



The Rising Role of Budget Coaching in Today's Turbulent Times

\$5 Trillion Lost in 2008 Housing Market

My 401(k) Plan looks like a 201(k) Plan.

Seniors Lose Trillions in Retirement Funds with no Time to Recover.

Beware! Credit Repair Charlatans!

These are some of the screaming economic headlines we are seeing and experiencing in today's chaotic financial markets. The housing bubble that we knew we were creating suddenly burst in 2008 and the stock market went down with it. Not to mention \$4 plus per gallon gasoline prices in the summer which just might have been the economic tipping point.

Now Americans can no longer look to the equity in their homes to help them make ends meet. The personal savings rate has hovered at 0%, so savings aren't the answer either. What does the financially strapped consumer do now when their backs are against the wall?

Answer – *Call Your Budget Coach.*

Who? What's a Budget Coach? Where would I find one if I knew I needed one?

Budget Coaching is quickly becoming a service that many people are currently seeking. Churches have seen the need for many years and some have cultivated a team of coaches to help members deal with these stressful economic times.

Now some corporations are seeing the need and some forward-thinking Human Resources departments are taking action too. Companies can't even begin to estimate the hours of productivity lost because employees are worried about their personal finances. Budget Coaching is a benefit that has been added to other Life and Health Coaching offerings. And the coaches they've brought in have one thing in common – ***They Are Busy!***

So, what is this new program that is cropping up all over? Budget Coaching is a process where a trained budget coach works with couples and individuals, helping them develop a personal spending plan (or budget) by applying sound financial principles. The process is designed to begin to move participants on a path toward *financial peace*. Financial peace is the state that many in today's environment and culture are seeking. With the marital issues caused by unstable finances and the pounding calls from collection agencies, many participants are just looking for some relief from financial stress.

Are you in this situation where a little peace is needed? Look at the list below of topics that can be addressed by budget coaching:

- Developing a Spending Plan (Budget)
- Debt Repayment Plans
- Personal Money Management
- Using Credit Wisely
- Understanding Finance Charges

- Understanding types of credit available
- Establishing Credit
- Understanding Your Credit Report and Score
- Alternatives to Bankruptcy

If one or two of these topics gets your attention, then you may be a candidate for the coaching.

Any of the issues above can be driven by underlying behavioral issues. Some people overspend their budgets due to strong feelings of entitlement, while others are just waiting to win the lottery in order to cure their budget ills. Some individuals believe that overspending just “really doesn’t matter” when compared with the world’s larger order problems. Others are out “keeping up with the Joneses” and overspending their budgets to impress others. The old cliché goes something like this, “*we spend money we don’t have, to buy things we don’t need, in order to impress people we don’t know.*” Whatever the reason, budget coaching may be able to provide some valuable insights.

Does the coach have all the answers? No! Budget Coaching is normally limited to developing and implementing the spending plan. From the information provided in the sessions, the budget coach may identify and suggest that additional assistance is necessary. This may be professional assistance in areas such as:

- Debt Management Services
- Legal Assistance/Services
- Foreclosure Counseling/Assistance
- Financial Stewardship Ministries
- Mortgage Services

Is this a financial panacea? While budget coaching touches many areas in the participant’s financial life, the service does not usually provide any detailed financial planning advice. The areas of taxes, securities, stocks, bonds, and real estate are so complex in today’s society that they can only be addressed with a variety of good financial counselors who are experts in their respective fields.

How much does budget counseling cost? Pricing for budget coaching varies depending on the service provider, number of sessions included, area of the country and scope of the services provided.

Can I get a coach to help me? Budget Coaches are available around the United States. Most will work with you remotely, by phone and/or e-mail. Send an e-mail to the author to help get a coach working with you!

Don’t be surprised if it seems that your company is teaming up with your pastor in offering some money management help during these trying times! Take action now. Help may be only one step away, in your next church service or even in the company news bulletin!

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