

Your Financial Habits: Spender, Builder, Giver or Saver? **by: Captain Crank**

Does your attitude about money define you as a person?

Some experts think so. Just as attitudes about love, family, work and fun define the human condition, money leaves its own unique imprint on the average person.

A new book by financial planner Diane McCurdy examines why different people spend their money the way they do. And most importantly, it tells how everyone can survive and thrive today while still building a healthy nest egg.

"We all have deep-rooted attitudes about money that control the way we use it," notes McCurdy in her book "How Much is Enough? Balancing Today's Needs With Tomorrow's Retirement Goals."

"For some, cash is a vehicle used to build empires, while others see it as a luxury that makes life exciting and entertaining. At the same time, some people can't sleep at night if they don't have their whole paycheck sitting in the bank. A person's various attitudes must be taken into account (pun intended) if any financial program is going to work for them."

In the book, McCurdy cites four consumer-finance "templates" that fit Americans.

* The Spender:

Spenders love money for the things it buys them. They prefer to have something concrete (cars or trendy gadgets) as opposed to having something as abstract as savings.

"They enjoy having the newest 'toys' and are often the envy of their friends, much like the fabled Joneses," McCurdy insists. They can get into trouble when they spend everything they have - or more. This category of people has the most difficult time saving money. A spender who doesn't pay off his monthly credit card debt, for example, may find himself on a very slippery slope toward bankruptcy.

"Each month, take out your allotted savings and expense money immediately," she advises. "The rest is yours to spend however you wish."

* The Builder:

Builders see money as a tool. They use it (and sometimes risk it) to turn their dreams into reality, says the author. Builders receive joy from the creative process involved in their projects and may even work at mindless jobs just to have the resources to build their dreams.

Most entrepreneurs and corporate leaders are builders and they make excellent mentors

because of their creative endeavors. However, they are prone to miscalculating the funds and risks that are involved in their projects and neglect to leave themselves a margin of error just in case.

* The Giver:

Society couldn't get along without givers, as they make up the volunteers, charity donors and do-gooders of the world, says McCurdy. They buy extravagant gifts for friends that they would never purchase for themselves and deny their own wants so they can give to others.

"Givers put their time, money and energy into what they believe in," McCurdy writes. "Some of them view having money as almost a sin; therefore, the only proper thing to do with it is to give it away. They also find pleasure in making other people happy or in doing good."

Givers tend to get in trouble because they may ignore their own needs. They also may hurt their children by not teaching them how to take care of money.

* The Saver:

Savers are lifesavers.

Without them, who would the rest of the world borrow from? Savers create a fortune in the bank very quickly, while still living a comfortable life - sometimes even on a tight salary.

"Savers are great at spotting money-wasting activities and avoiding them without thinking twice," McCurdy insists.

These types are organized and not impulsive buyers. They don't like risk and require a cushion of savings for their own peace of mind. But they can be too conservative and often avoid investments that could actually make their money grow, says McCurdy. They also may postpone enjoying their money for so long that it becomes too late.