

Controlling Your Finances Starts with Thinking Differently

By Jasmin Vazquez



Before I get into a conversation about money, I want you to know, you are not alone. 80% of American families worry constantly about living paycheck to paycheck. Money related stress tears apart modern marriages. The good news is that knowledge is power: the power to recognize patterns and make one small change. That change must start in your mind.

Our biggest challenge is not the outside world. It is the things we tell ourselves. Do you deserve financial stability? I have run into so many hardworking families that have convinced themselves they will never retire, nor arrange their savings in a way that prevents their children from facing the same struggle. The way you think about money matters.

Robert Kiyosaki, businessman and founder of the Rich Dad Company authored a book called “Rich Dad, Poor Dad” in 2000. In it, he explains that he had two father-like figures in his life. Both worked very hard, but both did not succeed the same way. One left behind millions for his family and community. The other died penniless and left his family in debt.

The difference in outcome had nothing to do with their education levels. Robert’s “rich dad” completed eighth grade while Robert’s “poor dad” had several advanced degrees. It is what they taught their children about money that was the difference between wealth and poverty. He notes “One dad recommended, ‘Study hard so you can find a good company to work for.’ The other said, ‘Study hard so you can find a good company to buy.’”

Thinking differently about how money works results in a difference in how you pay your bills. Robert notes that “both dads paid their bills on time, yet one paid his bills first while the other paid his bills last.” Do you pay yourself before you pay your bills?

One dad believed in reaping what was put into public assistance, holding him back from ever owning a business for himself. He was concerned with job benefits and pay raises. The other dad believed in complete self-reliance, never putting himself in a situation where his benefits outweighed his financial independence. A managed risk is worth taking, he taught Robert.

Financial independence is when an individual earns more income than he or she has expenses. It's the moment you are no longer living paycheck to paycheck and are in control of when and how to retire. Can you imagine what that feels like?? Most Latinos cannot. We work extremely hard for very little pay and zero long term medical or retirement benefits. We internalize this struggle as proof that we do not deserve the better things and push ourselves because of our strength and pride.

Tell yourself you deserve to retire. You deserve to afford quality medical benefits. You deserve a savings account. You deserve vacation time. You deserve to have all these things and still work less than you currently are. When you decide to love yourself, you take managed risks and reap large rewards. Decide to make a change. And please, stop encouraging your children to study hard to become employees. Support them becoming businessowners and investors. Think and act differently than we have been taught and it will be worth it.