



The high life

Alysia Hamilton (pictured above), 39, lived the high life in her twenties before realising she was not building a solid financial future. "There are many women who are in the same position. I had spent most of my money on travelling and clothes and then, in my thirties, I realised I may want to start saving and investing if I wanted security, a home and to retire comfortably," says Alysia. Since then Alysia has founded Girls Learning About Money (GLAM) which runs finance education events for women in a comfortable, fun and supportive way.

Alysia says: "I started GLAM because I wanted to learn about money-related topics and take actions that would lead to financial freedom. I thought it would be fun learning with a bunch of like-minded friends so we could inspire one another!"

Having deciding to get serious about her financial goals at 30, Alysia now has four investment properties, a share portfolio, mutual funds, and a few art and antique investments alongside her savings and retirement accounts.

Show me the *money*

So you're over 30 and have very little to show for it financially. You have heaps of fantastic shoes but no decent assets to speak of. What do you do?
By Alysia Hamilton.



Start with educating yourself. Write down what financial topics you would like to learn about, who you know that may have financial knowledge or who may know people that do. Find out what books would be beneficial to read or seminars to go to that will provide you more information about the topic of money.

I personally found Robert Kiyosaki's book Cashflow Quadrant and Cashflow 101 Game life-changing but you may find other books that provide that 'Ah Ha' moment.

MUST DO: Read Robert Kiyosaki's Cashflow Quadrant and play his Cashflow 101 game - it's fundamental learning in how to get out of the rat race! I also recommend Suze Orman's Women and Money is highly useful for understanding the basics. Research female finance education events like GLAM or similar groups and attend.

Work out your financial goals

There's no point putting a plan together and learning about different financial topics if you don't actually know what you're aiming for. Do you want to save money for a house? Do you also want enough leftover for a big overseas holiday each year? Are you planning to be a property magnate?

Write out your financial goals. Make them clear, concise, measurable and start with "I will" so it's action orientated. Give yourself one minute to brainstorm this and write whatever comes into your head. Then pick out the three financial goals that mean the most to you. Post them in your bathroom mirror, on the fridge, behind the bathroom door and tell a few trusted friends that will be supportive.

MUST DO: Brainstorm your goals now. Consider where you want to be in one year, and in five years. Why wait?

Get an expert in your corner

This is simple. Find a financial planner. My advice is find one that will look at you from a holistic perspective that encompasses your goals. For instance, if you want to have a home, they can work with you on a financial plan that includes planning for this investment even though they won't actually organise the loan for you.

Together, focus on your income, fixed expenses and goals so a personal plan can be developed for you. Getting expert advice from someone with experience helping people make financial decisions will make you more confident, and ensure you're on the right track.

MUST DO: Make an appointment with a financial planner today. If you don't know one, call your friends to ask for recommendations.

Take action!

You can get all the education and planning you want but if you don't take action, you may acquire a lot of knowledge but have no results. There's no better way to learn than by "doing". You will make mistakes but hopefully your education and planning will help you avoid many of them. Put into action what you learn even if it means you take small, conservative steps until you get confidence. For instance, you may only start with a small percentage of your pay cheque going towards your credit card debt while you get used to working with a budget. This percentage increases as you learn to budget better and better.

Another example is: if getting into the share market is your goal, you can paper trade or penny stock trade until you feel confident in placing a few hundred dollars or a few thousand into a share portfolio. There is absolutely nothing wrong with starting out small.

MUST DO: One of the easiest things to do is set-up a savings account and have 20 per cent of your salary go directly there (your employer should be able to do this for you). You will want to grow this so you have at least three months salary for emergency situations and then the rest can build up for your investments.



If you're having an early mid-life crisis, it can be useful to get advice from someone who's been there, done that. We look to three wise women on what advice they would have given to their younger selves.

Diane Drysdale, 52

Managing Director, Wines By Design



You know what? Life is full of twists and turns and honey, enjoy every one of them! Don't be afraid to shine. A lot of people approach their friends and their customers from a space of being afraid of not being "good enough" and being fearful of what others might be thinking of them, and not wanting to make a fool of themselves. Hey, if we all operate from these fears and continue to create our defensive fortresses, then we all live within the same limits! So, my gorgeous self: don't bother protecting this fortress, just let the walls tumble down, have fun, give yourself permission to come from a space within, of self love and a care for everyone - own your life. This joy and integrity within myself is what has brought me success in life and in business as I create the journey of my life.

Ronni Kahn, 58

Founder, OzHarvest



Choose a career in whatever it is you love to do, regardless of the financial rewards, because when you are passionate and committed to what you do best, the rewards will follow. Financial rewards are not the measure by which to evaluate your life. Life is short, and every day counts ... so don't think that "One day, you will be better, skinnier, nicer, volunteer, give back to your community, make a difference to those around you." There is no "one day", there is only now. So get on with being the very best friend, daughter, sister, lover, mother, wife, partner, worker, volunteer, you can possibly be, today. Live your life in the present, and measure your success by the joy you can share with those around you.

Wendy Eade, 54

Director at Eaden Sleepwear



Oh how I would love to have the knowledge and confidence in my mid twenties that I have now. Would I have stayed up all night worrying about things that I absolutely had no control of? I don't think so. Would I have felt old before my time with stress that I carried around because my career wasn't moving in the right direction fast enough? I don't think so. Would I have been too scared to back myself 100 per cent to achieve my dream career? Definitely not!

If you have a dream, follow it, stay focused on what your goals are but remember "Rome wasn't built in a day". What you don't achieve this week you will the next. Balance in your life is the most important thing. Once you get that balance right everything else will fall into place. L