

HOW TO INVEST IN YOU, INC.

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1. Set up a 'business' account to deposit all inflow. This includes but is not limited to your salary, bonuses, commissions, sales, gifts, found money, lottery winnings, lemonade stands, that \$20 bill you found on the street, and the money you made from selling your Great Aunt Sophie's snow globe collection on eBay. All money flows through this account, but no expenses are paid from it. The only outflow is in the form of your personal 'draw'. (hint: make sure this is a checking account because there is a maximum to the number of withdrawals you can make from a savings account. Also this will likely not be a real business account according to the bank's regulations - that's fine)
2. Pay yourself the a draw out of that account in whatever interval makes your life easiest. Once a month, twice a month or 4 times a month. Do not do every other week as that will throw off some months with 3 withdrawals. Keep this account at the same bank as your Business account for easy transfers. Do not automate this feature. You have the time to log onto the website and make this transfer and if you don't there is a whole lot more you need to change before attempting any of this. Only transfer what you need to live. Any extra money stays in your Business account.
3. Treat that income as your 'steady' income. Do your best to live on that and let the money in your business account grow. (more later on this - see #7)
4. Did you do steps 1 and 2 and have successfully put step 3 into practice? OK, now you are ready. Sit down. Breathe. This is the fun part. Ask yourself (with your partner if you have one) what it is that you want. What do you want? Take a day, or a weekend to brainstorm this. It's not as easy as it sounds and it will be ever changing. NOTHING, I mean nothing is off the table. I don't care if you are making \$20,000 a year and want a villa in Lake Cuomo so you can run into George Clooney while picking up Mineral Water and truffles at the market. Or if you are earning \$450,000 and just want a quiet weekend with the hubby. Write. it. Down. Dream big, little, and everything in between. Be honest with yourself. Don't say you want a boat if you aren't willing to do what it takes to keep a boat. (It takes a lot I hear). This isn't about what your mother wanted for you or what your dad always hoped you would become or even what you swore you wanted last week. Or yesterday. Start with a clean slate.

I hope at the end of this you have reams of paper with crinkles and cross-outs and highlights and stickers if you want. If you have the sense that you've just given birth, you have done this step well.

5. Prioritize the shit out of it. What is most important? Saving? The Villa? A nap? Taking care of a sick parent or a healthy child? A daily latte? Purple suede Prada platforms that are on sale and you can't live without? (I digress).

6. Go get a latte. You need one at this point, let's face it. Maybe a brownie too.
7. What do good businesses do with their profits, especially early on? They invest them back into - you guessed it - the business. Now I want you to take the money in your business account and invest the appropriate percentages to each item on your list. Does retirement get 50% and the Villa get 25% and 25% goes to liquid savings? Or does the Villa get 97% and 3% goes to savings? You can see I'm not here to judge. If option 2 is your option so be it. It may not be the choice most people would advise but this is your list. You have prioritized them to your satisfaction and that's all we need to know. Number 1 on this list may not get the lion's share of the money - and that could be OK. If the first thing is to throw a fabulous surprise birthday party for your Pomeranian in two weeks then I would say be sure to put in enough so that can happen.
8. Shampoo, rinse repeat.

If you do this consistently you will have all your requirements met (food, shelter, clothing) AND you will be putting time (to plan), energy (again, planning) and money to bring joy to your life.

What is money for, if not joy?

Always remember:

GETTING BY IS NOT.