

5 Keys to Abundance

Dear Jane,

I am sick of running out of money before the end of the month. Other people seem to know something I don't about creating abundance. What's the secret?

I heard a shocking statistic on Oprah once: Over 70% of people who experience a financial windfall from such strokes of luck as winning the lottery or inheriting a large sum of money tend to be back to where they were financially within just a few short years.

Most of us think this would never happen to us. Our thoughts probably run along the lines of, "If I won a million, two million, ten million dollars [take your pick], it would change my life forever. All my worries would be gone. I'd be happy."

How can it be that what seems like an inevitable happy ending just doesn't turn out to be true for such a large majority of people? Are those who come serendipitously into wealth dumber than we are? Are they all spendaholics, compulsive gamblers, inept business people, or at the very least so codependent that they can't say "no" to family and friends who ask for handouts?

It's true that many of us who are not used to handling large sums of money are inept with it. It's also true that a lot of us are codependent enough to fall prey to wanting to be loved by giving everything we have. If we're already doing that, we'll probably do it more, not less, if given half a chance. And if some of us aren't spendaholics now, like kids in a candy store, we certainly might become crazed with buying the first time we have a wad of cash in our hands. But even these shortcomings and lapses in judgment don't explain the expected fate of 70% of us who would end up no better—and possibly worse emotionally due to shame—than before our sudden wealth.

Many of us don't budget at all, claiming that there isn't enough money to do so. We pretend we aren't choosing to use up our available resources with the argument (while our debts mount), "I work hard for my money. I should get to enjoy it." We fall deeper and deeper into debt, feel incredible stress, depression, and shame, and wind up having to work harder and longer. And still we continue to shoot ourselves in the foot arguing that we deserve to spend our money any way we want to. We treat ourselves like entitled brats, demanding that reality fit our fantasy. But underneath this façade of entitlement, we are deluded by what I call The Big Lie. More about that in a moment.

There is no one roadmap to creating abundance, just as there is no single roadmap to creating a loving relationship. To find a relationship, you can date online, join a club, hang out at your favorite pub, buy a dog, or ask friends to set you up. To make more money, you can find a better-paying job, go back to school, learn a new skill, ask for a raise, gamble, or play the lottery. Getting isn't the biggest problem for most of us, whether it's a relationship or money; the trick is to learn how to keep and build upon what we get.

Until we open up to abundance and become “spiritually fit” to receive, the truth is that we are just as likely to deplete our treasure chest the same way our neighbors do and just as likely to find ourselves continually short on cash and long on debt. So here are five keys to building, maintaining, and enjoying abundance:

1. **Embrace the true meaning of abundance:** Abundance is that which already exists. In an abundant state, we understand that we are dipping into an overflowing well. Abundance is everywhere. Equally, it is within us. We *are* abundant. We don’t have to seek abundance. We can say yes or no to this belief. It is up to us.
2. **Stop using the world as a reflection of your worthiness:** The Big Lie I mentioned earlier is the belief that we are unworthy. Most of us decide base our worthiness on outside barometers such as who likes us, what kind of house or car we have, how much money we make, how much education we have, or what clothes we wear. As long as we measure our worth based on outside factors, we our happiness is at the whim of others.
3. **Practice worthiness as though it’s a skill:** While some of us were born believing we were worthy, life experiences may have convinced us otherwise. To retrain our thoughts, we must change our behaviors. Ask yourself what you would be doing differently right now, today, tomorrow, next week, this year if you already believed you were entirely worthy. What behaviors and activities would you stop? Which ones would you start? Make a commitment to yourself to “fake it ’til you make it.” Practice your new behaviors until they become second nature, replacing the old habits you are shedding. Change your actions and your thoughts are sure to follow.
4. **Recognize what your jealousy is telling you:** Jealousy is what we experience when we don’t believe we will have (or deserve to have) what someone else has. Therefore, jealousy comes from a belief in lack. If we put the first three keys into active practice, our jealousy will dissolve into gratitude for that which already exists. Gratitude doesn’t mean that we become complacent. It means that we strive, not from fear and lack, but from the joy of thriving.
5. **Be generous now:** If you wait until you “have enough,” whatever that means to you, the message you are telling yourself is that there is lack within and around you. Abundance thinking is a leap of faith for many of us. Faith, by definition, is only validated once we have made the leap. My friend had promised to tithe to his church and then “cheated” because he was broke. One day of scarcity led to the next until he woke up one day and realized that he was not trusting abundance (or God) at all. He was waiting for proof. How could waiting for proof be an act of faith? That day he took a deep breath and emptied the change from his pockets into the church’s coffers. Immediately he felt the peace that goes along with keeping an agreement with oneself, no matter how difficult it is. He also felt strength in choosing to decide to have faith. Almost immediately, his phone began ringing off the hook with work offers. For him, this was wonderful evidence. But even more lovely, he didn’t even need the evidence at that point. Since he already trusted, he was less fearful about the ups and downs of business and felt more relaxed about experiencing abundance however it presented itself.

Will you get rich by practicing these five keys? Nobody knows what the Universe has in store for us. But you can begin to define rich in new ways that give you appreciation for the abundance that already exists. You are already a wealth of knowledge, support, energy, artistry, compassion, and ideas. How can you maximize and share your abundant wealth today?

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