

Deviate From Your Financial Course

Stanley Greenfield, RHU

The dictionary defines *deviate* as "to turn aside from a course." I think that definition fits what I want to write about perfectly. It is exactly what I want you to do. I want you to turn aside from a course. The one that will take you down a route to financial disaster with no possibility of return.

Deviate from all the bad advice that you have been getting up to this point and do two things right now for yourself and your financial future: Open your mind to some new possibilities, and be willing to try them for 90 days. I can promise you a few things: A financial future that is bright and you in control of your finances.

If you are willing to do the two things that I listed in the last paragraph then I welcome you to finally catch up to the 21st century. The future for you will be challenging but you are up to it. It will also be exciting and rewarding.

Why not start by getting a real handle on what is going on inside your wallet and your checkbook. Does it seem like you put money into both and it just disappears? If that is the case, then it is time to check for "leaks" in both of these areas. Let's begin with your wallet.

Pull out all of the credit cards that you have stashed in all those secrets compartments. Make a copy of both sides of the all the cards. You now have a record of all of the cards in your wallet and the account numbers as well as the 800 numbers if you ever need to call to report a lost card or cancel the card. For those who are willing to write or put this information on a computer, you can do this. The whole purpose is to make a record so you know what you have. I would suggest going through this same exercise with the wallets of your spouse, significant other and children. You need to have a record of how many cards they are carrying around too. Do you feel like you have climbed a little out of that rut you were in? Do you feel like you are starting to take a little control of the financial world that you have been lost in? Do you feel like you have deviated maybe just a little bit from where you were before you started reading this article? Good!

Now let's tackle the checkbook. If yours looks like most that I have seen, then maybe it is time to consider buying a computer program to keep track of what is going on inside that checkbook, or consider on-line banking. Whatever you do, you need to get things in order in your checkbook. I would first suggest that you only go through the painful task of writing checks no more than twice per month. You should mark every check that is written for a business purpose with a special mark so you can make sure you take a deduction at tax time, or have a separate account just for business expenses. It will make life a lot easier for you and your accountant.

Do you make sure on the check stubs that you list what the check is for? If not, you need to do so, with an explanation that you can understand when you go back through your checkbook. If a check is written to an insurance company, is it for life insurance, auto, disability, liability, or what? What is the

policy number? Was it for an annual premium or quarterly? Is it personal or business? If personal, who is covered by this policy? Wouldn't be a good idea to be able to look at that check stub and figure all of that out? It may take a little longer when you write the check, but it could save you a lot of time and aggravation later on.

While we are on the subject of the checkbook, have you sat down recently and figured out all those fees your friendly banker is charging you each and every month just to hold on to your money? It's time that you did. Pull out all of your statements and add up all of the charges. Amazing isn't it? I think it might be time to have a little chat with that friendly banker and suggest that they lower the fees or the bank down the street may start to look better and better to you. It never hurts to ask.

While we are talking about the wallet and the checkbook, it would also be a good idea to sit down and try to see where all of your money is going. A budget may be just the thing for you. I would start off with all of your fixed expenses such as mortgage payment or rent, utilities, insurance, dues, and overhead both personal and business. It should be a lot easier now to see where all of YOUR money is going each month. The other leaks in your wallet and checkbook will now start to appear and now you can plug them.

Stop for a moment and look around. Notice anything different? Does the sun look a little brighter and do the birds sound like they are singing a little louder? You like it "up here" don't you? Life is nicer up here out of that rut you have been in for too long. Want to stay up here? Just keep your mind open to new ideas and your future will be brighter!

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