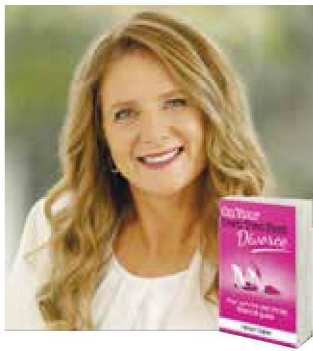


Money advice for different life stages



Helen Baker is an Australian financial adviser and founder of On Your Own Two Feet.

Her latest book *On Your Own Two Feet Divorce: Your Survival and Thrive Financial Guide* is available pre-order now at www.onyourowntwofeet.com.au or in book stores and Amazon from 1 November 2018.

She has also written *On Your Own Two Feet: Steady Steps to Women's Financial Independence*.

What do women really want when it comes to money? To borrow some lyrics from the Spice Girls, I'll "tell you what you want, what you really, really, want". It's lifestyle, security and peace.

There's a disconnect between many women and the financial planning industry, I found when researching my master's degree in financial planning: a perception that financial advice is all about dollars and analytical sense that make investments happen and not what matters to women. I believe that financial planning is all about lifestyle, now and the future.

For more than a decade, I've been working delivering professional financial advice and seeking to enhance women's financial literacy so that they can stand on their own two feet in all aspects of life.

We age, and life events change circumstances yet there are two constants that impact on money matters.

A healthy mindset

The first constant is a mindset that I refer to as the 4Cs: clarity, control, certainty and confidence. Women are wired for security. We thrive when we have clarity and a sense of control. With a better understanding of what our 'now' and 'future' look like, we gain certainty—and with certainty comes confidence. We can achieve, we can tackle and overcome difficult situations. We can do whatever we believe in.

Financial foundations all women need

The second constant is the need for the same five financial foundations whether a woman is aged in her 20s or 80s (albeit with different emphasis). These foundations revolve around: a spending and investment plan, insurances, estate planning, superannuation and an emergency fund. The 'emergency fund' often raises eyebrows: while it

can be your means of escaping a relationship that's gone sour without being penniless, it may also be the means to joining your best gal pals on a spur-of-the-moment Scoopon bargain getaway to Bali. Lifestyle again is at play.

This mindset and the foundations work together. You control your spending and investment plan, superannuation, insurances, estate planning and emergency fund.

And you need all five financial foundations in place for a strong future. Just as houses in tropical Australia need to comply with stringent design, construction and performance regulations to withstand cyclonic winds and rain, our financial house is on shaky ground if an element is overlooked or played down. It's not enough to bank on superannuation for retirement, for example. In 2013-2014, there was a gender retirement age superannuation gap of 52.8%—and given longevity trends, women statistically must make theirs last longer. Ensuring all five financial foundations are in place affords protection for your investments and the lifestyle that your investments are working to achieve. Let me share a few tips for just four of life's financial kickers.

Starting a family

This tip is for the working couple talking about starting a family. Before even trying to conceive, organise finances so that you can live on one income and use the other entirely to pay down the home mortgage.

Raising a family

Enhance children's awareness of where money comes from by teaching them the difference between 'needs' and 'wants'. You provide their 'needs': they pay for their 'wants' (through pocket money or an after-school job if in teens). They learn

how to manage money and you protect your future financial wellbeing too!

Divorce

A marriage or de facto relationship can't effectively be defined by 'before' and 'after' the end was called. I talk in terms of four phases—pre-settlement, negotiation, post-settlement and rebuild. This approach helps create a process of timely steps that need to be addressed. By all means, ask your lawyer about the law particularly when children are involved, but don't ask them to be financial advisers because that's not their professional expertise. A financial planner can work through what you need, now and in the future, and what you want, explain the pros and cons of assets in the settlement pie and align them with your goals and values. This takes emotional heat out of settlement negotiations—and can save time, money and further stress.

Redundancy

Few if any jobs are for life nowadays. When markets turn south, businesses (and government departments) downsize and you may well become a part of that. For some, the offer of a redundancy is a dream come true; for others a source of immense stress. Know your spending and saving habits along with tax and debt obligations. How long can a redundancy package keep you going if another job fails to materialise (and it can be difficult, even when you are highly skilled)? If you see a redundancy coming, pro actively salary sacrifice some of your wages in superannuation, to get some tax savings and build your future.

It's fair to say that the earlier you start managing your finances, the better: small things maintained for a long period help to manage risk rather than doing big things all at once. Having said that though, I must stress, it is never too late.

Competition – Book Giveaway – Summer Reading Pack

WIN a Summer Reading Pack. No summer would be complete without some books to enlighten and inspire you. We are giving away a set of 2 books. Here's what you can win!

Change Made Easy

by Karen Wilson

Change Made Easy is a book that reveals the amazing ability you have, to create what you want in life and in three simple steps shows you how to do that.

It explains why people often struggle with change and provides strategies to move past challenges and achieve goals. The book encourages a new level of awareness; of your choice of change, the way you approach and do change and of your life generally. Whether you want a change of perspective or have a specific goal in mind, this book will help you achieve that.

Change Made Easy stands alone as a blueprint for successfully making change. It is also a springboard for topics you may choose to dive into and explore further. Whether you chose to admire the outlook, dip your toes in the water or dive headlong in, immersing yourself in the information in *Change Made Easy* will change you. Designed to upgrade you to a new level of mind the book inspires you to enjoy making change, to make it easily and create an authentic, heart-centred life that you love.



Journey of the Empath: A Collection of several stories of Empaths around the world

Featuring the personal stories of nineteen empaths from around the world, this collection is a must have for anyone who is an empath or knows someone who is. Inside you'll find details of some common challenges that empaths go through, real life experiences and inspiration, and techniques for effectively and positively managing this amazing gift.

Being an Empath can be quite challenging, but it also brings beautiful rewards along with it. This is a compassionate and heartfelt collection of experience and knowledge.

Journey of an Empath is a collection of personal stories from empaths, who have generously shared their experiences to help raise awareness and assist empaths in understanding how to manage this gift in healthy and positive ways.

Congratulations!

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