

# Small Steps to Health and Wealth

## Strategy 3 - Put Your Mind to It (Wealth)



**For more information or to schedule Health and Wealth sessions, please contact Elizabeth Trejo:**

**(281) 855-5600**  
**etrejo@ag.tamu.edu**

**Texas A&M**  
**AgriLife Extension**  
**3033 Bear Creek Dr.**  
**Houston, Texas 77084**



*This program and newsletter is adapted from the "Small Steps to Health and Wealth Program," developed by Joanne Kinsey, M.S., CFCS at Rutgers, New Jersey Agricultural Experiment Station*

Dave's Daily Tip

**There's no easy, magical formula when it comes to getting out of debt. It takes a lot of time, hard work, and discipline.**

daveramsey.com

Paying off debt can be quite the undertaking, especially if you are carrying a great deal of debt. Seeing the light at the end of the tunnel can be difficult so a little encouragement is necessary to get motivated.

If you plan to reduce debt, imagine yourself receiving a credit card statement that shows a zero balance. Experts also advise visualizing how you will deal with obstacles to your goals (e.g., paying for unforeseen incidentals without using a credit card).

There are other ways to stay motivated, in addition to mentally visualizing that zero balance. One simple way to make it tangible is to write down how much you owe on a piece of paper and pin it where you will see it every day. Then, each time you make a payment, cross off your debt and write down how much you have left.

Another creative motivator might be to create a construction paper chain (you know, like the one you made in grade school to decorate the holiday tree). Each link would represent a portion of your debt - 20 links for a \$2,000 debt would mean each link represents \$100 - write the amount on the link. As you pay down the debt equivalent to a link, remove a link. As your debt reduces, your chain gets smaller. This is a great way to get your children involved and teach them about financial responsibility.



Finally, there are many websites, calculators and applications available on the internet to help you manage your debt and create debt payoff plans to assist you with reaching your goals.

Emotions are another important component of the behavior-change process. Visualize, and then verbalize to others, how you think increased wealth will make you feel. Positive and long-term feelings can be powerful motivators.

Share your success! Post updates on social media, join a blog and tell your family and friends. It helps to know others are supporting and keeping you motivated. It also holds you accountable.

**Pull in your belt, spend less, and reduce debt.**

Ray Dalio

Use "language of change." Start by banishing "weasel words" such as "I hope to," "I plan to," and "I'll try to" from descriptions of future action steps.

Replace them with bold declarative statements starting with words such as "I am," "I can," and "I will save \$100 a month," for example, has a much more powerful impact on the unconscious mind & increases accountability to yourself.

Another language "trick" is to describe the behavior you intend to take in the present tense, preferably with words like automatically," annually," and "always," as if you have already been doing it for some time.

Again, there is an accountability aspect to talking this way. It is an incentive to start "walking your talk" because, otherwise, you are basically telling other people a lie. It is also motivational to focus on small, positive action steps. Some examples of present tense phrases include:

- ◆ I have a Roth IRA account and contribute to it regularly.
- ◆ I put \$75 a month in a savings account by only eating out on special occasions.



<https://www.facebook.com/HarrisCountyFCS/>

**We're on the web!**

<http://harris.agrilife.org/program-areas/family-and-consumer-sciences/>

*Texas A&M AgriLife Extension provides equal opportunities in its programs and employment to all persons, regardless of race, color, sex, religion, national origin, disability, age, genetic information, veteran status, sexual orientation, or gender identity .*

*The Texas A&M University System, U.S. Department of Agriculture, and the County Commissioners Courts of Texas Cooperating.*