

THE ONE WEEK BUDGET

LEARN TO CREATE YOUR MONEY
MANAGEMENT SYSTEM IN 7
DAYS OR LESS!



THE BUDGETNISTA
(TIFFANY ALICHE)

Praise for *The One Week Budget*

“Sensible, professional, sophisticated, intelligent. These are just a few words to describe Tiffany. I call her the Suzie Orman of our generation! Her daily money tips are not only helpful, but extremely educational. I learn something new everyday! I would absolutely recommend her if you are serious about getting your finances in line.”

- **Jacqueline Nwobu, Publisher/Editor-in-Chief, *Munaluchi Bridal Magazine***

“Tiffany was the first person who gave me real advice on how I should manage my money. As a friend, she decided to share her opinion about why I should save. I never took this seriously until she brought it to my attention. Rarely do you meet "friends" who decide to look out for YOUR best interest. Her easy advice of saving 20% of your income made all the difference in my life. Real planning and self control has now given me the ability to buy my first house at age 27. I believe finance is equally as important as your health, and Tiffany made me realize this firsthand. I can't thank her enough...”

- **Chris Anokute, Senior Vice President, A/R Universal Motown Records**

“After making financial sacrifices to start my dream non-profit, *The One Week Budget* showed me how to transform pennies into dollars by making simple fiscally conscious decisions. The Budgetnista won't tell you how to make millions, she'll show you how to save the millions you already have... and her charismatic writing style will keep you laughing all the way to the bank!”

- **Diesa E. Seidel, Founding Director, United Initiatives for Peace**

“First and foremost: This book should be on EVERYONE's bookshelf! This should be the FIRST book anyone that wants to find his or her way to financial freedom reads. The budget process is mapped out in a way that everyone from the stay-at-home to mom-investor can use. The simple steps put the system in place, and will help the reader reach their long and short-term financial goals and objectives. Soon to be on multiple best-seller lists and well worth the one week!”

- **Chike Uzoka Founder, Valentine Global, LLC**

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To anyone who has ever asked me, "Tiffany, when is the book coming out?"
I finally have the answer. Thank you for your love, support, and suggestions.
God makes all things possible.

To my parents, Irondi and Sylvia Aliche.
You are the inspiration behind all that I strive for.
Thank you for setting the bar so high.

And to the Aliche Girls, "Sistars are doing it!"

Introduction

First, I want to say congratulations for trying to change your current financial situation. Even if you are here by force, the fact is that you are here! When trying anything new, education is the most important aspect of attaining success.

By beginning to educate yourself, you have taken the first step toward financial empowerment. It doesn't hurt that you chose me, The Budgetnista (humor me), to get you started. As you are well aware, there are thousands of books on real estate, stocks, mutual funds, entrepreneurship, and various other money-making pursuits. Like many of you, my thirst to learn more about money drove me to read many of these books. Admittedly, I read most of them for free at the bookstore. Most of those books assume that you already have a money management system in place and, let's be honest, you don't.

This is where I come into the picture. I want you to consider this book as the prerequisite to all other financial books. This book will teach you step-by-step how to manage your day-to-day finances, and all in one week! The ability to properly manage your own money is the first step in a long journey toward making your financial dreams a reality. I wrote this book because this is the book I wish I had read when I was beginning my own financial journey. I can distinctly remember it (cue the dream sequence music)...

I had recently graduated college, acquired my first real job, and just

moved out of my parent's home. Woo hoo! It was the first time in my life that I had complete financial responsibility for myself. I was scared, really scared. Although I was not frivolous with my money (unless you count my \$5 a week candy habit) I knew there had to be a better way to manage my finances. Until that point, the only knowledge I had about money was what I learned from my parents and by making my own mistakes along the way.

Despite my fear about managing money, I recognized how blessed I was: I was young, gorgeous (unrelated, I know) and I had no debt, sans a small student loan. I also grew up in a household where money management was openly discussed during family meetings (yeah). I was raised in the Northeast, one of the most expensive regions of the United States, yet my sisters and I lacked for nothing. (Although, I never did get that pony, but I'm so over that now.) My parents emigrated here from Nigeria and were far from rich. With hard work, they were successfully able to raise, provide for and fund college educations for themselves and five daughters. Through all of that, they still managed to lend assistance to family and friends in their native country.

My father, an accountant by trade turned executive director of a New Jersey-based nonprofit, has his MBA in business administration with a concentration in Finance. He taught my sisters and me about money on a daily basis, i.e. breaking down the cost of each toilet flush and warning us not to waste our flushes (true story)! We were held accountable for our financial choices like withdrawals made from our accounts, purchases, and any irresponsible credit card usage.

My mother, a nurse with her masters degree in nursing, taught me the practical side of money. From her, I learned about negotiating store discounts, buying in bulk, and eliminating unnecessary spending. She was truly a master haggler. I always feel sorry for the mere mortal salespeople that dare challenge her.

My parents always spoke openly and honestly about the state of our family's finances, whether good or bad. Through them I learned valuable lessons about money, life, and the obligation of service. They truly lived the mantra: "To whom much is given, much is required."

In 2001, I was just beginning to understand this statement—I knew that if I wanted to gain anything of value I must remember that it was not mine alone to keep (my favorite shoes excluded). I remember praying that if God would allow me to figure out the big mystery behind money, I would give back and share that knowledge to help other people. I took classes, read books, researched, and learned from those around me. I used what I learned to create a simple and systematic money management system called *The One Week Budget*.

My Journey

Like most students and Libras, I was indecisive and undeclared during the majority of my college career. When the time came to decide on a major, I chose what I perceived to be the "safe" route—business. I mean, you can work anywhere with a business degree right? So, I graduated with a BS in Business with a concentration in marketing. During my last year in school, I worked in the campus childcare center. It was there that I realized

how much I enjoyed teaching and hated business.

At first, I was scared to make a career change. I believed that as a teacher I would never make much money—aka I did not want to be broke. When I brought my concerns about money to my mother, she gave me some life-changing advice. She said, “No matter what you choose to do, do it well and to the best of your ability. Money will follow.”

I have lived my life by that pearl of wisdom. With age, I have come to realize that she didn't mean I'd become a millionaire being a teacher. What she meant was that I would always make enough money to realize my dreams. It's not how much money you make, it's what you do with it. We have all heard the stories of famous people making and losing dollars in a relatively short period of time. The lessons to learn from their misfortune is this: money is attracted to those who manage it well and lost by those who do not, and parachute pants are really not flattering on anybody! (Sorry, MC.)

After teaching for a few years, I began C.L.D. Financial Life LLC. CLD is an acronym for Control, Lead, and Develop. The company's objective is to teach individuals and communities how to successfully control, lead, and develop their finances. CLD Financial Life accomplishes this through personal finance consulting, financial fun parties, group seminars, and books on my website, www.thebudgetnista.com. CLD also offers free financial literacy programs in underserved communities. *The One Week Budget* system is the foundation that the company is built upon.

The Greek philosopher Plato said, "Necessity is the mother of

invention.” *The One Week Budget* started as a system I created because I needed an organized way to manage my money. Contrary to popular belief, I am not as organized as my finances suggest. Let's just say I leave my house keys in the front door overnight, more often than I'd like to admit. My system effectively took me out of the equation! This system has allowed me to never have a car note, and save \$40,000 in three years while only making \$35,000 a year. It provided a way for me to purchase my own home at age 25, with no help from "the parents." It has also allowed me to securely pay my mortgage on time in 2008 during a recession, which was time of unprecedented foreclosure rates and economic downturn. My *One Week Budget* system has also helped me, in conjunction with my sisters, to be able to send my parents on a lavish (my word, not theirs) vacation of their choice each year.

One of my favorite things to say is, "Since I moved out of my parents' home, I have never had a day of insurmountable financial hardship." I have taken on second jobs and cut luxuries when times have called for it, but I've done all this while maintaining "the fabulous." With my *One Week Budget* system in place, I have never worried about whether or not I was going to make it financially. I am not telling you all of this in an effort to brag or toot my own horn (toot, toot), I am simply illustrating how well this system works through the best example I know: myself. I have helped hundreds of amazing people through my company since I started sharing *The One Week Budget*. In fact, this book was originally written as a few quick steps in a notebook for a friend I was unable to sit down with to help.

After years of sharing my system in informal financial sessions with

my family, friends, coworkers, schools, and organizations, I have come to this end (or beginning)—my first book! I hope that through this book I can fulfill the promise I made to God to help financially empower others. My goal is to help you achieve a clearer understanding of how to skillfully manage your money. I know that the information in this book can do even more for you than it has for me. When it does, you can make the “thank you” check out to me, The Budgetnista. ☺

Enjoy,

Tiffany Aliche

Getting Started

A MUST READ

(Especially if you skipped my Intro and Journey)

Hate paying bills? So do I, and that's why I stopped! What if I told you that I haven't paid a bill in over a decade, and my credit score is in the high 700s to low 800s?

Would you call me a liar, or would you want to know how I did it? I will teach you what took me years to learn in just one week. It's an important financial lesson that we all need to understand. The lesson is: There is a magic about money.

What does that mean? When money is not planned for and tracked, it literally disappears, like magic. How many times have you asked yourself, "Where did my money go?"

The opposite of this is true as well. When money is documented and used wisely, it will inexplicably multiply for the skilled handler. This is why it is imperative that you have a physical system in place to keep track of your money if you wish to enjoy a financially stable life. *The One Week Budget* will show you how to successfully manage your finances, increase your credit score, lower your debt, and spend less than 30 minutes a month doing so. Do I have your attention yet?

How to Read This Book

I've made the steps in this book as easy to implement as possible.

There are 12 steps that can be completed over seven days. Each step contains:

1) A related anecdote featuring one of my clients (names have been changed and I'll never tell)

2) Directions about how to complete the step

3) An example of what the step looks like (The examples are the actual budget of a friend of mine, "Bella." I wanted you to be able to progress through my *One Week Budget* system alongside a real person.)

4) A condensed version of the day's Step(s) called The Easy Action Step(s) (Recap)

5) A blank template where you can fill in your own information

You can carry out the steps in one of two ways:

- Do them on a sheet of paper or spreadsheet as you read each step
- Wait until the end of the Day or Chapter and fill in your information in the blank template I've provided

I've written the book as if you are doing a combination of both options. Do what suits you best.

I have also included a bonus chapter in the back of the book that speaks directly to those of you who need help with your credit and help getting and staying debt free!!

To reap the full benefits of this book, I suggest that you first browse

through it without taking any action. Then, choose a week on your oh-so-busy calendar where you can dedicate yourself to reading the book and working on the steps each day.

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DAY ONE

Step 1 Create a List of Your Spending Habits

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Step 1: Create a List of Your Spending Habits: The Money List

There are only two mistakes one can make along the road to truth. Not going all the way, and not starting.—Buddha

I swear to tell the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth, so help me God.—United States Court System

Me, Myself, and I

After four years of college, I, like most of my classmates, decided to completely ignore my degree and switch careers. My uneventful internship in a less-than-exciting work environment only cemented my decision to forgo corporate America and teach instead. It's been said that I have quite the bubbly personality, so who was I to waste it in a stiff business setting? Besides, the business world seemed too much like school, minus the fun parts, and with way more homework! The only downside to teaching and spending my days playing at the park with my kids (I taught preschool) was the worry over whether I'd make enough money to live the life I wanted. It was then that I first began implementing what would one day become *The One Week Budget* system.

I was 21 years old, a recent college graduate, and I'd just secured my

first job as a preschool teacher's aide. I was making \$12 an hour, not exactly raking in the dough. Fortunately, I was still living at home (rent free), but unfortunately, I had no mode of vehicular transportation except the occasional pity ride from my sporadically accommodating older sister. So, like most young grads in my position, my first official, adult financial goal was to purchase a car. Setting and accomplishing this goal taught me an über-valuable life lesson: thou must have clear, written, and measurable financial goals. So, I wrote down my goal, chose a time frame, created a plan, used my money management system, and I saved over \$10,000 that year!

Although I had not yet formalized *The One Week Budget* system, the steps I used to save money then are the same steps that I use now. The first thing I did before receiving my first paycheck was to make a list of all my monthly expenses. I will refer to this list as "The Money List."

My Money List (age 21):

Student Loans: \$173.00

Entertainment: \$100.00

Cell Phone: \$32.00

Train Fare: \$105.00

Toiletries: \$90.00

Total: \$500.00/month *sigh*, those were the days

Even then, I knew that in order to accomplish my goal of buying a car, I needed a plan. I calculated that at \$12 an hour, my monthly take-home pay was going to be about \$1,400. If I only used \$500 on expenses, this left \$900 for potential savings. Do you see how easy it was getting started?

Planning my finances early ensured that I didn't develop bad spending habits. After a year of following my plan, I had \$10,800 in my savings account ($\$900 \times 12$ months). I know that my first major financial accomplishment may seem impossible to some. Most of your lives are more complicated and more fun than that of a new college graduate living at home. I use this early example of myself as a lesson on how a small amount of money can grow into a large sum in a relatively short period of time. But that's only if you have a plan.

With my father's advice, I decided to use some of the money I saved to buy a gently used, previously-owned vehicle from an auction. That's a fancy way of saying I bought a used car. I purchased the two-year-old vehicle for \$5,500 and believe it or not, I still had that car eight years later! Not only was I able to pay for my car in full, I was also able to obtain insurance at a super low rate. This was because I had full ownership of the car. Do you see how far \$12 per hour can go if used and managed wisely?

Create Your Own Money List

It's now your turn to create your own Money List (don't worry, it's easy). In order to avoid having your hard-earned paycheck fall victim to

designer coffee outlets and expensive clothing outlets every pay period, you must be conscious of how you spend every dime. This means no more mindless debit or credit card swiping. The little things like a bagel with cream cheese every day can chip away at your financial future. Think about your day from beginning to end. You may get a newspaper, grab a cup of coffee, buy lunch or an afternoon snack. These things may seem minuscule, but they can slowly but surely create a dent in your financial well-being.

Begin by making a list of everything you spend money on—and mean everything! I'm watching you, so don't cheat! List the obvious little things such as rent or mortgage, car note, or utilities and then list the not-so-obvious things. Those items include cigarettes (umm, stop smoking), gum, coffee, snacks, etc. If you're anything like me, chocolate, gummy bears, and licorice will be at the top of your list.

Write down everything, no matter how small. I cannot stress this enough. This step is important because it will teach you to become more aware of your money. It will make you conscious of what you are spending it on. If you do not learn to respect your money in smaller amounts, you will never respect or keep it in larger amounts (once again, professional athletes. . . Need I say more?). Keep this in mind during the transformation process this week: It is easier to see how much you spend when it's down on paper or displayed on your computer screen. So write it down!

Don't worry about writing the amount of the expense this step. Why? I've found that when people write down the name of the expense *and*

the amount at the same time, they usually forget expenses. For now, just write the name of the expenses. You'll write the amounts for each expense in the next step. Use the following example Money List as a guide.

Example Money List

NAME OF EXPENSE

MORTGAGE

RENT

CELL PHONE

CREDIT CARDS

CAR NOTE

CAR INSURANCE

CHARITIES

ASSOCIATION FEES

CHURCH OFFERING

GAS AND ELECTRIC

CABLE

PHONE

INTERNET

LOANS

GYM MEMBERSHIP

HEAT AND HOT WATER

SEWAGE

GARBAGE DISPOSAL

LUNCH

BREAKFAST

POCKET MONEY

THERAPIST

DR. VISITS

PARENTS

CIGARETTES

DINNER

LAUNDRY

CLOTHES

FOOD

HAIR

MAKE-UP

NAILS

CHILD EXPENSES

TOILETRIES

HOUSEHOLD ITEMS

BABYSITTER

DRY CLEANERS

ENTERTAINMENT

GAS (CAR)

EATING OUT

MEDICAL EXPENSES

TOLL

TRAVEL EXPENSES

INVESTMENTS

MEDICINE

VITAMINS

TRAIN PASS

BUS PASS

CANDY

EVERYTHING!

Step 2: Show Me the Money

The truth shall set you free.

—John 8:32 and Ironi Aliche aka “Daddy”

Truth is by nature self-evident. As soon as you remove the cobwebs of ignorance that surround it, it shines clear.

—Mohandas Gandhi

State of Affairs

Tony was a local politician who was canvassing the area to learn the concerns of the people in his district. During one of his many visits, he made a detour to the school where I taught. He spent the afternoon reading and playing with my students. That day, I shared with him my passion for teaching people how to manage their personal finances. To my surprise and glee, he expressed a strong interest in my services. He needed help putting his financial life in order. Tony ended up being my first paying customer!

The first time Tony and I met for our session, we quickly completed Step 1 and created his Money List. Although Tony did not have many expenses, it wasn't until we tackled Step 2 that I saw the problem. After we calculated the monthly dollar amount of each of his expenses, I found that he owed large amounts of money on the few expenses he did have on his list. Most of these expenses were credit cards. It was obvious to me that Tony was used to drinking champagne with beer money. He used his credit cards to make up the difference and the monthly cost was robbing him of his financial goals of investing and starting a business.

Fortunately, Tony had the funds necessary to pay off most of his debt in full. Shockingly, the extra money he had was earmarked for vacations rather than debt reduction (go figure). Tony was reluctant to use his vacation funds to pay off his debt. He explained that his job was a stressful one and taking vacations was necessary in order to curb the stress. It was not until we delved further into Tony's situation that we realized that most of the stress he was experiencing stemmed from several things. Among them were his poor financial situation and a hectic love life, but I couldn't help him with the latter. With my prodding, he recognized that once he had a strong financial foundation and possibly a new girlfriend, the stress would be minimized. Tony followed my advice and decided the vacations could resume at a later time. Since then, Tony has stayed debt free while continuing to travel and now classifies himself as "single and ready to mingle." (His terminology, not mine.)

Tony is no different from many of us. I know you may be saying, "I would never go on vacation rather than pay off my debt." The truth is that you may have a similar financial pattern as Tony. Think about it. Do you buy breakfast, lunch, or dinner on the go each day? Do you spend money on expensive gifts, subscribe to premium cable channels, or finance luxuries (televisions, jewelry, furniture sets, etc.)?

Many of us refuse to reduce our spending, big or small, in the interest of our financial health. We feel like we owe it to ourselves and others to live a certain lifestyle. We do this no matter the state of our finances. I am a big proponent of fabulousity and having the things that you desire, but you must

first acquire the means to adequately fund them.

What changes are you willing to make to truly have what you want? You can start with a policy of full disclosure and complete Step 2.

Full Disclosure

Remember, when it comes to your money, it is always better to see things in black and white, even if it may cause a migraine. You cannot change what you do not know. The most important aspect of keeping your money is being aware of how much of it you are spending. Believe me, even Oprah keeps track of the money she spends, although she probably pays someone else to do it for her.

To begin tracking your spending, we will use the Money List you just created in Step 1 and add realistic monthly amounts next to each expense. You should start with the easiest items first—your bills. I know the word alone can put a damper on anyone's spirit, but you know your bills; you know what is due. First list how much you pay for your rent, car note, cable, and so on—any bill that is consistent. Follow up by writing the average amount of your bills that change based upon your usage, such as gas, electric, and credit card bills.

Tip: A quick and easy way to find the average amount of your usage bills is to take the last six to 12 months' worth of each bill (check online), add them up, and divide by how many statements you have.

Conclude the bills portion by listing the amount of the bills that you do

not pay every month. Be aware of the bills that are not due on a monthly basis, since they need to be factored in as if they were due monthly. For example, many of you may only be responsible for paying a water bill every three months. If your water bill is \$30 every cycle, then you would input \$10 for your water bill on your Money List (\$30 divided by three months).

Next, write in the amounts for those things you buy daily. For example, if you buy breakfast every day before work at \$5 a day and there are about 23 workdays in a month (excluding weekends), you are easily throwing away \$115 a month on breakfast—that's \$1,380 a year!

Choose the cheaper option and enjoy breakfast at home or bring it with you. This will save you a few extra dollars in the end. Lastly, estimate the rest of the items on your list: groceries, clothes, grooming, and candy (that last one was for me, of course). You know yourself, so be truthful. If you are not sure of the actual amounts, overestimate what you spend. As you begin implementing your budget, you will be able to add concrete numbers to these expenses.

Before we go any further, BREAK TIME! Take a deep breath, stretch, get something to drink, and then resume your budget once you're energized. You should be excited—you are about to change your financial future forever!

Welcome back!

Let's go over an example for this step. As I mentioned in the "How to Read This Book" section, the examples we discuss in the chapters are the actual budget of a friend of mine, "Bella." I want you to progress through my

One Week Budget system alongside a real person as she works through the same steps as you. Use Bella's Step 2 example on the next page as a guideline. Also, take the time now to add your Monthly Take Home Pay (monthly income after taxes and deductions) to your Money List (your blank Money List found at the end of Day 1).

Leave the Monthly Spending, Beginning/New Savings, and Total blank for now. We will address them later.

Bella's Step 2 example: Show Me the Money

MONTHLY TAKE HOME	\$3,700.00
NAME OF EXPENSE	WHAT YOU SPEND NOW
RENT	\$750.00
CELL PHONE	\$55.00
CREDIT CARDS	\$200.00
CAR NOTE	\$450.00
CAR INSURANCE	\$275.00
OFFERING/CHARITY	\$30.00
GAS AND ELECTRIC	\$100.00
CABLE	\$70.00
PHONE	\$30.00
INTERNET	\$30.00
LOANS	\$200.00
BREAKFAST	\$115.00
LAUNDRY	\$40.00
CLOTHES	\$100.00
FOOD/GROCERIES	\$400.00
GROOMING	\$150.00
CHILD EXPENSES	\$300.00
TOILETRIES	\$100.00
LUNCH	\$115.00
ENTERTAINMENT	\$100.00
GAS (CAR)	\$200.00
MONTHLY SPENDING	LEAVE BLANK
BEGINNING/NEW SAVINGS	LEAVE BLANK
TOTAL (spending + saving)	LEAVE BLANK

I didn't forget about you! Remember, your blank template is at the end of Day 1. You can begin filling it in now or continue reading and fill it in later.

Step 3: Money in the Bank: Beginning Savings

If you'd be wealthy, think of saving, more than of getting.—Benjamin Franklin

A New Patient

I could tell that Tina had been crying before I came to see her that day. This was our first session so I didn't mention the redness in her eyes as we sat down. Instead, I asked a question that I already knew the answer to: "Did you do the Steps?"

Visibly upset, she said yes and showed me the paper on which she'd completed Step 1 through Step 3. Tina was a new doctor, so she was making a lot of money, but spending even more of it. Unfortunately, this is a very common habit for the YBF—young, broke and fabulous. Tina was referred to me by a mutual friend who was concerned about her spending habits. I agreed to meet with her and requested, as I do of all my clients, that she complete Step 1 through Step 3 of the *One Week Budget* system. Yes, I gave her homework; remember, I am a teacher first.

Tina had just completed the steps moments before I arrived. She was shocked and dismayed when she realized how much money she was spending. Tina, like many of us, did not realize the full scope of her

financial situation until she put it on paper. The process of documenting her spending and comparing it to her income was both eye-opening and overwhelming. After completing Step 3 (subtracting what you spend from what you make), Tina found out that she was spending almost two and a half times more than what she earned each month.! This meant that her Beginning Savings (the amount she was currently saving) was a negative number. She did not realize this until she completed Step 3, because she managed her expenses by only focusing on the immediate bills due.

Does this sound familiar? This system of robbing Peter to pay Paul was finally catching up to her. Like Tina, many of us do not recognize that we are having trouble managing our money. It is not until we see our financial picture on paper that we can fully appreciate our fiscal situation, good or bad. There are people who avoid budgeting for this very reason. Are you one of those people?

The truth can be frightening at times, but once the initial shock wears off and you put a strong financial plan in place, you'll realize that there is a way out. There is always a way to rebuild your financial future—and it begins with full disclosure of your current fiscal status.

Look on the bright side. This step will be quick, easy, and simple....three things I love, outside of chocolate, gummy worms, naps, and saving, of course. As stated previously, being aware of your finances is imperative, and this step will show you how to calculate your Beginning Savings. The reason I refer to this step as Beginning Savings is because the amount you are currently saving is just the beginning. Get it?

In the steps that follow, I will show you how to save more! For now, you need to know if you are saving anything, saving nothing, or spending more than you make.

Calculate Beginning Savings

Take out your Money List and add up your What You Spend Now column. Write that amount next to Monthly Spending at the bottom of your Money List. Next, compare your Monthly Spending to your Monthly Take Home Pay. To do this, subtract the difference (Monthly Take Home Pay - Monthly Spending). This resulting number reflects what you are presently saving or your Beginning Savings. Put that number next to Beginning/New Savings. Don't worry—we'll get to New Savings later. Lo and behold, you may find that you are saving nothing or that you are spending lavishly like your last name is Hilton. At first it may hurt to see your spending habits exposed, but in order to progress, it is important to see your finances stripped down to the bare reality.

This will be the first and only time I will say this: It is OK if you are currently saving nothing or spending like Paris. It is OK because the steps to follow will show you how to fatten your pockets and put more money in the bank..

Your last task for today is to add your Monthly Spending and Beginning Savings amounts, even if it's a negative amount. Let's be honest, it probably is. Then, write the amount at the bottom of your Money List by Total (savings + spending). Your total should equal your Monthly Take Home Pay. If it does not, you've made a mistake; take your time and

redo Step 3 and check your math.

Use Bella's Step 3 example to help you. Don't be too hard on yourself if you find out that you are spending more than you make. As you will see, Bella wasn't exactly getting an "A" in money management either.

Bella's Step 3 example: Money in the Bank:Beginning Savings

MONTHLY TAKE HOME	\$3,700.00
MONTHLY SPENDING	\$3,810.00
	Subtract
BEGINNING/NEW SAVINGS AMT.	-\$110.00 (Step 3)
NAME OF EXPENSE (Step 1)	WHAT YOU SPEND NOW (Step 2)
RENT	\$750.00
CELL PHONE	\$55.00
CREDIT CARDS	\$200.00
CAR NOTE	\$450.00
CAR INSURANCE	\$275.00
OFFERING/CHARITY	\$30.00
GAS AND ELECTRIC	\$100.00
CABLE	\$70.00
PHONE	\$30.00
INTERNET	\$30.00
LOANS	\$200.00
BREAKFAST	\$115.00
LAUNDRY	\$40.00
CLOTHES	\$100.00
FOOD/GROCERIES	\$400.00
HAIR	\$150.00
CHILD EXPENSES	\$300.00
TOILETRIES	\$100.00
LUNCH	\$115.00
ENTERTAINMENT	\$100.00
GAS (CAR)	\$200.00
MONTHLY SPENDING	\$3810.00
BEGINNING/NEW SAVINGS	-\$110.00
TOTAL (spending + saving)	\$3,700.00

DAY 1: Easy Action Steps (Recap)

Step 1: Create a List of Your Spending Habits: Money List

- Create a Money List by writing down all of your expenses.

Step 2: Show Me the Money

- Write the monthly cost of each expense on your Money List. Put your Monthly Take Home Pay on the top of your Money List.

Step 3: Money in the Bank: Beginning Savings

- Calculate your Beginning Savings by adding up your Monthly Spending and subtracting it from your Monthly Take Home Pay. Remember your total must equal your Monthly Take Home Pay! Fill in the amounts for Monthly Spending, Beginning Savings, and Total.

NOTES

To My Readers,

It is my hope that you have taken away something of great value from this book. I hope that the desperate feeling you've had about your finances has been eased. I hope that you feel empowered knowing that if I can dig my way out of my "Financial Fiasco," you can too! I hope that I've kept my promise to God by sharing the knowledge that I was blessed with in a way that was easy to understand and implement. Please don't forget to help others. Keep in mind that gifts are never yours alone to keep. I leave you with these parting words: Is a week's worth of work, worth a lifetime of financial empowerment? I hope you answered yes. Your blessings begin the moment you allow them to.

Live richer,

Tiffany Aliche (The Budgetnista)

Acknowledgments

First and foremost, I would like to give my most grateful thanks to God. He always blesses us. It is we who choose whether or not to allow our blessings to manifest.

I also want to thank Mommy, Daddy, and my sisters: Karen, Tracy, Carol, and Lisa. You are my cheerleaders, my best friends, my sounding board, and my inspiration. Anyone who knows the Aliche Girls knows how supportive we are of each other. Thank you.

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I especially want to thank those people who allowed me to help them create their personalized budget. You gave me more than I ever gave you. You are forever memorialized as the anecdotes in this book.

Tiffany "The Budgetnista" Aliche, is an award-winning teacher of financial education and is quickly becoming America's favorite, personal financial educator. The Budgetnista is also an Amazon #1 bestselling author of The One Week Budget and the Live Richer Challenge series.

Through her company, The Budgetnista, Tiffany has created a financial movement that has helped over 1 million women worldwide collectively save more than \$150 million, and pay off over \$100 million in debt, purchase homes and transform the way they think about their finances. These women that participate in this global movement call themselves, Dream Catchers.

Tiffany credits her experience as a preschool teacher for 10 years in Newark, NJ for defining her purpose behind The Budgetnista...education.

In 2019, Tiffany transformed her commitment into legislation when she partnered with Assemblywoman Angela V. McKnight to write a bill that was later signed into Law A1414 (The Budgetnista Law). This law made it mandatory for financial education to be integrated into all middle schools in New Jersey.

To further her mission Tiffany has created and teaches numerous financial classes both online and in person. Her signature course is her annual, Live Richer Challenge with over 900,000 women participating in one or more of her Challenges.

She also blogs about personal finance for The Huffington Post and The Budgetnista Blog, co-hosts an award-winning podcast, Brown Ambition and has an online school, the Live Richer Academy that teaches women how to

create, implement and automate their own financial education path.

The Budgetnista and her financial advice have been featured on Good Morning America, the TODAY show, PBS, TIME, The New York Times, The Wall Street Journal, Reuters, ESSENCE Magazine, FORBES, Fox Business, MSNBC, CNN/HLN. She is also the featured financial expert for the popular daytime talk show, The Real.

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