



CLARITY

*Step Eight:  
Focus & Make Money  
Your Friend*

IRIS HIGGINS



“Taking power back around your money is about getting the balance right. Taking too much or too little responsibility holds you back from having a beautiful, healthy and abundant relationship with your true wealthy self.

You don’t need to get evicted, lose all your friends or break up your marriage to learn the lesson. Take a look at where money is a pain in the butt for you and ask yourself: Where has this shown up in the past? What’s the pattern? What’s the Universe trying to tell you? What are you afraid of?

What are you no longer willing to put up with?”

— Denise Duffield-Thomas

## **Step 8: Focus & Make Money Your Friend**

**Follow your passion and the money will come - or not.**

In the age of online entrepreneurs, the general inclination is to monetize your calling. After all, if you’re going to do something you feel passionate about, you need the time and energy to do it. And that’s hard to find when you’re working 40+ hours a week doing something else. Yet is the age-old adage true that if you follow your passion, the money will come?

For years I looked to women like Elizabeth Gilbert, J.K. Rowling, and Ellen Degeneres, and thought, “Well, they followed their passions and the money definitely came!”

I used them as my inspiration and motivation to jump off the cliff and quit working (and quit my second round of grad school) so I could focus full-time on my passion: [helping women heal through hypnotherapy](#).

Guess what? The money didn't come.

For years I worked on what I felt was my calling, tuning out the fear and ever-increasing money struggle. When I got pregnant and didn't have the income producing business that I thought I would have, I had to face a new reality: Government assistance a.k.a. welfare.

But I kept on with my business, thinking eventually it would pay off. After all, I was following my passion, wasn't I? I was doing what I was called to do, wasn't I?

Well...yes...and no.

The truth is, I was doing something that Elizabeth Gilbert had stridently advocated *against*. I was expecting my art, the thing that I felt called to do, to pay my bills. And in doing that, I was corrupting my calling.

Why?

Because I had put myself in such a dire financial situation that I could no longer listen fully to what my guides and intuition were telling me to do. I

had to make money! So a part of me was listening to the calling and a part of me was listening to the money fear. The result was that I was only putting myself out there fifty percent authentically.

Fifty percent - give or take - of what I created, wrote, and advocated for in my business was what I felt was my calling.

Fifty percent was what I *thought* would make me money. (Too bad it didn't!)

And behind all that was a whole avalanche of beliefs and projects that I kept stuffed under my mental mattress because - even though I felt they were part of my calling - I didn't know how to monetize them and I couldn't give time and attention to something that wouldn't make money when my family needed me to bring in an income.

Now, perhaps if I had just fully followed my calling all along - no holding back, no worrying about what would make money - the money would have come.

But the truth is, when you're freaked out about how to pay your bills, it's really hard to follow your calling. Not impossible. But super hard.

So my "hindsight is 20/20, I learned this lesson so you don't have to" suggestion is this: Listen to Elizabeth Gilbert.

*"I made a promise to my writing life when I was about 15 years old. I said to writing: "I will never ask you to provide for me financially; I will always provide for YOU." - Elizabeth Gilbert, Big Magic*

### **A note for struggling with chronic illness:**

Even as I am writing this, I can hear a little voice inside my head saying, "But there was a reason you quit your job. There was a reason you decided not to do both. Some people don't have enough spoons, and isn't it cruel to hold them up to the same measuring stick as someone who is perfectly healthy?"

So let's talk first about the spoon theory for those of you who don't know what it is. Wikipedia does it better than I could so here you go:

*The **spoon theory** is a disability metaphor used to explain the reduced amount of energy available for activities of daily living and productive tasks that may result from disability or chronic illness. **Spoons** are a tangible unit of measurement used to track how much energy a person has throughout a given day. Each activity requires a given number of spoons, which will only be replaced as the person "recharges" through rest. A person who runs out of spoons has no choice but to rest until their spoons are replenished.*

When I was in my late 20s I went through a period of depression, mental fatigue and chronic headaches. I won't bore you with all the details - and as

anyone with chronic illness knows, it's rather complicated anyway - but the gist of it was that a variety of factors had come together to wreak havoc on my thyroid. Traditional tests said I was totally fine but a naturopathic doctor was able to do extra thyroid testing and see that I was in the early stages of Hashimoto's Hypothyroiditis, an autoimmune condition that attacks your thyroid. This is extremely common in women, which - side note - I have many theories about! My naturopath told me that I didn't need medication yet, and through eating a healthy, gluten free diet, and focusing on my self-care, I've been able to stay that way so far.

But I don't have the mental energy that I did when I was younger. I remember being in high school and doing my homework while watching TV and also instant messaging with friends (this was back in the AOL Instant Messenger days) and eating. My brain worked incredibly fast and multi-tasking was easy for me.

These days? I have a few hours of good brain energy a day. That's it. Once it's gone, it's gone.

If I use that energy to do the monthly budget, there's no energy left for my work. If I use that energy to plan the weekly meals and grocery list, that's it. No energy for anything else that requires my brain.

Because of this, I have had to be extremely thrifty about where I place my energy. I know that if I want energy to write this workbook, it has to happen

first thing in the morning. I have learned that it is best to plan my grocery list one day and then do the actual shopping trip the next because they both use up my energy.

The truth is, I just can't do it all the way I used to.

When I decided to quit grad school and my nanny position so that I could focus on my hypnotherapy business full-time, it was because I realized I couldn't do it all. In fact, I got the nanny position so that I could work on my hypnotherapy business *without* being stressed about money. But I realized very quickly that nannying took my energy and there wasn't a whole lot left for my business.

As I'm writing this, I have a side gig as a virtual assistant. I took this job because - again - I needed the money and wanted to put less pressure on my own business. But it uses up my energy (or spoons) and I have to be extremely intentional about how I plan out my days, when I do my virtual assistant work, and how to make room for both that *and* writing this course *and* working with 1:1 clients.

All this is to say, I highly recommend that you keep your day job so that you can follow your calling without money worry getting in the way. BUT if you, like me, only have so many spoons in the day and you know that following your calling just isn't going to happen while you're working, you have to do what feels right to you.

Think it through carefully. If you decide to go ahead and let go of your job to follow your calling, save up some money first if you can. Learn about investing. Learn to budget and budget well (I'm going to teach you my method). And be willing to ask for support when you need it.

## **Focus Goals**

Before you can even begin to budget, you need to know where to spend your dollars. The best way to do this is to create a Focus Goals Worksheet. This is an easy and visual way for you - and your family - to set goals and priorities for the year so that you are clear on where you want to spend your money.

To start, download my sample Focus Goals worksheet. This was my 2017 worksheet and will give you some concrete ideas on how to structure your own. You might be doing this alone or with a partner, children, or other family members. Basically whoever is a part of your household (and who you share money with or regularly spend money on) should be a part of this process. Below, I'll share instructions for creating your own worksheet but you can also listen to the Focus Goals Audio Workshop where I coach other women through this process.

## **Your Practice: Create Your Focus Goals Worksheet**

## **Big Picture Goals**

Think about where you - and your family - hope to be in five or ten years. What are some big picture goals you have? Write down three to ten big picture goals. These might be concrete ideas like buying a house or more general ideas like wanting to feel more grounded.

## **Focus Goals**

Think about the next year of your life and write down three to ten things you want to accomplish this year. Again, these can be concrete (i.e. spend less time online) or more abstract (i.e. feel at peace). Then look at all of the items you wrote down and see if there are some general themes. For instance this year I want to cook healthier meals, get more sleep, and exercise daily. But all of those things can go under the general category of “health.” I also want to make more money in business, support my partner by doing more at home while he’s working and going to school, and take good care of our three year old and our soon to be born baby. All of these can go under a category of “supporting my family.”

Try to hone all of your items down to three general areas of your life that you want to work on for the next year (like health, finances, education, etc.). There are so many things we can do that it’s easy to feel frazzled and forget what matters to you. So this helps you to focus on three areas that you want to improve upon or work towards this year.

Then for each category, create an affirmation that will help to remind you daily of where to put your energy.

My affirmation for health could be: *I make choices daily that support my emotional and physical health.*

My affirmation for supporting my family could be: *I support my family emotionally, physically, financially, and spiritually.*

These are simple and yet they provide you with a touchstone to come back to when making decisions throughout the year.

If you are doing this with other people, create focus goals and affirmations with them (or for them with young children). If you are budgeting with a partner, you might also decide to create focus goals and affirmations for your relationship. This is something my partner and I do to remind us of how we want to work on improving our relationship.

Then type up and print out (or you can turn this into an art project if you want) your Big Picture Goals, Focus Goals, and Affirmations. Place this somewhere you will see it daily, like the fridge.

When you are doing your monthly budget, refer back to your big picture goals and focus goals to help you decide where to allocate your money. For example, my partner and I used to share one car. When he decided to

go back to school, we looked at his focus goals for the year to decide whether buying him a (used) car was worth the expense. One of his goals was to improve his education and another was to have more adventures and feel free. Buying a car allowed him to do both (drive to class and have more freedom) so we decided the money was worth it. On the other hand, when he wanted to buy \$200 of gaming equipment, we looked at his focus goals and that investment didn't go along with his goals for the year. So we nixed that idea.

Now, onto budgeting...

## **Learn how to budget.**

When I was younger and had a stable income, I didn't have to budget. I have always been thrifty and instinctively knew how to live easily off my income and save money. When I started running my own business I had some money saved up to live on for a while but didn't actually plan out how and when I would use that money. Budgeting was a vague idea for me. I knew approximately how much I spent each year and figured that meant I knew how to budget.

Not surprisingly this method did not work for long when I was self-employed.

Once my money ran out and I started to depend on my partner's income (which was barely a living wage), I became an ostrich and just stuck my head in the sand. I knew we paid our bills each month and I didn't really want to know more than that.

Eventually that didn't work either.

When we had to apply for government assistance, I had a whole new motivation for getting our finances under control. I read a few popular books about women and money, finding them to be philosophically interesting but not particularly helpful.

And then I read, *"Love Your Life, Not Theirs"* by Rachel Cruze. Rachel Cruze is the daughter of famous money guru, Dave Ramsey (who I had never heard of at the time). The book is filled with easily digestible and implementable tips and I highly recommend it.

One of the sections focused on budgeting, and after reading about how she creates a budget, I decided to create a template for my partner and myself. Since then we have been budgeting diligently every month and my head is decidedly out of the sand. Using this budget, I am able to estimate how much we will spend in the coming month, how much we can allocate to extra things (like vacations, eating out, holidays, birthdays, etc.), how much we can put into savings, and how much we can donate to charity.

## Your Practice: Create A Monthly Budget

### How to Budget Using My Monthly Template (*Based on Rachel Cruze's ideas in "Love Your Life, Not Theirs"*)

I am going to walk you through this step by step. It might look complicated but it is actually really simple and even kind of fun.

1. Download and print out the budget template. My template assumes you are creating a budget for two people. You can easily just do it for yourself if you are not sharing living expenses with someone else.
2. Start with your worksheet. Calculate your projected income for the month to come. If it's August, you're creating a budget for September. In the Projected Income category, write down what your partner expects to make, what you expect to make, and any other income or money you will receive that month (cash from family, interest from investments, etc.). Total all that up and add the total to your projected monthly budget income.
3. Using your worksheet, add up your projected utilities, using the previous month as a baseline. Add that number to your monthly budget.
4. Do the same with groceries. You can see from my template that I am assuming you have a child in diapers. Obviously you can delete that and add other categories. Basically anything you would purchase at a

grocery store goes under this category. Add your total projected grocery bill to the budget.

5. Think about anything extra you have coming up this month that will cost money. Birthday parties, eating out, car repairs, back to school shopping, etc. all go under this category. Guesstimate as best you can and then add up the total. Add that to your budget.
6. Think about what you would like to put into savings each month and what that money will go towards. You can allocate savings money to things like: emergency savings (aim for \$1000 minimum in the bank), holiday travel and gifts, saving for a home, car insurance (so you're prepared for the big bill when it comes), etc. Decide what you want to do and total that up. Add it to your budget.
7. Now go to your budget and fill in the other categories. Add your rent or mortgage, gas, childcare budget, and anything else you pay for on a monthly basis. I added a miscellaneous category so that my partner and I each have \$10 each month for random things that may come up. Your miscellaneous category may be more money or you can delete it altogether. Finally decide how much you want to give to charity each month, even if it's just \$1. (As a side note, I've heard that non-profits prefer to receive monthly donations over yearly because it helps them to better project their own budget.)
8. Now is the fun part. When you take your projected monthly income and subtract your projected monthly expenses, the total should be equal to zero. Try it out. Is it? Ours wasn't! The first month we did this we had to play around to find the right numbers and figure out how

much we could allocate to savings, donations, and other expenses. Play around with this until you have numbers that you feel comfortable with. Know that the first month tends to be the hardest and after that it gets pretty easy to do your monthly budget.

9. Once you have your budget filled out, print it out and keep it handy. We check our budget twice a month, on or around the 15th and then on the last day of the month. We compare our projected numbers to our actual numbers by checking our credit card (we filter our purchases by date and only look at what we purchased during that month). We also pay for everything on our credit card so that we have a record of all purchases. Rachel Cruze does NOT recommend this in her book. She recommends ditching the credit card and paying cash for everything, but personally we would find that difficult to keep track of, plus we get cash back with our card. We also pay our credit card in full every month so that we're never paying interest.
10. At the end of your first month, you'll have a sense of how realistic your budget was and you can edit your budgets accordingly going forward. If you realize you can't afford your life, you can either find ways to cut down on expenses or find ways to make more money. As someone who is self-employed, I use our monthly budget to project how much I need to make each month. It helps me to create a break even goal for myself (meaning we couldn't put anything into savings but could pay our bills) and a reach goal (so we could put some into savings). And if you find you have lots left over to put into savings each month, this will give you more freedom to see where your

money is going and allocate some of that to things you would like to buy/see/do (or donate more to charity).

11. At the bottom of the monthly budget template is a savings tally. Every month we update that so that we know what all of the money in our savings account is allocated for. \$1000 might be for emergency savings. \$500 might be for an upcoming vacation. \$5000 might be for saving up for a down-payment on a home. (I'm pulling these numbers out of nowhere but hopefully you see what I mean.)

Ultimately you need to find a way of budgeting that works for you. You don't want to let money be the thing that stops you from following your calling. This is only one way to budget, but I share it here because it has had such an impact on my life. It has not only improved my sense of control over money but has also helped my relationship because money suddenly became something we were on the same page about rather than arguing over.

### **Extra Money Resources:**

I'm not an expert on money (although I do work with many of my [hypnotherapy clients](#) on healing money blocks) so I'm going to share some resources below. I am not an affiliate for any of these. I'm just sharing them because I want us all to have an abundant and smart relationship with money.

### **Blogs and Podcasts:**

[Denise Duffield-Thomas](#), creator of The Money Bootcamp  
[Redefining Wealth Podcast](#) with Patrice Washington

### **Books:**

[You Are a Badass at Making Money](#) by Jen Sincero

[Love Your Life, Not Theirs](#) by Rachel Cruze

[Millionaire Women Next Door](#) by Thomas J. Stanley, Ph.D.

[The Financially Empowered Woman](#) by Tracy Theemes

[The Soul of Money](#) by Lynne Twist

### **Money Coaches:**

[Emily Zillig](#) - Bookkeeper and money coach for entrepreneurs

[Nicole Iacovoni](#) - Financial Therapist