



# FINANCIAL PREPAREDNESS

*"One of life's most painful moments comes when we must admit that we didn't do our homework, that we are not prepared." ~ Merlin Olsen*

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## Everyone's on Their Own Journey

*And you may find yourself living in a shotgun shack  
And you may find yourself in another part of the world  
And you may find yourself behind the wheel of a large automobile  
And you may find yourself in a beautiful house, with a beautiful wife  
And you may ask yourself, "Well, how did I get here?"*

~ "Once in a Lifetime" by Talking Heads

The most recent quote I had my son write down in his Life Lessons book is "Everyone's on their own journey." As I explained to him, the combination of beliefs, mis- or disinformation, habits, myopia, naiveté, willful ignorance and incuriosity, cognitive dissonance, wishful thinking and drive for immediate gratification is so powerful that only overwhelming pain can cause someone to stop and ask themselves, "Well, how did I get here?"

Everyone includes me. For example, before my heart attack, if someone had told me that I needed to eat healthier, I probably would have looked at them blankly and thought, "Uh, no thanks. The food I eat tastes great and I'm still healthy enough to play adult soccer." I wasn't ready to get the memo until my then-10 year old son walked into the emergency

room and I saw the look of fear on his face. *At that moment*, everything changed. “When the student is ready, the teacher will appear.”

To be fair, thanks to misinformation by the federal government's Food Pyramid, disinformation by the food industry, false accepted wisdom (e.g., “Eating fat makes you fat.”) and general lack of scientific knowledge, until fairly recently, even if I had wanted to eat healthier, I'm sure much of my efforts would have been counterproductive.

When I looked up the lyrics to the song above, I came across part of an interview with frontman David Byrne, who said of the song, “We’re largely unconscious. You know, we operate half awake or on autopilot and end up, whatever, with a house and family and job and everything else. We haven’t really stopped to ask ourselves, ‘How did I get here?’”

My primary life purpose (or *ikigai*, as the Japanese call it) is to help people live a fulfilled life. Not only is this one of my daily affirmations, I also have it on a sticker on my computer screen and bathroom mirror to remind me of it. Like what happened to Michel de Montaigne in the 16<sup>th</sup> Century, after my close brush with death, I became a student of life and how to live it.



As Thoreau wrote in Walden, I want to learn what life has to teach so that at the end of my life, I don't discover that I had not lived: “I went to the woods because I wished to live deliberately, to front only the essential facts of life, and see if I could not learn what it had to teach, and not, when I came to die, discover that I had not lived. I did not wish to live

what was not life....I wanted to live deep and suck out all the marrow of life, to live so sturdily and Spartan-like as to put to rout all that was not life, to cut a broad swath and shave close, to drive life into a corner, and reduce it to its lowest terms, and, if it proved to be mean, why then to get the whole and genuine meanness of it, and publish its meanness to the world; or if it were sublime, to know it by experience, and be able to give a true account of it in my next excursion.”

Once you start reading hundreds of books (many of which cover fairly recent advances in fields such as health & wellness, psychology, personal effectiveness and personal finance), you start to get a pretty good idea of better ways to live. Now that I know what I know about health and diet, for example, I want to shout it from the rooftops (especially after seeing what happened to my own family) that you don't have to be sick and dying and [dead](#)—that there's a better way.

You would think that most people would be interested in hearing new information that would allow them to “live deep and suck out all the marrow of life,” but you would be wrong. As my dad says, “You can tell them, but you can't tell them much.” In fairness, I think a significant part of the reason for that isn't due to human nature or individual laziness or thoughtlessness but because of the self-reinforcing physiological downward spiral that most Americans are in due to unhealthy food, drugs, a sedentary lifestyle, television and social media, and a lack of sleep, sunshine, [nature](#), clean air and [water](#), purpose and human connection.

When your body isn't healthy, neither is your brain. It doesn't have the energy or drive to do things like read books or blogs, think critically, or have stimulating conversations with informed people. Just like a body in a La-Z-Boy, it just wants to sit there, passively and mindlessly consuming CNN, *Entertainment Tonight*, and maybe the new “Barbie” movie. Their interaction with other human beings is limited to clicking the “Like” button, working as a serf on Mark Zuckerberg's digital plantation so he can dispense more [Zuck Bucks](#) before the next election.

Here are the most common destructive inertial beliefs/actions/habits I see:

- I can sit in a chair all day, but as long as I eat a variety of foods from the [Bakery food group](#) (cookies, doughnuts, cakes, pies, muffins, rolls, biscuits, crackers, bread, etc.), and some pasta, I should be fine. After all, for decades, the federal government recommended that I eat 6-11 servings of this per day.
- I should do whatever my doctor says, because [they're an authority figure \(because they wear a white lab coat and carry a clipboard\)](#). Their interests are completely aligned with mine and they are not influenced by the beautiful young women who bring a free lunch for their entire staff every day, or [the many thousands of dollars of cash and other benefits that pharmaceutical companies give them](#). They also stay current with the latest research by reading [prestigious and respected medical journals](#).
- The solution to my health problem is a drug, vaccine, injection or surgery. (The

shorter the period over which a vaccine was developed, and the less time that it has been around, the more often I should have it injected into my body.) I don't need to make any changes to my current lifestyle.

- All drugs and vaccines that have been approved by the FDA are safe and effective, with virtually no [side effects](#) or [adverse reactions](#). [Anyone who says otherwise](#) is a conspiracy theorist who should be censored, deplatformed and forcibly injected.
- If the CDC, WHO, Bill Gates, Governor Cuomo, [Admiral Rachel Levine](#) et al. say I should do something, I do it, because they are the health experts. Leave my elderly parent in [a nursing home forced to take COVID-positive patients](#); quadruple [mask](#) inside my house (especially if [I'm on a Zoom call](#)); [stay locked inside my house](#) away from fresh air, sunshine and exercise; don't try to prevent or treat COVID with Vitamins C and D, quercetin, zinc and NAC because only a pharmaceutical product can do that.
- Health insurance will get me health care, and health care will get me good health. (So all of that is a “human right” and should be provided to everyone for free.)
- The way we live now is pretty much how humans have lived for millennia, so all of this is normal and I don't need to do anything different. [Electromagnetic fields](#) from electronic devices (especially WiFi routers, laptops, cell phones and microwave ovens) are harmless because I can't see them. 5G is safe because cell phone providers say it is.
- [Social Security will provide all of the economic benefits that the federal government has promised me](#). And Medicare will never try to deny me care just because they can't afford it.
- The best long-term asset allocation is 60% equities (primarily U.S. stocks—even though it's the third most richly valued stock market in the world) and 40% bonds (primarily U.S. Treasuries, because the federal government can never go broke because [it can always print more dollars](#)).
- I should use index funds to obtain exposure to that asset allocation because they have a low expense ratio. All stocks are equally attractive, so I want to own all of them. In fact, the more richly valued a stock is, the more of it I want to own, so I use market cap-weighted index funds.
- I should invest in funds managed by Vanguard, Blackrock and State Street. Sure, in 2019, those firms signed a [declaration that sought to redefine the purpose of a corporation away from maximizing shareholder value](#) (shareholders aren't even mentioned until the fifth--and last—priority), but they plan to “mobilize” my life savings by making investments in companies like [Solyndra](#), raising edible bugs on [Bill Gates' vast farmland holdings](#), and for whatever good ideas [AOC came up with in the Green New Deal](#). I'm sure it will all work out OK.



- I should listen to and follow the free investment advice offered by [Goldman Sachs](#), MSNBC and Jim Cramer, because they are competent and have my best interests at heart.
- If a government or central bank official says that the government, central bank, currency, commercial banks, or whatever is financially sound, that means they are, and I can go back to watching *Friends* reruns on the [telescreen](#), or videos on the CCP's [TikTok](#) platform.
- Gold is a barbarous relic, and is not money (dollars are money). Like Warren Buffett, I think it's weird how we dig it out of the ground and then put it back in the ground (in underground vaults). All of the gold that the federal government seized from the American people in 1933 is still at Ft. Knox.
- [Politicians wage war to keep us safe. No Americans get killed in these wars.](#)
- If you want to change society, you should [vote](#) every two years. Just don't ever question [how the results were arrived at](#), which would be treason.
- I can believe what the media report because they're objective and only care about the truth. As one of my grandmothers used to say, "Why would they put it in the newspaper if it's not true?" Their reporting is totally unaffected by either who pays for the ads they sell or pressure from incumbent politicians.

In conclusion, even though I don't have all of the answers, at least I'm curious enough to be looking for them. It can be frustrating to see so many people living on autopilot, going about their lives in an unthinking, uncritical way. But I have to remind myself that I was once like that myself, trapped in a downward spiral of poor health and bad decisions, and I have to have patience and empathy. I think the best approach is not to preach but to lead by example and be ready to be a teacher when the student has experienced enough pain.

## Recommended

[Feardom: How Politicians Exploit Your Emotions and What You Can Do to Stop Them](#) (4.5 stars) by Connor Boyack.

[Unknown: Cave of Bones](#) on Netflix.

[Dirty Money: The Wagon Wheel](#) on Netflix. Remember, for years Warren Buffett called Wells Fargo "the best managed company in America." Anyone could have figured out that this was just a massive fraud.

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*(I receive a commission if you buy a book via this link.)*

I would love to hear from you! If you have any comments, suggestions, insight/wisdom, or you'd like to share a great article, please leave a comment.

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*Before starting a new diet or exercise regimen, you should consult with a doctor, nutritionist, dietician, or personal trainer.*