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Spending a little time organising your finances can improve every part of your life, says Alvin Hall



The reward for effective financial planning is freedom. That's what a close friend discovered when, after years of ignoring (if not neglecting) most components of his financial life, he decided it was time to put the various parts in order.

The job turned out to be easier and less time-consuming than he imagined. Worry and fear had distorted his perception, making his problems appear much larger. When, in short measure, he prioritised his life goals and finances, created a realistic plan for improving and sustaining his financial health, and set off on the path to achieving his goals he was able to see the benefits: "I never imagined that spending a little time with my money each month could yield such a sense of calm and freedom."

Importantly, my friend's comment refers to more than the freedom that comes with achieving the financial security that may enable him, for example, to retire early. It highlights the freedom from worry that comes with integrating your financial plan and its essential actions into both your mindset and your day-to-day activities. Being proactive becomes as

natural as shopping for groceries or replenishing your toiletries.

Over the years, I've found that no matter how many times I deliver this message, some do not want to believe that it is true. Why? They view financial planning through an emotional lens that undermines their confidence to deal with their problems.

Some people are emotional expanders. They tend to see all problems as being much bigger and more encompassing than they are. In short, a molehill becomes a mountain and they stand in front of it feeling overwhelmed and doing nothing.

Other people obsess over detail. They see every single little step, mini-step, and micro-step along the way. This seemingly unending series of ever-multiplying little actions stops them from even trying. Some respond by working on too many steps at the same time. The result is usually unproductive chaos. ►