individuals can reflect on the deeper meanings they've assigned to money and how these perceptions shape their behaviour.

For example, some people might see money as a sign of achievement and view their financial success as a reflection of their value as a person. This can lead to overworking or constantly striving for more wealth, often at the expense of rest or relationships. Others may view money as a source of security, which can lead to a tendency to save excessively and avoid taking any financial risks, even when those risks could lead to growth or opportunity.

By understanding money's role in our identity, we gain insight into what truly motivates us in our financial decisions. This awareness can then help us find a healthier balance between our personal values and financial goals, allowing us to redefine what money means to us.

4. Breaking Generational Patterns

Many of our financial habits and beliefs are inherited from our families. Whether we realise it or not, the way our parents or caregivers handled money often leaves a lasting impression on how we approach our own finances. Writing “My Money Story” provides a space to examine the generational patterns we may have unconsciously adopted and assess whether they are serving us well.

For instance, if a mentee realises that their family has a history of being financially risk-averse, they might come to see how this has influenced their own fear of investing or trying new financial strategies. Similarly, someone might recognise that they've inherited a tendency to live beyond their means or avoid talking about money altogether. By uncovering these generational patterns, individuals can begin to break free from unhelpful behaviours and create a new financial narrative for themselves and future generations.

5. Creating Financial Awareness and Accountability

Writing “My Money Story” fosters greater financial awareness, making individuals more conscious of their financial habits and decisions. Often, we go through life making financial choices out of habit or convenience, without fully understanding the long-term impact those decisions might have on our future. Reflecting on past financial experiences helps people identify patterns of behaviour that may be hindering their financial progress, such as overspending, avoiding money conversations, or failing to plan for the future.

Additionally, by writing down and sharing their money stories, people become more accountable for their financial actions. Storytelling makes the abstract concrete, allowing people to see the consequences of their financial behaviour in a clearer light. This can inspire individuals to take ownership of their finances, set goals, and make more informed, intentional decisions in the future.

6. Healing Financial Wounds

For many, financial experiences are neutral events and moments of profound emotional impact. Whether it's losing a job, facing significant debt, or experiencing a major financial setback, these events can leave emotional scars. Writing your money story can be therapeutic, allowing individuals to process and heal from past financial wounds.

By expressing these experiences, individuals can begin to let go of the shame, guilt, or fear that may be holding them back. This healing process can lead to a healthier, more positive relationship with money, as individuals learn to forgive themselves for past mistakes and move forward with a renewed sense of purpose and control over their finances.

2. Biblical Examples

Writing "My Money Story" can be profoundly enriched by examining biblical narratives that highlight the complexities of our relationship with money. Two compelling examples are the Parable of the Prodigal Son and the story of the Rich Young Ruler, both of which provide valuable insights into personal financial journeys and the lessons that can be gleaned from them.

1. The Prodigal Son (Luke 15:11-32)

In this well-known parable, Jesus tells the story of a young man who demands his inheritance from his father and squanders it on reckless living. The Prodigal Son's journey serves as a cautionary tale about the consequences of poor financial decisions and the importance of understanding one's relationship with money. After experiencing hardship and loss, he comes to his senses and returns home, reflecting on his actions and their repercussions.

Writing "My Money Story" allows individuals to reflect on their financial decisions and the lessons learned from their experiences. Just as the Prodigal Son ultimately seeks reconciliation and redemption, we, too, can explore our financial missteps and recognize how they shape our understanding of stewardship and responsibility. This process fosters a sense of humility and growth, encouraging us to align our financial choices with our values and seek forgiveness and restoration where necessary.

- **What lessons about financial responsibility could the Prodigal Son have learned from observing his father's stewardship of the family estate?**
Reflecting on his father's management of resources might have encouraged him to appreciate the value of money.
- **How might the Prodigal Son's understanding of the consequences of spending beyond one's means have altered his choices?**
If he had grasped the dangers of impulsive spending, he might have made different financial decisions.
- **What role did family values and discussions about money play in the Prodigal Son's understanding of wealth?**
Exploring how conversations about money in his family shaped his attitude towards it could offer insights into his choices.
- **How could the Prodigal Son have benefited from seeking financial wisdom from his father before leaving?**

If he had asked for advice or guidance, it might have helped him make more informed decisions regarding his inheritance.

- **What experiences or teachings about generosity and sharing could have influenced the Prodigal Son's approach to spending?**

Understanding the importance of generosity may have led him to use his resources more wisely and compassionately.

2. The Rich Young Ruler (Mark 10:17-27)

The story of the Rich Young Ruler offers a contrasting perspective on wealth and attachment to material possessions. When the young man approaches Jesus, asking how he can inherit eternal life, he is told to sell all he has and give to the poor. This request reveals the young man's struggle with his attachment to wealth, ultimately leading him to walk away saddened.

This narrative invites us to examine our own relationships with money and the potential barriers that wealth can create in our spiritual lives. By writing "My Money Story," individuals can confront their attachments and the influence of materialism on their decisions. Reflecting on this story helps illuminate the need for a balanced approach to money, reminding us that financial resources should be used to serve others and advance God's kingdom. It encourages us to identify areas where we may be holding back, challenging us to embrace a life of generosity and purpose.

- **What financial principles, such as saving, investing, or giving, might the Rich Young Ruler have learned from his upbringing?**

Examining his background could reveal valuable lessons he missed that would have shaped a healthier relationship with wealth.

- **How might the Rich Young Ruler's understanding of the transient nature of material wealth have influenced his choices?**

He might have been more willing to part with them for greater spiritual gain if he had recognised that material possessions can be fleeting.

- **In what ways could the Rich Young Ruler have benefited from conversations about the importance of generosity and helping others?**

Engaging in discussions about altruism might have encouraged him to view wealth as a tool for service rather than a source of status.

- **How could the Rich Young Ruler's attachment to his possessions have clouded his ability to see the value of investing in eternal treasures?**

Reflecting on his priorities may have helped him realise that spiritual fulfilment surpasses material wealth.

- **What teachings about the relationship between wealth and spiritual growth could the Rich Young Ruler have integrated into his financial mindset?**

Understanding that true wealth lies in spiritual richness could have prompted him to reevaluate his priorities and choices.

The Prodigal Son and the Rich Young Ruler illustrate crucial lessons about money, stewardship, and personal growth. Writing "My Money Story" in light of these biblical narratives encourages us to reflect on our financial decisions, recognise our attachments, and seek alignment between our values and our financial actions. Through this process, we can cultivate a deeper understanding of our relationship with money, leading to greater financial wisdom and spiritual fulfilment.

3. How to start writing “My Money Story.”

Here's a step-by-step method to guide individuals through writing "My Money Story." This structured approach encourages reflection, exploration, and, ultimately, a deeper understanding of one's relationship with money.

Following this step-by-step method, individuals can write a comprehensive and personal “My Money Story” that provides insights into their financial behaviours, beliefs, and aspirations. This reflective process fosters self-awareness and empowers individuals to take charge of their financial future.

Step 1: Set the Stage

- Find a Comfortable Space: Choose a quiet, comfortable place to write without distractions.
- Gather Materials: Use a notebook, journal, or digital document to capture your thoughts. You might also consider using coloured pens or highlighters for visual interest.
- Create a Relaxed Atmosphere: Light a candle, play soft music, or enjoy a warm beverage to create a conducive environment for reflection.

Step 2: Reflect on Your Early Experiences with Money

- Childhood Memories: Think back to your earliest memories of money. What was your family's attitude towards money?
- Key Experiences: Identify specific events or moments that stand out—such as receiving your first allowance, learning to save, or experiencing financial hardship.
- Writing Prompt: Begin by writing a paragraph or two about your first experiences with money and how they shaped your understanding of finances.

Step 3: Explore Your Family's Financial Habits

- Family Influences: Consider how your parents or caregivers managed money. Were they savers, spenders, or somewhere in between?
- Lessons Learned: Reflect on the lessons you learned about money from them—both positive and negative.
- Writing Prompt: Write about how your family's financial habits have influenced your own beliefs and behaviours around money.

Step 4: Identify Your Money Beliefs and Attitudes

- **Current Beliefs:** What do you believe about money today? Consider aspects like wealth, saving, spending, debt, and generosity.
- **Emotional Connections:** Explore how you feel when you think about money. Are there specific emotions that arise, such as fear, excitement, or guilt?
- **Writing Prompt:** Write a few paragraphs describing your current beliefs and feelings about money. Consider how these may have changed over time.

Step 5: Reflect on Significant Financial Events

- **Key Financial Milestones:** Identify significant events in your financial journey—such as graduating, buying a car, or experiencing a job loss.
- **Impact Assessment:** Reflect on how these events impacted your financial situation and mindset.
- **Writing Prompt:** Write a narrative of one or two significant financial events, focusing on what you learned and how it shaped your current relationship with money.

Step 6: Analyze Your Current Money Habits

- Spending Patterns:** Examine your spending patterns closely. Are there areas where you tend to overspend or underspend?
- **Saving and Investing:** Reflect on your saving and investing habits. Are you comfortable with these aspects, or do you tend to avoid them?
 - **Writing Prompt:** Write a paragraph or two analysing your current money habits. Highlight any patterns or behaviours you'd like to change.

Step 7: Identify Emotional Triggers and Challenges

- **Triggers:** Consider what situations or emotions trigger specific financial behaviours. For example, do you overspend when feeling stressed?
- **Challenges:** Identify any financial challenges you face regularly, such as budgeting difficulties or fear of investing.
- **Writing Prompt:** Write about your emotional triggers related to money and the challenges you encounter in managing your finances.

Step 8: Envision Your Financial Future

- **Goals:** Think about your financial goals. What do you hope to achieve in the short and long term?
- **Values Alignment:** Consider how these goals align with your personal values and life vision.
- **Writing Prompt:** Write a paragraph or two describing your financial goals and how they reflect your values. What steps can you take to achieve these goals?

Step 9: Craft Your Narrative

- Organise Your Thoughts: Review your notes and reflections for common themes or insights. Create a Flow: Structure your story so that it flows logically from early experiences to current habits and future goals.
- Writing Prompt: Begin crafting your money story by weaving together the insights from previous steps. Aim for a narrative that reflects your journey with money.

Step 10: Reflect and Revise

- Take a Break: Step away from your writing for a few hours or days to gain a fresh perspective.
- Revisit Your Story: Read through your narrative and reflect on its completeness and coherence.
- Revise and Edit: Make any necessary edits or additions to ensure your money story resonates with you. Consider sharing it with a trusted friend or mentor for feedback.

Step 11: Set Intentions for Change

- Action Steps: Based on your reflections, identify specific actions you can take to improve your financial habits and align them with your values.
- Commit to Change: Write down your intentions and commit to taking actionable steps toward achieving your financial goals.
- Writing Prompt: Write a closing statement or paragraph that outlines your intentions for your financial future. This statement should serve as a motivating reminder of your journey and aspirations.

Step 12: Share Your Story

- Community Sharing: If you are comfortable with it, consider sharing your money story with a supportive community, such as a workshop, a friend, or a blog.
- Encourage Others: Sharing your journey can inspire others to reflect on their own relationship with money and spark meaningful conversations.
 - Reflection: After sharing, reflect on the experience and any new insights gained from the feedback or discussions.

4. My Money Story Worksheets

Here is an illustration help reflect on “My Money Story.”

Imagine your financial journey as a roadmap, illustrating the various stages of life you navigate, each marked by distinct experiences, lessons, and decisions. This visual representation is a powerful reminder of how our relationships with money evolve over time.

The foundation is laid in childhood, with early lessons learned from parents, caregivers, and the financial environment around us. These formative years shape our beliefs about saving, spending, and the value of money. As we transition into adolescence and young adulthood, we encounter pivotal moments—earning our first allowance, saving for a cherished item, or perhaps taking on student loans. These experiences often teach us about responsibility and the importance of financial planning.

As we enter adulthood, our roadmap expands to include significant milestones: buying our first car, purchasing a home, or starting a family. Each stage brings new financial challenges and opportunities for growth, forcing us to adapt and reassess our financial goals.

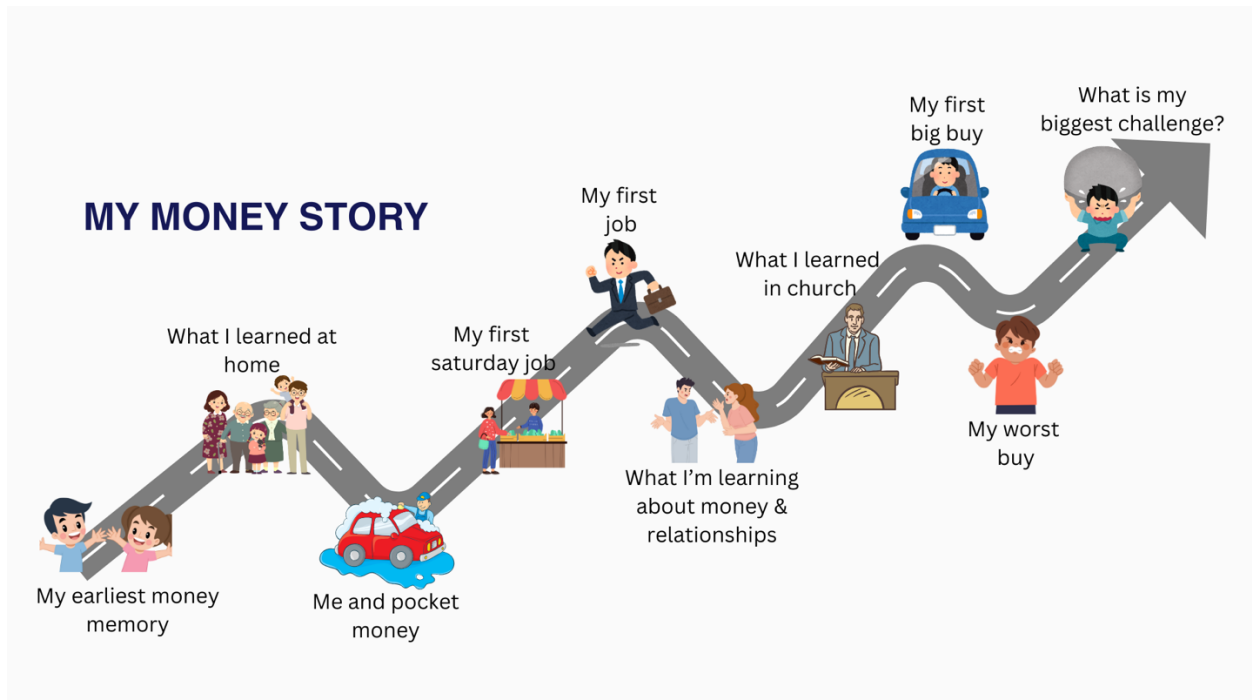
As we navigate through midlife and beyond, our journey might be marked by career advancements, retirement planning, or even helping the next generation manage their finances. Each phase reveals valuable insights about our priorities and values, allowing us to refine our approach to money.

Our money memories evolve as we age, shaped by the experiences that mark our financial journey. We might remember our parents arguing or worrying about finances, or how money was often considered a taboo topic at home. We can recall the thrill of earning pocket money or the excitement of spending our first week's wages. Other significant milestones might include the joy of purchasing that beat-up Mini or the anxiety surrounding our first major expense. There are also more challenging memories, such as dealing with redundancy, facing a debt crisis, or unexpectedly receiving a financial windfall.

These memories are like pieces of an unfinished jigsaw puzzle, each holding its own significance and context. As we begin to fit them together, we learn to articulate our money story, revealing the deeper meanings behind our experiences. This exploration invites us to reflect not only on the events themselves but also on how we felt at the time and the lasting impact those experiences had on us. By piecing together our financial memories, we unlock valuable insights that help us understand our current relationship with money and guide our future choices.

By illustrating "My Money Story" as a roadmap, we can better understand how our past influences our present, guiding us toward a more intentional and empowered financial future.

The Roadmap



Questions

Ask questions such as ...

- What are one or two of your earliest memories of money as a child? Are they funny or sad? Does it make you angry, resentful, or grateful?
- Was money talked about in your home or was it a taboo subject? Was money a cause of anxiety to you as a child? Does one particular memory stand out for you?
- Did you have pocket money? If so, did you earn it, or was it given to you?
- Did you work before leaving school? A Saturday job? A paper round? What did you like to spend your money on?
- What was your first job when you left school? How much did you earn? Do you remember what you spent the first week's wages on?
- In a relationship (a marriage, with a friend or a sibling, for example), do/did you and your partner have similar or different attitudes to money? What are/were the causes of tension and disagreement and how do/did you resolve them?
- What have you heard in church about money (a sermon, small group or a special project)? Has the church been influential in shaping your money story?
- Excluding a house, think of one big item you have bought. What was it and how did buying it make you feel?
- Have you ever regretted buying something? What made you do it?



Share your earliest money memories and how you felt about them.



How did you experience money matters while growing up at home?



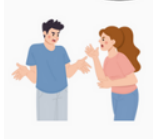
Did you earn pocket money, or was it given? How did you spend it?



Did you work while at school? How did you manage your money?



What was your first job? How did you manage your money?



What are you learning about money and relationships?



Did you learn anything from church about handling money?



What was your first big buy? Did you borrow or save for it?



What was your worst buy? How did you feel about it? Learn anything?



What is your biggest money challenge?