



Whack! Ouch! Yes! You Can Have It All!

Apulsing, throbbing pain is now well established on my right ring finger. A few hours ago, while cutting onions for a picnic, I sliced off part of my fingernail and finger! *Ouch!* But no big deal — I studied the stoics in high school, Zen breathing from Samari, and did Tantra energy work with Margo. Gosh, my stupid little cut shouldn't keep me from finishing my first column for *Spirituality & Health!* But no matter how hard I try to ignore it, concentrate on it, breathe it away, or visualize my pain floating down the river, there it is. That bugger won't leave. It's quite embarrassing. I set out to write using the pain.

Everything Connects — credit cards, time, money, 401(k)s, breath, kids, fun, sadness, work, you, me, friends, investments, houses, stepmoms, paper, pen, blood, and Band-Aids. In this interconnectedness lies success and —

Oh, my God! My finger is screaming because my teacher, Master Dogan, just read those words over my left shoulder and took an iron frying pan and smashed my bloody finger as he boomed, “Paul, no judgment!”

Looking up at his weathered face, I ask, “But why did you need the pan? I have ears! Now I need more Band-Aids, and I'll never get this column done.” Dogan smiles at me as I explain how, with this column, I sincerely want to help people with their financial woes — help them to relax and enjoy life.

“Tell them everything connects,” says Dogan. “Tell them they trade their time for money; money is merely energy; live modestly; save wisely; don't trust fools. Tell them that they can't go forward until they give up their victimhood, quit judging everything, and lose their ego.” Dogan pauses for a breath, and then, *poof*, he's gone, leaving me happy that he showed up to bring me back to the moment's intention.

And my intention with these columns is so simple: I want your connection to the energy of money to bring you peace, harmony, joy, and freedom. I want you to be comfortable in the world of economics and finance while feeling simply powerful because you understand how money interconnects with everything in your life.

Let's get started.

As Dogan taught, study yourself, then forget yourself! Forget everything you have learned about money. Release the idea that money is anything other than your friend. Pull those old money-arrows out of your heart — those arrows are your bad habits, wounds, fear, avoidance, and victimhood. Get rid of them now! Then open yourself to something new: You can do the money-and-wealth thing.

Yes, you can.

“You cannot do the thing if you think you can't do the thing,” Gandhi said.

The first spiritual practice to learning that you can do the financial thing is to take responsibility. Right now, take 100 percent responsibility for your lot in life. Accept it, love it, say “Thank you,

God” for it, and, with intention, practice the habits to bring you to where you wish to be.

Heavy in debt? Fearful of sickness? Afraid of growing old? Freeze every time you think of investing? Be thankful for all that learning and experience. Do you spend too much each month? Stop it! Do you use your credit cards so much you can't pay them off? Burn them! Do you dread the bills in the mailbox? Are you hopeful about retirement? Patiently set up a plan where you're grateful for your home and the blessing of using the mortgage as a tool to own it.

I know it's not that simple. And, of course, you need to take this Dharma teaching with two bags of salt. But try to use this first column to begin to soften your habitual beliefs about your finances — and more. To that end, I leave you with a few sentences to contemplate by yourself and to argue about with your lover and friends:

- There are no limits.
- Envy, greed, and victimhood are the enemies that make it impossible to get in harmony with money, work, bliss, abundance, freedom, and prosperity.
- “Can't” is a swear word more vile than any slur. You can have it all. All you dream, you can have!
- What do you really want?

Please email me with questions and concerns you would like me to discuss in future columns. We are our brothers' and sisters' keepers. Everything connects. I am grateful for Band-Aids.

Paul H. Sutherland can be reached at paul@SpiritualityHealth.com. He is the author of *Zenvesting* and other books on finance, and he serves as president of Financial & Investment Management Group and manager of the Utopia Funds.