

**MONEY
INTELLIGENCE™**
ANCHORED IN VALUES

Susan Wahhab



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Dedication

For my ancestors and my parents—
for infusing your selfless love, wisdom and faith in my veins, I honour you.

For my son Gabriel, the young generation and
future generations yet to be born,
I dedicate this book to you.

For you are the future custodians of Mother Earth.
Please look after her.

- *You need not leave your room.
Remain sitting at your table and listen.
You need not even listen, simply wait,
just learn to become quiet, still, and solitary.
The world will freely offer itself to you to be unmasked.
It has no choice; it will roll in ecstasy at your feet.* ‣

FRANZ KAFKA



My parents, Victor and Souad Wahhab, on their wedding day 16th June 1968

About the author—Susan Wahhab

Susan Wahhab is a leading Financial Strategist and Money Mentor with an uncanny ability to create lateral solutions to complex financial and tax problems. She is a qualified CPA (Certified Practising Accountant), an accredited SMSF Specialist with SMSF Association, a licensed Tax Agent and a member of the NTAA (National Tax and Accountants' Association). Susan has Bachelor of Business (Accounting), Masters in Commerce (Accounting), and Diploma in Financial Services and Certificate IV in Property Services (Real Estate).

Susan Wahhab is the managing director of Accounting and Financial Services practice Winner Partnership Pty Ltd. She established her practice in July 1995 using \$15,000 overdraft secured by her parents' home. She has been advising hundreds of clients over the past twenty years and has built a successful practice. Professionally she is committed to empowering business and professional women to succeed.

Susan is a passionate peace activist who believes that peace is possible between people all over the world, and especially between Palestinians and Israelis, if both can sit together over coffee, talk about their stories and share their common humanity.

For more information on Money Intelligence™,
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Definitions according to Susan Wahhab

Money: Money is a flow of energy. You allow it to flow towards you when your values are aligned, your mindset is focused and you understand and apply the divine universal laws in your life.

Money Intelligence™: The ability to make the money; manage the money you earn; spend it responsibly and invest it wisely while anchored in the Investorgetic™ values. The sustainability of your family's wealth is dependent upon the level of Money Intelligence™ you have and the Money Intelligence™ you impart to the next generation. You cannot lose your wealth even if you lose all your material possessions. Wealth is Money Intelligence™. You cannot lose intelligence and knowledge. It is imprinted in your mindset. Whatever you think, you become.

Investorgetic™: A term I coined to mean someone who is passionate about investing to build his or her wealth. An Investorgetic™ is someone who thinks long term, who plans ahead, who is open-minded to learn everything that he/she needs to know about Money Intelligence™. An Investorgetic™ thinks about the impact of his/her current money habits on the long-term financial liberation road map. He/she uses the numbers to guide him/her on the prosperity path towards financial liberation.

Consumerholic: A Consumerholic is focused on consumption without considering his/her current and future financial position. One who lives beyond his/her means without a budget and without thinking about creating and implementing any future long-term plans to secure his/her financial security and liberation.

Money Manager: The Money Manager in this story is my mum, Souad. The Money Manager is good at managing the money, knows what comes in and what goes out and how to use the surplus to build income-producing assets.

Money Maker: The Money Maker in this story is my dad, Victor. The Money Maker is skilled at earning the money, and finding and taking advantage of business opportunities. He/she builds businesses, excels at work and helps contribute to the economy by creating jobs, exchanging ideas and pioneering new ways of doing business.

Money Mentor: The Money Mentor in this story is my parents' friend, Eli. The Money Mentor advises people on what to do with their business and personal finances to make the best decisions while considering his/her mentored personal and business situation, and bearing in mind the overall business environment they operate in as well as the local and global economy.

Winner Partnership - M³™: The partnership between the Money Manager, the Money Maker and the Money Mentor. There is power in the trinity when each person's skills and values (collaboration, trust and accountability) converge to create an unbreakable Winner team. The Winner team in this story is Victor, Souad and Eli.

Money-Anchor™: The Money-Anchor™ is someone who believes that contribution, empowerment and compassion are the values we need to adopt in order to support each other starting with family, then society and planet earth. The Money-Anchor™ knows that giving of their time, knowledge and money is their way of following their life calling of contribution, empowerment and compassion.

Financial Blueprint: Financial Blueprint is the plan that incorporates the financial strategy, personal and financial needs and objectives over the long term.

How to navigate this book?

I have tried to write this book without using too much financial jargon. I wanted to talk to you, my reader, about money in an informative and inspiring way as if we are both sitting in my meeting room having a conversation.

Initially I wanted to write a book on “How to build wealth” to inspire my clients to become Investorgetic™. What I didn’t expect while going through this writing journey is that I found myself writing about my parents’ business in Ramallah, Palestine in the 1970s and 1980s while living under Israeli occupation. I wanted to share with the world how they joined forces in 1975 to save the family business as a result of wise counsel from their Israeli friend Eli Mahlab.

Chapter 1: In the beginning I write about my parents’ interesting business story. You will notice I make my own conclusions about what I learnt, and I use that as the basis for the book. (I coined the terms Money Manager, Money Maker, Money Mentor, Money-Anchor™, Winner Partnership – M³™ and Investorgetic™).

Chapter 4: It’s all about Money Intelligence™, explains the money model that will be used throughout the book. Self-determination, Winner Partnership – M³™, Money Mindset, Achievement, Transformation, and Money-Anchor™ form the basis of the Money Intelligence™ model. Here is the structure of each of those chapters:

I begin by narrating my parents’ story in Palestine from the perspective of the Money Mentor. After their story, I present you with three values I learnt from my parents. Then I explain how those values impact mindset and present to you eight mindset principles based on those three values under Susan’s “2 cents” worth section—presented to you in an octagon visual with two layers to make it easy for you to learn and apply the money mindset principles.

A Winner client case study follows based on the values and mindset principles presented in the chapter. Those case studies are about real people and real cases. However, I changed the clients’ names and certain circumstances to make sure I protect their anonymity. I wanted to make investing relatable and possible for the average Australian. What better way than showing you what others have done with their money?

I conclude the chapter with the reflection corner “A penny for your thoughts?” asking you eight questions based on the “2 cents” worth mindset principles. Again the octagon visual, this time with three layers, shows you the way to reflect on those principles while asking you the questions.

I encourage you to write those eight questions in “A Penny for your

thoughts” section in your journal and allocate at least two pages per question. Keep in mind there are forty-eight questions in total based on the forty-eight money mindset principles that you need to go through. I recommend that you give yourself time to reflect, write how you feel and what you think about each principle. Give yourself time to reflect even if it takes a day or two per question. It’s worth giving yourself time to feel the impact of each question. I am in the process of creating a colouring/exercise book with the book’s artist Natalie Najjar (a young and talented Palestinian artist and Ramallah resident), that incorporates the forty-eight mindset principles to support you on this exciting prosperity journey.

You will find some chapters that I deemed relevant start with a proverb—translated from Arabic to English—and a drawing. Each drawing created by Natalie is drawn with the Arabic proverb inside the drawing to reflect the English translation. I learnt those Arabic proverbs from my mum while growing up in Palestine. She loves Arabic poetry and proverbs, and believes that there is so much wisdom we can acquire learning about them.

Chapters 10 (Jane Carr case study) and 11 (Tania and Justin Cattan): These offer you financial case studies with strategies, calculations, budgets and projections. I wanted you to see that you can achieve financial liberation by understanding and using the numbers to your advantage.

Chapter 13: Self-determination in the age of entitlement suggests what Australia could do and how you can be part of the solution.

Chapter 14: Where is your lolly? I invite you to choose to live an Awesome life by urging you to choose the Money Intelligence™ mindset principles to get unstuck.



Mum and I at St George Church in the town of Lydda (Lod) where her family is originally from

PREFACE — WHERE IS MY LOLLY?

- » *What is a beginning?*
- What must one do in order to begin?*
- What is special about beginning as an activity or a moment or a place?*
- Can one begin whenever one pleases?*
- What kind of attitude or frame of mind is necessary for beginning? »*

EDWARD SAID, *BEGINNINGS: INTENTION AND METHOD*

When I was five years old, Mum took me to the doctor's surgery in Ramallah for a tonsil operation. I used to get sick often and when I did, my tonsils would inflame and I found it hard to swallow. Eventually the doctor advised my mum that the best thing to do would be to take the tonsils out. The day of the operation was arranged and Mum came to school late morning and took me to the surgery. I remember that day clearly as if it happened yesterday.

While waiting in the reception with Mum, a tall and slim brunette with green eyes wearing a white dress came towards us. She spoke briefly to Mum and then took my hand, gave me a big smile and said, "Come let's get you a lolly." I gave her my hand while beaming and thinking *Mum came to pick me up from school so that I could get a lolly from this woman. It must a big lolly.* She took me into a room with a big olive green chair placed in the middle. We were greeted by a man standing next to the chair, who was also wearing a white "dress". He didn't smile at me like the woman did. He looked like he was cranky about something. He said, "Yalla let's get the girl on the chair and begin." The woman sat me on the chair and buckled me in. I still remember the sound of the buckle clicking. *She will give me the lolly now* I thought. I felt a jab on my hand and the next thing I became aware of was seeing a big round red thing coming out of my mouth. *This must be the lolly* I thought. But I saw it being thrown in a silver container. I must have dozed off and woke up to the woman's smiling face. She said, "Come let's take you to your mum." I wanted to say, "But where is my lolly?" I could not speak.

While she was walking me to Mum a thought came to me that *maybe Mum got the lolly.* But when I saw Mum she didn't have the lolly. The woman said goodbye and walked away. I kept looking at her waiting for her to turn around to give me my big lolly. But no lolly came. I didn't understand. I did everything right. I was a good girl. I deserved my lolly.

Fast forward thirty years later to me sitting on a counsellor's black lounge seeking her support to deal with my life's challenges while replaying this thirty-year-old scene to decipher "what made me tick". It was then that I realised that my inner belief, my big word is "I cannot trust anyone." *I cannot trust anyone* played everywhere in my life. I looked for "lack of trust" everywhere so I could keep the belief unchallenged. I was stuck in the surgery with the smiling nurse and the cranky doctor. I felt betrayed as a five year old.

Thirty years later, the revelation was life changing. I got it; I was going for a tonsil operation not on a lolly treasure hunt. Emotionally I was stuck in a five-year-old mindset needing the promised lolly. "I cannot trust anyone" meant that if I wanted something I was sure others would not give it to me. I could not rely on others to deliver what they promised. I taught myself from as young as five years of age that if I wanted the lolly I could not wait for others to give me the lolly, I must learn how to take the lolly. Empowering belief no doubt to be self-reliant. I was confident in myself and my abilities, I knew I would always deliver on my promises to myself, I knew I could rely on my own abilities. But this "personally empowering" belief is incomplete, and for starters, is based on a five-year-old world view. When it came to relationships—personal and professional—I believed that I was the only reliable person in the room. That meant I could not have a fulfilling relationship because I could only rely on me and not him or them. How in the hell was I going to start a new life and find a decent man to get married to and have a family, if I could not feel confident I could rely on and trust him? How could I grow my business if I could not rely on and trust others?

Despite eating cold milk pudding, ice cream and jelly every day for two weeks while my tonsils healed, my obsession was with the one lolly I missed out on. Here I was enjoying daily serves of ice cream and jelly for breakfast, lunch and dinner while my siblings envied me for the luxurious lifestyle I was enjoying and all the while I was still thinking about the lolly I didn't get. It took thirty years to get it: Despite not getting the one big lolly, I got all the ice cream and jelly any child would dream of every day. I got "the blessing in disguise" lesson—I should be more grateful. Thirty years for the penny to drop is a long time but at least I got it. It was not too late! I could change my life.

Self-awareness is priceless because it allows us to tap into the unconscious belief systems we build inside our minds. Self-awareness allows those belief systems to determine how we interpret the world that we see. Self-awareness shapes our mindset and as a consequence determines our

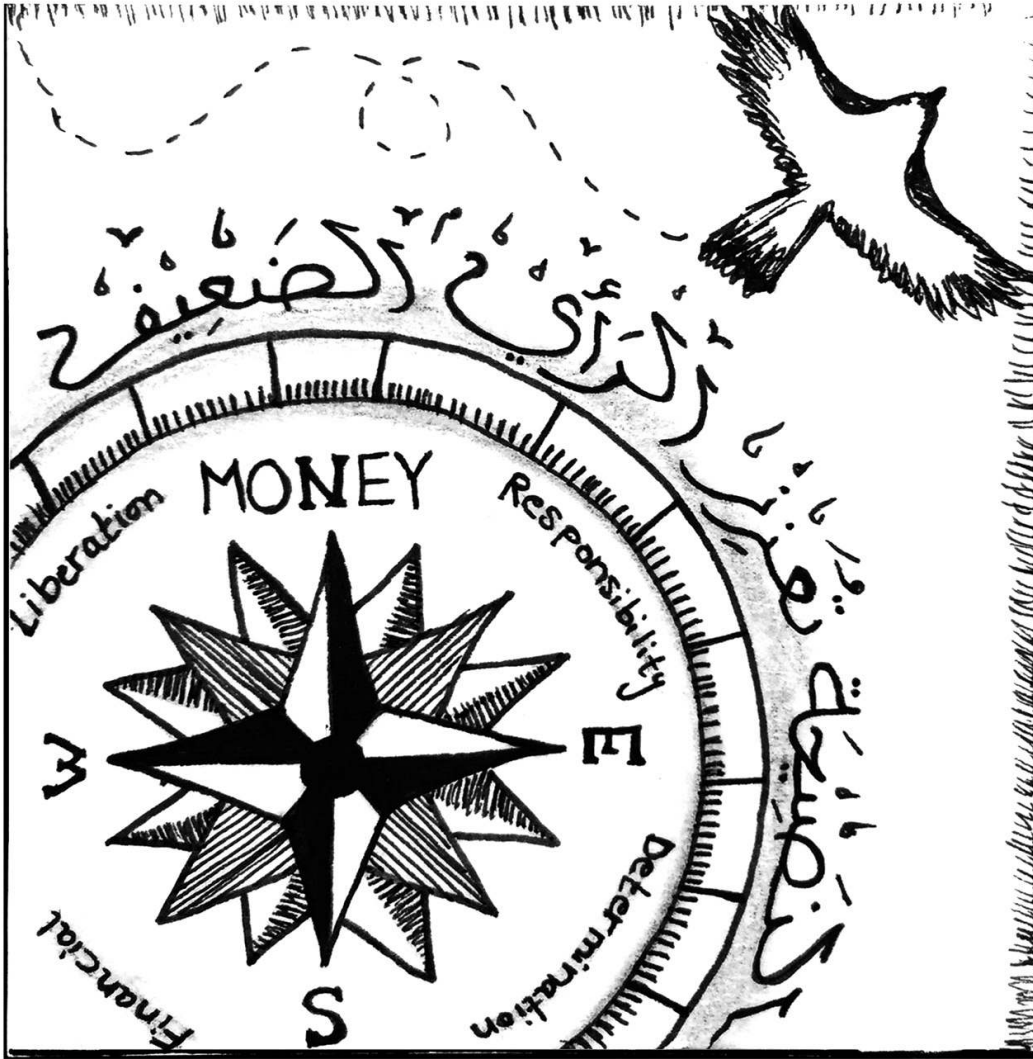
destiny. It helps us to question our most inner assumptions for one good and powerful reason, and that is to have the opportunity to choose to live an *Awesome* life. “It’s not what happens to you that’s important, it’s how you deal with it” is the first statement I heard when I started my personal self-discovery journey twenty years ago. I didn’t get it the first few times I heard it. It took time to get it. We are all wise in hindsight, of course. I became a big believer in personal growth and development and I owe every atom of my success to self-awareness and personal growth. Deciphering what makes us tick, distinguishing the meanings we place on events, and how we feel about those events is the key to making powerful choices in life and with it shaping our destiny. Self-determination then makes sense.

Money Intelligence™—Anchored in Values is more about self-awareness and personal growth. It’s about how beliefs, thoughts, words, habits and values drive our mindset and shape what we become, and with it, how our story unfolds in front of us on the stage of life. I invite you to read this book from the perspective that the value mindset offers you a rich and fulfilling life. It’s not a how-to-get-rich manual, even though you can follow the forty eight money mindset principles and the financial strategies in the practical case studies to understand how you can build your wealth. It’s a book that asks questions about your belief system, the values you carry with you about money and life and how you can adopt those values to shape your money mindset and consequently determine your destiny.



My parents' shop, now a fruit and vegetable store that still bears the same name, *Centrale Shops*. The apartment on top is now a lawyer's office, and the banner is advertising Bank of Palestine.

IN THE BEGINNING



Advice sharpens a rusty opinion.

I was born in Jerusalem's Al Khalidi hospital on the Arab side of a divided holy city in 1969, two years after the 1967 Israeli occupation of the Palestinian Territories of the West Bank and Gaza Strip. I grew up in Ramallah for the first seventeen years of my life before migrating to Australia with my family in the mid-1980s. I was born to a Palestinian Orthodox Christian family (my dad Victor) and Roman Catholic (my mum Souad). We trace our origins to the time of Jesus Christ, his disciples and followers. Our Palestinian Christian community makes 15% of the total Palestinian population worldwide. The rest of the Palestinians are mainly Sunni Muslim and a small percentage of the population includes Druze, Samaritans and Jews. Our multicultural heritage is a mixture of all the nations that built civilisation, sought refuge and pilgrimage to the Holy Land over the past 5,000 years—Canaanites, Phoenicians, Jews, Arabs, Greeks, Romans, Egyptians, Ethiopians, Persians, Assyrians, Russians, Armenians, European Crusaders and missionaries.

We identify firstly as Palestinian in nationality, Arab in ethnicity and language, and Christian in religion. Most of the Palestinian Christian community belonged to the Greek Orthodox Church till the 19th century when European missionaries started coming to the Holy Land and managed to convert the Orthodox community to other Christian denominations, mainly Catholic, Anglican and Lutheran. Palestine saw the building of these churches and schools in cities and villages with sizeable Christian populations like Jerusalem, Jaffa, Ramleh, Ramallah, Bethlehem, Beit Jala, Beit Sahour, Ramallah, Nazareth, Haifa and Tiberias.

My father's family held on to their Orthodox religion while my mother's family converted to Catholicism after the 1948 Palestinian Nakba (meaning catastrophe in Arabic). Between 1947 and 1948 over 700,000 Palestinians fled or were expelled and hundreds of Palestinian towns and villages destroyed and depopulated by Zionist militias to make way for the establishment of the state of Israel. The refugees and their descendants, now numbering in the millions, are living in the Occupied West Bank (800,000), Gaza Strip (1.1 million), Jordan (2 million), Lebanon (½ million) and Syria (were over ½ million but most had to leave Syria from 2011 due to the recent Syrian war and become refugees again).

I lived my childhood and most of my teenage years under Israeli occupation with neither freedom nor civil rights. The environment—military presence—induced me to believe that the Israelis were our enemy and our oppressing occupier, that they hated us and all they wanted was to drive us out of our beloved Palestine. But my views of Israelis changed in 1975 when I was six years old. I met one of my dad's best friends, a Jewish Israeli named Eli Mahlab.

Eli visited us at my parents' Centrale Shops in downtown Ramallah (there is uptown Ramallah) on the Shabbat. He lived in West Jerusalem. It was a day that I would never forget. I believe it changed my life and my family's life for the better. I have forgotten what Eli looks like but I remember his sermon in the shop. From the moment he began speaking, I knew he cared very much about my dad. I remember how the three of them sat in the middle of the shop. They sat on three chairs and a tiny square coffee table. Eli sat facing Mum, and Dad sat on his right. While my younger siblings (Nabil, five years old; Wedad, three years old and Mary, two years old) were playing in the shop I stood behind Eli and listened in. My youngest brother, Jiries, was six months old and wrapped up and sleeping in a cot at the back of the shop. By then, I was an expert at eavesdropping on my parents' endless business conversations, wondering how our life was going to work out, and fantasising that Jesus would come every night and put money on Mum's dressing table to cover my dad's money shortfall.

Eli was my dad's colleague and friend at Berman's Bakery—the second largest bakery in Israel based in West Jerusalem (the first largest was and still is Angel Bakeries which Dad traded with in later years). It was founded by a courageous, hard-working Rabbi's wife named Kreshne Berman, who supported her family while her husband studied full-time at the Yeshiva. Thanks to Eli, my dad was one of the first pioneers who introduced western-style Israeli bread to Palestinian Arab villages and towns across the West Bank in the 1970s and 1980s following the Israeli occupation of the Palestinian Territories. He built a fast-growing bread run covering hundreds of villages and towns selling thousands of bread loaves and rolls every day, feeding large Palestinian families fresh, cheap subsidised Israeli bread.

That day Eli advised my parents to create what I now call a Winner Partnership – M³™, to succeed in their business. He spoke with passion. I was too young at the time to be able to understand the role or importance of an adviser. But I understood later that Eli's advice was crucial in saving my family. The moment he said to Mum: "Victor is not good with managing money, you need to help him manage the business finances," and turned to Dad and said, "You need to allow your wife to help you by taking an active role in managing the business and the finances," I intuitively knew Eli had said something profoundly transformational. He nailed it. He saved my family from perpetual financial insecurity.

I felt it. It was not something I needed to think about as a six year old. It was something that I had been looking for to solve my parents' problems which I knew all about by then: The increasing debt to Berman's Bakery and

to family, friends and acquaintances in Ramallah; the failing shop business managed by Dad's friend; my parents' nightly talks and worrying; their arguing over "the money and where did the money go?" They were all a result of *financial mismanagement*. Somehow I knew Dad was skilled in earning the money—the Money Maker—but was not good at managing the money. That's where Mum stepped in—thanks to Eli—and completed the skill set. Mum was good at managing money. She was, and still is, a good Money Manager. Eli merely expressed in words how I intuitively felt. He was whom I now call a trusted Money Mentor.

My parents didn't have formal qualifications, neither an MBA nor a business degree. But they knew their business very well. They knew how to grow it, to a certain extent, as much as they could with the resources they had. They knew their customers and had good relationships with their suppliers. What they lacked in "expertise" they compensated for in hard work. Nothing beats sheer determination and my parents had it in abundance.

Reflecting on my parents' journey, I concluded that without Mum's strong belief and faith in God, without her daily prayers, without reading the bible every day, and without resorting to the wisdom of Arabic proverbs, she would not have strived and broken through the barriers of the difficult and challenging situations that she faced with my dad. Without my parents' unwavering strength, without their dreams and aspirations for their children, my parents would not, as a team, have succeeded. Without my dad's sheer determination, hard work beyond the impossible, without his charm, humour and ability to connect with people, my dad would not have grown the business and brought the money home for my mum to manage. Without their compassion, integrity and down-to-earth attitude, customers would not have been loyal to them and supported the growth of their business. Without an honest, loyal, creative and lateral thinking mentor like Eli, they would not have become an unbreakable team; they would have stayed husband and wife rather than partners in life and business. Without God/the universe/the infinite spirit that engulfs all living beings travelling on this living earth, all three would not have converged at that moment in history and made a difference to each other and consequently to their families and their wider communities. They would have not become a Winner Partnership – M³™.

I saw a change of mindset at my parents' shop that day. That change of mindset transformed my family and the path that the seven of us were on. That day was a detour, and that detour was only possible because Eli saw something that both my parents could not see but knew to be true the moment he spelled it out. How many times are we faced with an issue and

we are unable to see the solution until either someone points it out or we take an objective observer's view? Most of the time, the solution is always to build enough courage to face the problem, rather than avoid, defer or ignore it. Sometimes the solution is the simplest and the most obvious but our mind deceives us into thinking that the solution should be more complex, or that it is in someone else's power rather than ours. Problems pile up and become more complex because we don't "tackle" them straight on. We ignore them because they either look hard or we hope and pray that they will just go away and everything will "work out in the end". We convince ourselves that God or our leaders will "fix it all up". So we create a society that venerates a few leaders rather than a society with millions of capable leaders in their own lives and in their spheres of influence.

Thirty years on, I advise my clients, just as Eli advised and supported my parents. That's why I love being a Financial Strategist and Money Mentor. I see every client like I saw my parents, and every time they tell me their stories, I go back in time to 1975. Every time I hear a story of hardship, of sheer determination, of lack of profit and tight cash flow, I go back in time to downtown Ramallah. Every time I work the numbers for clients, my heart feels their struggle. I no longer hold onto my childhood fantasy that Jesus is a financial saviour walking around with pockets full of cash dropping by and placing it on dressing tables to save families from financial ruin. But I do believe that each human being is born gifted from God/the universe/the infinite spirit with unlimited potential to save oneself from their own ignorance, fears and limited beliefs and rise over one's circumstances. Faith in one's potential, dreams and aspirations and consequently self-determination are the anchors of success. Money Intelligence™ is anchored by those values.

I believe that without faith—in oneself, in one's partner, in one's mentor, in one's community, in one's work mates, in the country's economy and financial system—there can never be prosperity on either an individual or societal level. An economic system is founded on this basis. Our economists call it "consumer confidence". But I like to call it trust. We trust our country's currency, our leaders' economic policies, our companies' CEO's visions, our small businesses' pioneers, our advisers and mentors, our teachers with whom we entrust our children, and our farmers whom we trust our food with. To strengthen this circle of trust, the rule of law, and fair and strong policies must be strengthened and society's high moral compass and ethical standards must infiltrate institutions and the education system. My family has been blessed. I am lucky to have them and to share their story

as well as mine with you. Without our stories, we have no hope of a better life and we cannot change our human condition; we cannot learn, grow and more importantly, evolve and transform. It is our stories and life experiences that define us and make us the human beings that we are—real people with feelings, desires and dreams. But most importantly, people with unlimited potential, ready to be unleashed once we answer the call to the Hero's Journey.

Twenty years of business experience has taught me that change is the only constant—so far I have witnessed the proliferation of credit cards and personal debt, the introduction of the GST, the year 2000 tech crash, the 2008 GFC and its aftermath, the continuous off shoring of service jobs and technology taking over many professions that we thought would be safe from the machines. Our mindset must be adaptable and flexible enough to take in and transform the change all around us so that we succeed for our family's sake.

However, mindset is not the same as values. Values must be rock solid and must withstand the onslaught of a fast changing world. "Do no harm" should be at the forefront of our thinking as we forge ahead to build businesses and create wealth. The challenge for society is in keeping and holding on to our values but changing our mindset enough to adapt to an ever-changing environment. Every human being is living and walking on the path towards personal growth, whether or not they are aware of it. The Hero's Journey is closer than we think. It's not in books and movies with stories of myths and legends. It's living inside us. The call to adventure is constantly being sent out. It is up to us to stop and listen to the call and make something inspirational out of a life that we can create rather than a reactive life lived without purpose, meaning or passion.

I have chosen to pass on my message and share my own journey to help you become financially savvy. I couldn't think of a better way to share Money Intelligence™ than through my family's life story and how my parents partnered together to build their business and provide my siblings and I with a better life. My intention is to give you a money book without financial jargon and make it easier to learn so you begin to embrace the idea that Money Intelligence™ is mission possible. This book was written genuinely to help you realise that potential. Most of all, I bring you the good news: Self-determination, Winner Partnership – M³™ and Money Mindset form the foundation of Money Intelligence™. Without them, humanity cannot build civilisations, cannot innovate and cannot make the world better for the next generation.

Christmas 2015 marks the fortieth anniversary of the fateful cold winter day when my mum walked out of her Ramallah home dressed in black (in honour of my grandfather, her dad Issa Habash, who died that same year from a heart attack in his sleep) pushing a pram with my six-month-old brother and four little children aged two to seven walking next to her. Typically, it would be a fifteen-minute walk from our home to the shop but it took longer with four young children at her side, and a baby in a pram. The winter is harsh in Ramallah and it snows most years. Walking the streets on a cold morning is no place for children. But there we were, bracing the wind rugged up with our pyjamas underneath and two more layers of clothing to keep us warm, walking down the street to be with Mum at the shop. That was the first day out of thousands more to come from 1975 to 1986.

My parents worked so hard and walked their Hero's Journey together, fought together, cheered each other in good times and leaned on each other in bad times. They fought for us, their children, because they wanted us to have a better life than the one they had; achieve a better education; have more money; have more support than their parents could provide for them. They wanted the best for us and were willing to sacrifice everything for us at the expense of their personal dreams.

They spent a decade building a successful business and a beautiful white house surrounded by quiet olive mountains only to see it all sold within a year. It was heart breaking for Mum who wished for nothing but to stay at home, look after us and sit in front of the mountain of olives in the afternoon and drink her favourite cup of tea (black with sage). This book is dedicated to my parents, especially my mum who I believe sacrificed the most to make sure we "turned out". There was nothing she was not prepared to do for us.

This book is also dedicated to every woman from East to West, North to South, who finds herself leaving her home every morning to provide for her family and work in the office, in the fields, in the mines, in the taxis, in the shops, in the banks, in the restaurants, in the hospitals, in the schools, in the parliaments and every corner on earth where the woman is needed and honoured for her intelligence, hard work, loyalty and selflessness. This year also marks the 40th anniversary of the first International Women's Year celebrated on 8 March 1975. More reasons for acknowledging women's significant contributions the past four decades.

Writing a book about money, business and life has been a long-held dream. My family's story has been in my heart and on my mind since Christmas 1975. As an avid reader of novels since the age of six, I dreamt of one day writing about my family when I grew up. I had dreams of becoming a

writer and journalist at high school. But I ended up pursuing a business degree for various reasons and among them “writing doesn’t pay the bills”.

Despite twenty-three years of being an accountant and financial adviser, writing has been one of my favourite escapades. I even took a few writing courses a decade ago at Sydney’s “The Writers Studio” to improve my writing skills with an aim of writing books and novels by the time I was forty. Alas, the juggle of family life and business was a hindrance. But something changed for me in 2014 when I decided that I needed to make drastic changes in my life to enable me to pursue my dream. I knew the 40th anniversary was coming up. I had to write “The Book” about my family, life, business and money—the tapestry of my life and who I am.

I started my journey to become an author and a thought leader on money at Thought Leaders Business School (TLBS) that was founded by Matt Church and Peter Cook. It’s a community of people who come together every quarter to ask themselves serious questions like: “What do we want for our life? What difference do we want to make?” Each one of us is faced with these questions at some point(s) in our lives. The questions don’t have to be difficult to ask and or seem impossible to find an answer for. No matter who we are and where we come from; what business we are in; what job we do; whether we are rich or poor; whether we are famous or not; whether we are young, middle-aged or old; whether we are single, a couple or parents with children, we all have to deal with our human condition and ask “What is the meaning of my life? Why am I here? What difference do I want to make?”

It was 28 August 2014 as Sydney was transitioning from winter to spring when I began my immersion into self-discovery and thought leadership at TLBS. Half way through day two, I hadn’t written anything—writers block is real! I had one more day left before the first immersion weekend would conclude. If it weren’t for Coach Corrinne Armour I would have given up and gone home. An hour of cathartic coaching later and half a box of tissue consumed as an aftermath, I emerged from her mentoring session knowing I needed to write about my family, my life and about money. I found myself writing in the TLBS black book about my parents’ Victor and Souad Wahhab, and their life and business experience that they lived through the past forty years. I wrote, “My identity is glued within my family. My parents’ love for me, for us, for our extended family, for their business, for their customers is what gets me. It’s confronting to see two dedicated generous parents give more and more. It’s confronting seeing generosity, love and selflessness in action. Who they are demands more from me to be like them—loving, generous and selfless. I am who I am because of them.”

Dr Viktor Emil Frankl, Austria's most eminent psychologist, survived the Nazi concentration camps by finding meaning in the midst of extreme suffering. He believed that people are primarily driven by "striving to find meaning in one's life". I read Dr Frankl's *Man's Search for Meaning* fifteen years earlier and I felt it was time to get the book out of the library again and read it that weekend. I opened the book that night and read the following statement that I had highlighted years earlier:

» *What was really needed was a fundamental change in our attitude toward life. We had to learn ourselves and, furthermore, we had to teach the despairing men, that it did not really matter what we expected from life, but rather what life expected from us. We needed to stop asking about the meaning of life, and instead think of ourselves as those who were being questioned by life—daily and hourly. Our question must consist, not in talk and meditation, but in right action and in right conduct. Life ultimately means taking the responsibility to find the right answer to its problems and to fulfil the tasks which it constantly sets for each individual.* 🌱

DR VIKTOR FRANKL, *MAN'S SEARCH FOR MEANING*

It was as if Dr Frankl was talking about me, about my parents and my family. My parents definitely live their lives from "what life expects from them" rather than what they expect from life. They didn't go to university to learn the latest business and financial management skills, and both had to leave school earlier due to life's circumstances. But they did well together in our family business in Ramallah. They breathed dedication, generosity and love for their business. I can't label what that is. I will try to unravel it for you in this book. But it is what made them succeed. "My simple parents managed to make something meaningful out of their business and they were happy" was my last entry in the black book diary.

My message to you is that *hope is never lost*. Life always goes on. Humanity is most resilient in the face of adversity. We all have the capacity to survive.

But for humanity to thrive and flourish, it needs to—like my parents did back in 1975—join forces and create Winner Partnership - M³™ together to overcome, to stand shoulder to shoulder, like Mum stood next to Dad to save the family from poverty and financial ruin.

You might be struggling in your business to make a decent profit; you might have lost your job and your home got possessed by the bank; you might be finding it hard to make ends meet and pay the bills; you might have lost your family; you might have lost your home and land to climate change, floods, earthquake or war; you might be going through a separation or divorce; you might be stressed at work and your boss is asking more and more from you; you might be losing your children to drugs and other vices; you might be struggling with alcohol and other addictions; you might be resigned in your relationship with your partner and all romance and love is gone. I am hoping this book will help you revive old flames, help you make more money and support you in reconnecting with your partner and family to join forces and create Winner Partnerships everywhere in your life.

During the process of writing this book, I realised that money is not a separate topic we compartmentalise and talk about nothing else. Money is not the centre of our lives. It plays a large part in our modern life. But it should not be front and centre. How we relate to money is based on our personal experiences and mainly the influence our family's values play in our lives. Money intelligence™ is learnable and portable. Once you know the foundation and building blocks for wealth building, you can never unlearn it and you can take this knowledge anywhere. If you end up a refugee and lose all your material possessions and have nothing but “the shirt on your back”, you can build it again, because Money Intelligence™ is within your mind and inside your heart.

I believe that Money Intelligence™ is about you following your passion. Money flows when passion is alive—for your partner, children, family, work, business, customers, community and Mother Earth. Money will mean nothing in the end if we collect it all for ourselves with no purpose and no one to share its comforts with. It is from this point of view that I write this book and passionately share it with you.

Love, Freedom and a Fair go

» *You must be the judge of your own happiness.
You want nothing but patience or give it
a more fascinating name, call it Hope.* ❧

JANE AUSTEN, *SENSE AND SENSIBILITY*

I lived a sheltered life in Ramallah toiling a daily routine of a high-achieving academic student at Saint Joseph School and bearing the eldest daughter's responsibilities and duties (cleaning, cooking and looking after younger siblings, though I must admit I was not a good older sister but I was a good cook!) Sport was not my thing. I was a bookworm. I loved philosophy, literature and history and I spent my days reading. My places of worship were the Holy Family Catholic Church across the road from our home and the Ramallah Library, a couple of kilometres away from Al-Manara centre in the middle of town. By age twelve, I had already read Greek mythologies, *Arabian Nights*, most of Naguib Mahfouz novels (Egyptian Nobel Laureate) and just started on Jane Austen's *Pride and Prejudice*, my favourite story of all novels!

As I was growing up, I dreamt of an aspiring life like Miss Elizabeth Bennett where I would find my version of Mr Darcy—I dreamt he would be an Englishman too!—a hero with noble ideals and also money. But along the way I discovered that in this day and age, a woman doesn't need a hero to save her and her family from an impending disaster. I also learnt that I am the heroine in my own story and I forge my own future and build my own wealth. *If it's meant to be, it's up to me* became my motto by age twenty-five in response to a few extended family and friends archaic patriarchs who expressed their views that "degrees and careers for women are useless since you'll end up at home anyway". I didn't find a rich Mr Darcy on £10,000 a year! But in my mid-thirties I eventually found a loyal and caring husband who loves his family very much.

I migrated to Australia with my family from Ramallah, Palestine in October 1986 when Bob Hawke was prime minister and Paul Keating was treasurer. By the end of my first day at Canterbury Girls High School, I was in a state of culture shock and went home (we were staying at my uncle's house at the time) begging Mum to pack our bags and go back to Ramallah. Coming from a conservative Christian background and strict schooling by the Catholic nuns at Saint Joseph School, I was taken aback by the short skirts, the smoking in the toilets, the makeup and wild hair (this was Madonna's

1980s after all!) and the screaming and what I perceived as wild behaviour of some of the school girls when they met up with their boyfriends near the school fence. I went home that day crying and told Mum I was going back to Ramallah to live with my grandmother while I finish my last year at Saint Joseph School. Thankfully Mum calmed me down and sent me back to school the next day. I am glad she did (I missed the 1987 intifada against the Israeli occupation) as I discovered while doing my HSC, reading the likes of Miles Franklin's *My Brilliant Career* and Ruth Park's *The Harp in the South*, what Australia is all about:

- A Fair go for all
- We are all equal
- We love being Free

I came to discover that Australia was an egalitarian society that rewarded its members based on merit rather than connections—an idea so refreshing for a Middle Eastern woman who lived under a patriarchal society that rewarded its members based on who they were. I was born under Israeli military occupation that didn't offer freedom to the population it occupies. And to make matters worse, the society I was born into distinguished between rich and poor, the sophisticated urban dwellers and the simple village people, businessmen and menial Palestinian workers, and more evidently discriminated against women. I was brought up being fed a man-made truth that life is neither fair nor free and that there is nothing I, or anyone, can do to change the status quo.

Fairness, equality and freedom rang true for me as a woman and since I learnt about the values of being given a fair go, I was determined to uphold my Aussie values and live by them. Freedom for me is about my self-determination, realising my true potential, thinking independently, behaving ethically and responsibly without oppression and discrimination. Fairness and equality for me is about valuing every human being no matter what they look like, who they worship, how much money they have or have not, as full human beings with feelings, dreams and aspirations. I believe that there can be no sustainable prosperity, no free enterprise, no innovation and no democracy without freedom, equality and fairness. A free society creates the opportunities and sets the groundwork for its members to unleash their talents and potential. That reservoir of human potential creates economies, drives innovation and builds civilisations. That potential needs freedom, fairness and equality to thrive and unleash. Let's hope Australia can export these values to every country on earth to make peace a reality.

Despite the social change in the past twenty years that has started to erode Australia's egalitarian society, I am hopeful that Australia will not stray from its principles and will not leave its most vulnerable behind; will not sacrifice workers' rights for the sake of more profits; and will pursue policies to ensure that its strong middle class keeps on flourishing.

Doing business in a “man's world”

When I graduated from university with an accounting degree in 1992, there were hardly any women partners in accounting firms, nor any women on boards. There was a lot of talk in the 1990s about the glass ceiling senior women were facing in the workplace. But the glass ceiling for all women was way lower than the one that senior women were facing back then. It was not uncommon to ask a junior accountant, “So do you plan on having children?” Many employers assumed that once women had children, their careers, and subsequently the employer's investment of training and money, would go to waste. Understandably, their concerns were more driven by financial considerations. Childcare centres were in their infancy then and it was not “the norm” to leave the children all day in the care of strangers for the parents to pick them up by the end of the working day. Many women my generation decided to go into business to pursue the “having it all” ideal—looking after the children and having a career or business.

With that in mind, it was in July 1995 that I decided to go into business and build my accounting practice at twenty-five years of age. I was young and inexperienced (I was caught by the entrepreneurial seizure as Michael Gerber in his book *The E-Myth* describes it) but I was full of energy and passion for business when I founded the practice with hardly any capital, any contacts and any clients. My parents secured their home for me to apply for a \$15,000 overdraft to start, and a year later I asked them to increase the overdraft to \$40,000 as I needed more money to pay for mistakes I had made with people I easily trusted (hindsight is a wonderful thing!). For the first seven years, I hardly made any money and lived at home while building up a loyal and wonderful client base, employing people who didn't work out and juggling an ever-increasing workload of marketing and networking, client meetings, employee supervising and reviewing accounts and tax returns.

In the beginning I found myself without much cash and a couple of times I had no money to catch the train to the office as clients were slow at paying while my bank balance was \$1 short of the overdraft limit. I refused to ask my parents for train money! I drove in my red Ford Telstar for hours at night completing tax returns in clients' homes while working full-time and building

the business part-time. Sometimes my dad would come with me and wait in the car in front of people's homes to make sure that I was safe. I slept in my office's meeting room many nights using two big pillows that decorated the reception's yellow lounge (it was a fashionable colour back then) and going to the gym the next morning to have a shower! Still now I keep a toothbrush, toothpaste and a hair dryer in my drawer even though I no longer sleep in my office. The only social life I enjoyed was attending networking breakfasts and dinners for business and professional people and the only fun I had was listening to inspiring speakers share their Hero's Journeys with their audience while drinking badly brewed hotel coffee. No regrets, it was really good fun and still is.

I met many unethical people in my line of work, including clients (now ex-clients) who never paid their bills; clients (now ex-clients) who fabricated outrageous accusations and blackmailed me to pay back the fees for services performed; clients (now ex-clients) who filed for administration and bankruptcy without telling me so they didn't have to pay our fees (that was the year 2000 tech crash); trainee accountants who lied to me about their weekly study leave only to find out later they dropped out of university months before while enjoying their Fridays off at my expense; and senior accountants who were operating their own accounting practice and taking calls from their clients while sitting right next to me.

Many times I felt I was the only naive accountant in town. I could feel it most when attending professional development days sitting next to older, grey-haired accountants who had run their accounting practices for decades. I was close to quitting many times and felt like a fraud advising my clients on how to build their businesses while I was making mistakes in mine. I became an accredited financial adviser and was still struggling to take a decent salary from the business let alone save any. The challenges in building my business in the first five years tested my enthusiasm and dented my "fighting spirit". It's a lonely place for a small business entrepreneur.

But like the hero in the Hero's Journey, once I followed the call to adventure and established my practice, battled with villains, slept in my office, suffered many tribulations and prayed for God's help while lying on the yellow pillows in my office at night, I met my business mentor who helped me cross the threshold, faced my challenges, shed my naivety and made something good out of Winner Partnership.

The late Richard Vincent was then CEO of World Xchange, a telecommunications company that existed in Australia in the 1990s. I started doing his and his wife's tax returns in 1998. Over the five years I got to know

him very well as he transitioned from CEO to management consultant and board member for a few Telco and IT companies. He was an exceptional communicator, and an ethical human being who treated me with respect and honour. He had an optimistic view of life and was always cheerful despite being a Pommy! He always gave me good advice about what to do and what not to do in business while doing tax planning and going through tax papers.

Richard battled with cancer and passed away in May 2003. A few days before he passed, he dropped by my office and met with me knowing it was going to be the last time. He came to say goodbye. Saying goodbye for him was more about making sure I succeeded after he was gone. He said, "I have done great things in my life and achieved so much. I made peace with my past and the people in it. I leave this world knowing I lived a big life. It's your turn now. Susan, I believe in you. I believe you can succeed. I believe that what you created here is amazing and you need to go out there and shine. You need to get out there and help women like you, make something good out of the opportunities that are now available to them. Never in the history of the world has this been available to millions like you. You can help women succeed in their business and help them build their wealth." His body was so frail, he was skin and bones by then, yet he was strong in spirit. His fighting spirit inspired me. His last hug I will never let go of, and his generous advice I will forever cherish.

The Hero's Journey isn't a two-hour movie. It's a string of events and life changes that one can only reflect on in hindsight. My business journey has been going on for twenty years. The first seven were the most challenging. But change comes when you change your mindset. Richard not only inspired me, he changed my mindset, my view of myself. It took some time. But shortly after our last meeting, I made a commitment that I was going to start my journey of wealth building, walk my talk before I went out there like Richard said I should. I created my Magna Vision and committed to two important things that I wanted to achieve in my life in the following decade:

Priority # 1: Find the man of my dreams. By then I had given up on a Mr Darcy version and was happy to find a good-hearted, open-minded, highly intelligent, highly ethical human being who would love me very much.

Priority # 2: Create my personal wealth plan and be financially free in fifteen years. I started saving small then went big: \$200/month became \$500/month and increased to \$1,000/month and within a year increased to \$2,000/month. I was saving to buy my own home and build a property portfolio.

The rest, as they say, is history. I met my husband Josh Govind in January 2005; we were married in less than two years and had our son Gabriel in 2008 while juggling motherhood and a growing practice. Over the past ten years, I have built a property portfolio that will secure my future retirement without having to rely on my husband, and ensured I have set aside a property in a trust for my son when he comes of age.

Once I secured my own wealth plan, I started thinking that I needed to help my clients secure theirs. I wanted to help others once I helped myself. I started asking myself big questions: *What do I want to do with my life now that I have secured mine financially?* I want to do something meaningful that changes people's lives for the better. Tax return and accounting is honest to goodness work. But advising people in money matters to improve their financial position is what makes me happy. When one is financially stable and secure, they attain peace; they stop living in a chaotic state of survival and start thinking about big-picture goals, amongst them, fulfilling their own life purpose. When I see couples get in tune with each other and forge ahead side by side creating their version of a Winner Partnership – M³™, I see prosperity come their way. That's what makes my heart sing. That's what I love doing.

But I needed to wake my clients up first. Over the past twenty years, I have advised hundreds of clients in financial matters. Most of my middle- to upper-middle class clients call me for meetings seeking ad hoc financial advice to solve short-term issues related to lifestyle goals. The recurring theme seems to be related to whether they can afford to:

- Buy or lease a new car and what's the best form of finance—loan, lease or pay for it from their mortgage.
- Buy an expensive home close to the city and whether their income will cover the *big* mortgage.
- Sell their existing home and move to a bigger home and generally a more expensive one.
- Keep the home they have and convert it to an investment property and then upgrade to a new home.
- Renovate an existing home or sell and then buy a new one.

From the point of view of an Investorgetic™, I believe that middle- and upper-middle class professionals pay too much for everything convenient without thinking of the long-term consequences. There is a myth that those earning high incomes working their guts out at work (while handing their souls at the corporations doors) end up with substantial money when they retire. The majority of clients I meet on high incomes are not building wealth for

retirement. They are spending it all for current lifestyle living. They have big mortgages, drive expensive cars, and have a modest super fund and hardly any properties outside of the family home. I would love to see those clients who are working hard for an employer or in their business get more focused on building income-producing growth assets (like property, shares, land, car parks but for goodness sake not art, bikes or vintage cars please!) and plan for retirement while working hard. It's actually not that hard to build assets. All I see is incomes being converted to consumables. That, for me, is a big financial tragedy, where the high risk of loss of one's job to technology and outsourcing is becoming a reality that we are accepting in the workplace. All I see is those people handing their souls at the corporations' doors are risking it all for a low return in the long term.

I try to preach my gospel of converting people's mindset from one of a Consumerholic to an Investorgetic™. For the past five years and since I have started feeling comfortable about my own financial path, I have been on a mission to take as many clients as possible with me towards financial liberation. I found myself becoming more courageous, having bold conversations with clients, running seminars in my office for small groups of clients presenting and educating them, their friends and family in the virtues of wealth building, property investing, negative gearing and self-managed super funds (SMSF). My presentation skills improved dramatically and 15% of my clients have converted from a mindset of consumer to that of investor. They have started their long-term journey of investing with Winner Partnership to secure their retirement future.

Over five hundred people have attended my seminars since 2010 and 100% walk away saying they learnt a lot from my intense seminar packed with numbers and warnings of their impending unplanned retirement. Sadly only 15% tick the "after seminar meeting" box and end up on their journey with me to help them build wealth. The take-up numbers are interesting as the general population numbers show that 86% of Australians end up receiving the old age pension (part or full). Disappointingly, 85% of clients never do anything about their financial situation and the years go by while the changes in the investment market, the economy, and the fast technological advances seem to squeeze more people out of meaningful careers and prized positions. How can one guarantee a forty-year career that will ensure a retirement pension in the end that is in line with one's lifestyle and standard of living while working?

Five years of preaching the Investorgetic™ gospel in my humble office and seeing a small percentage of clients join me on the journey, I am still

unsatisfied about the 85% left behind, those still stuck in the wilderness with no financial plan, no investments and a modest super. This book is for those 85% who procrastinate, defer, ignore, deny and wish for a lottery win or an inheritance. This book is for you and my last plea is:

Transform your financial life and shift your consumer mindset to investor; the end of your working life is nearer than you think. There is no such thing as a forty-year old career. Your super fund will not be enough to guarantee a comfortable retirement. Your home is not an investment property that you can generate income from when you retire unless you want to share it with strangers! Set yourself free from captivity and enter the world of financial liberation. Otherwise you have to ask the government for the pension!



Top: Ramallah Library, where I used to spend hours reading during the summer holidays. The librarian who worked there ended up marrying my cousin.

Above: The school that I attended from age three to seventeen, Saint Joseph School.

3

**IS THE LUCKY COUNTRY'S LUCK
RUNNING OUT?**



» *It is nothing but our own vanity that deceives us.* «

JANE AUSTEN, *PRIDE AND PREJUDICE*

More than 84% of people sixty-five years and older are receiving the old age pension (\$22,542 per year for single and \$33,982 per year for a couple as at September 2015). This means that only 16% of retirees are self-funded. The number of retirees has been rising the past twenty years as the Baby Boomers enter retirement—from 2.1 million living on the government old age pension in 1994 to 3.3 million in 2014. By 2040 the numbers are expected to double to 6 million. The current spending on age-related pensions represents more than 10% of total government expenditure and is projected to increase as the population ages.

How could this be the reality of one of the richest and luckiest countries in the world?

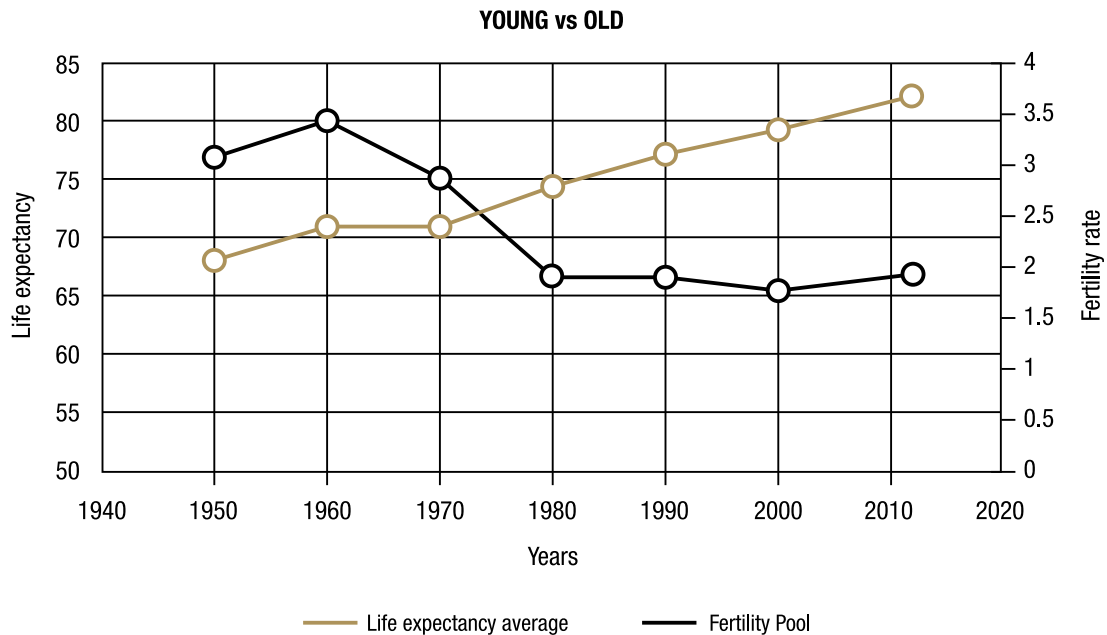
Young versus Old

Providing the old age pension was economically insignificant sixty years ago. Back then the life expectancy for a male was sixty-six years and a female, seventy-two years. The old age pension was on average paid over two to five years. With a current average life expectancy of seventy-nine years of age for a male and eighty-two for a female, the dollar value of the pension expense and consequently, health and aged care services, has been steadily rising since the 1970s. It will continue to do so for the next thirty years while a huge chunk of the government's budget pie is used to pay pensions and provide health and aged care services.

To make matters worse, the fertility rate has been declining since the 1970s. The number of children per woman has reduced from five in the 1950s to 1.7 in 2010. Australia, along with most western countries, is currently facing one of its biggest challenges—changing demographics. Never in the history of humanity have we seen an increase in older population and a decrease in the younger one. Due to medical and technological advances, populations around the world are ageing and living longer.

A lower fertility rate and an ageing population that's living longer are putting more pressure on the fiscal budget as the senior citizens are paid their pension over a longer period of time while the tax revenue is reducing as worker rates are reducing with a shrinking population. Of course immigration is helping curb the lower fertility rate. But migrants also age and their social security and medical needs are the same as the local

population. No amount of revenue raising is going to curb the increasing expenditure over the next few decades without affecting the economy.



Short-term focused governments

The reality is that governments have been slow at planning for the demographic and societal changes taking shape. Governments across the world are still running their affairs with a post WWII mindset. Back then offering the old age pension was not going to make much of a dent in the fiscal budget and a flourishing manufacturing economy meant western economies could pay the old age pension to their citizens. Living longer also means medical expenses will be higher and put a strain on the health system. The pension was designed to alleviate poverty among non-working ageing Australians, rather than “in sickness and in health, till death do us part” commitment. The burgeoning budget deficits are a result of rising pension payments, health care and aged care costs. As former Prime Minister Paul Keating warned: “The Commonwealth’s implicit promise of a decent retirement income cannot be met. The current system is not designed for people who lived beyond 80, let alone 100”. *Peace and prosperity: The spiritual challenge* speech 23rd August 2008.

Living longer is making the problem harder to solve. We are indeed in trouble if we do nothing about our future retirement. “She’ll be right mate” will not be right. In fact, she’ll be right is not true. The lucky country is facing major challenges in the next twenty years, including further globalisation and competition as more jobs will be outsourced to cheaper countries, a lower fertility rate, higher asset prices and a burgeoning ageing population.

What does this mean for Australia? What does it mean for you?

Western countries with successful economies are already feeling the pain. As more and more Baby Boomers retire, the budgets will be stretched and governments will have no option but to either/or:

- Borrow money: Governments across the world are already doing it indebting the next generations and limiting their future.
- Lift the legal age of retirement: The age pension was increased to seventy for people born after 1965.
- Phase the age pension out: Superannuation is the government's retirement plan to get as many people as possible to rely on their super as a retirement vehicle. So if you don't get your super investments right, you are in trouble.
- Increase taxes: Consumption/GST, land tax, income tax limiting the younger generations' standard of living.
- Exclude more people out of the pension by expanding the means test criteria: There are suggestions that the family home could be means tested. Don't wait for your inheritance!

Have you planned for a future without the pension?

If the variables stay the same, governments will have no option but to either burden the country and future generations with more debt and at the same time increase taxes to fund the rising pension expenditure or phase the pension out. Can you imagine people taking to the streets if this happens? It will be a slow transition though. By the time my son's generation grows up, they will be conditioned that they have to fund their retirement.

Many governments have been balancing the budget through borrowing. But that's not the solution, not in the long term anyway. Countries and governments should be borrowing to invest, not to spend. No country wants to see its economy shrunk and its government facing extinction like Greece or Italy, both with high numbers of old age pension retirees.

But the biggest cost will be the opportunity cost in terms of what the governments across the world will have to forgo in spending on their young population in terms of school and tertiary education, innovation, business support, and housing for families and young people. All of these investments are investments for the country's future. When governments have to choose between fulfilling their obligations of paying their older citizens the pension

and having to spend on the young population, we should know that we are indeed in trouble. We all know that the key to any community's future is in its young people.

We must face the reality that our society's changing demographics will mean the pension years are numbered and we need to adjust the western mindset that self-funded retirement is the new norm not the exception.

When one is faced with an outside challenge, the solution to the challenge always comes from within. One must ask profound meaningful questions to solve difficult problems. We must have a good theory for the future. For the future belongs to those who prepare for it. Without planning, the future is uncertain. We must believe in our own and communal self-determination. We have to forge our own destiny and think through (and write down) our goals and dreams, financial and action plans, and determine our course of action. We must free ourselves from the illusion that our backup financial plan is the government pension, untie the shackles of consumerism that's stopping us from saving for the long term, and save for our own impending retirement.

Imagine if 50% of my generation—Generation X—did that? Imagine if you as a forty to fifty year old decided now that you want to create your long-term retirement plan to ensure you don't knock on social security's door when you turn seventy? What would that do to the projected budget deficit in fifteen to twenty years' time? The government's current objective is to increase the ratio of self-funded retirees from 16% to 25% in the next twenty years. That's a low target that shows a lack of faith by our government. It tells me that our government has no faith in you in forging your own destiny. But I do have faith in my generation. We are entrepreneurial, independent and embrace and accept diversity. How do we secure the future of 50% of Gen X retirees to become self-funded in the next fifteen to twenty years? *Let's shift from a Consumerholic to an Investorgetic™ generation.* If we can move Gen X from a government-dependent mindset, the generations after us will follow. We need to set the standard.

The individual can make faster change in their life than a big government. Change is not easy for big organisations stuck with red tape, politics and complex systems. But I am a big believer in the ripple-effect philosophy. If I throw that little pebble in the pond, its ripple effect will be felt across the whole pond not only in the spot where I threw the pebble. So it's important that you start with your financial liberation. Because if we can tip the balance and have more people pursue their own self-funding retirement goals, then governments will have less people to pay money to at retirement,

which means they will have more money to spend on your children and grandchildren's education, on housing and social infrastructure that will benefit the whole society. I am a big believer in the ripple effect of personal change on society and history. So I am starting with speaking directly to you. You, as the conduit for social change. In order to shift from a Consumerholic to an Investorgetic™ mindset, you need to improve your Money Intelligence™.