

VERY seldom do we hear of people asking us, "How is your relationship with your money?" It may seem a little intruding but honestly, if you are asked this question, how would you answer? Understanding your relationship with money is crucial in helping you to manage it wisely.

Your Relationship with Money

What about My Past?

To understand the kind of relationship you have with money, let's flashback to the time while you were growing up. More often than not, your perception about money was shaped by the adults around you. You probably picked up many feelings and ideas about money from your family.

If people in your family had to work very hard, you might think that making money means many jobs and long hours. If there were fights over money, you might feel that talking about money makes people angry or afraid. If your family had government assistance, you might feel sad, thankful or embarrassed. If you earned money as a child, you might feel good or bad. You might feel good about having your own money or helping your family. You might feel angry about needing to work.

What about today?

Sometimes you can find out how you feel about something by finishing an idea in your own words. Try to complete as many as you can and be aware of your feelings when you go through them:

1. It is easy for me to spend money on
2. It is hard for me to spend money on
3. I like earning money because
4. I worry about money when
5. I argue about money because
6. Saving money makes me feel
7. If I had enough money today, I would
8. Talking about money makes me



9. When I buy things I don't need, I
10. I don't know how to manage my money because

What about tomorrow?

The best way to plan for the future is to understand your past and your present. Knowing how you think and feel about money helps you ask important questions. Your answers can help you make good decisions. Try asking yourself the following questions and take some time to think through your answers.

- How much money is enough for my needs and wants?
- How can I earn the money I need?
- What about emergencies?
- What about all the things my family needs?
- How can I stop worrying about money?

How do Malaysians feel about Money?

You need to think about your past and how it affects you. You also need to understand the influence of the world around you.

Malaysians in general value

money. Very often, we see the lives of the rich and famous through the movies, reality TV, sports, newspapers and magazines. In addition, advertisers tell us to buy, buy and buy some more. A lot of people act like money makes them important. We start believing that "newer and bigger" is better. We forget to plan before we spend.

Our culture shapes what we think and what we do. Let's ask ourselves truthfully: Do we not think about famous people and wish we were like them? Do we not try to talk, dress or look like someone we admire? Do we not act like the characters we see on TV, in the movies or playing sports. Do we not buy things because we want to be like the people in the ads?

Why do People Want Money?

People want money so they can live. They want money to take care of themselves and their families. But people also want money because our culture tells us: Money makes you important. Money equals self-esteem. You are what you earn.

Our culture also tells us that owning lots of things will make

us happy. What we see and hear suggests that we can buy feelings. If we pay attention to all this hype, we can come up empty. We can end up without money or happiness.

What can money do or not do?

While our culture says money is the answer to all our problems, we also hear that money is bad: Money is the root of all evil. Money corrupts! Let's take a look at what can money do or not do:

- It can buy a house, but not a home.
- It can buy a bed, but not sleep.
- It can buy a clock, but not time.
- It can buy you a book, but not knowledge.
- It can buy you a position, but not respect.
- It can buy you medicine, but not health.
- It can buy you blood, but not life."

So you see, money isn't everything!

What can money get me today?

With money you can take care of food, shelter and clothing. Everyone needs these to live. You also use

money for services like healthcare, childcare, transportation, insurance and education. You need many of the things you have and the services you buy. Other purchases are wants – a new car, eating out, expensive clothes, vacations or just trying to keep up with our neighbours.

The key is not how much money you have but how you use it. You need to get your spending in line with your values. Your values are what's important to you. This takes planning and practice. Unless you use money as a tool, it can easily become a trap!

What can money do for my future?

The choices you make today can change your future. When you do any of the following, you are not just planning for next week, next month or next year but a lifetime:

- Choose to spend or not to spend.
- Save for emergencies or "rainy days".
- Learn new skills to get or keep a job.
- Pay off debts.
- Become a good credit risk so that you can get a loan for big things like a car or house.
- Show children and family the right uses of money.

There you have it! Until and unless you have a good relationship with money, you'll never be able to live with it. As the saying goes, "A fool and his money were soon parted." - **Agensi Kaunseling Dan Pengurusan Kredit**

