

Financial Progression (from RegenerativeBusinessConsulting.ORG)

The first three steps are based on the first steps from Dave Ramsey's famously effective courses. If you want to go deeper into these principles, you could look up his recommendations online or ask your local library to purchase his course materials.

Goal	Description	Benefits
Budget	Live within your means = spend no more than your income. You don't have to be frugal in everything. Splurge on what's important to you, as long as you make sure you aren't trying to get your future self to pay for what you want this week or month. Dave Ramsey recommends that after budgeting, take out cash in the amount of the expenses that are not fixed costs that will come directly from the checking account, and put these in envelopes labeled with their purpose (e.g., food, fun, back-to-school clothes & supplies shopping). This keeps it very clear how much is left, so you don't overspend. Use a customizable budgeting spreadsheet for an accurate start. This is especially helpful for irregular wages.	More peace of mind
Emergency savings	Build up a savings, in an accessible regular savings account, that is sufficient to cover one month of expenses. If you have a true emergency, such as an accident or sickness, the expense won't have to go on credit or the slow uncertain generosity of strangers donating change into jars at the grocery store checkout. Don't tell friends or family about your savings if you suspect they might ask for loans and if you don't feel you have good enough boundaries to tell them it's off limits, just as their savings should be used for their own emergencies not anyone else's. Dave and others recommend that if you're going to give, make it an outright gift. Otherwise it could ruin a friendship or strain family ties.	Increased capacity to get thru hard times with less stress and loss
Decrease debt	Even if your goal is to eliminate debt, it is often helpful to assume some debt for career training, a business opportunity, a modest-sized residence, or a car if you don't have other reasonable commute options. You'll end up in bad shape if you get into debt for lifestyle choices. For motivation, figure out what you paid in interest in the last 12 months. In addition to decreasing your expenses to pay off debt faster, increasing your income is an option to consider. You could take on side jobs, ask for a raise or bonus, or raise your pay rate. Credit.com has tips	Get out of the trap of poverty or unfulfilling work you can't afford to leave.
Legal will	Take this super-simple step of writing out in one page whatever assets you have and who you want them to go to, then sign and date it. Give a copy to two people you trust. You can refine this later, as many times as you want to. Just make sure to hammer out this first draft. Nearly 6 in 10 U.S. adults don't have a will, and 78% of millennials (ages 18-36) do not have a will, according to a Caring.com survey. To go an extra step, look up a template online for your state or province and include a living will. This can (a) ensure that the person you designate has decision-making power if you are unconscious and (b) will prevent your resources from being wasted on useless medical procedures if you were to be in a long-term brain-dead state if you don't want a vegetative state prolonged.	This could save a lot of probate expense, plus animosity if family members argue about your assets when you die.
Guidance	When you've consistently been able to complete the prior levels, you set yourself up for a better financial situation that will allow you more options in life. If your goal is to accumulate enough wealth to have a secure and/or comfortable retirement, books and talks by Ramit Sethi, Garret Gunderson, and Tony Robbins can point you in the right direction. See the Recommended page at RegenerativeBusinessConsulting.ORG page for a personal financial advisor or money coach. This step is about your personal finances. If you have a business, work on its finances as part of the Career or Service category. Unless you are self-employed as a sole proprietor, you should separate your business expenses.	There's probably a lot you don't know that could increase your free time and give you more financial freedom.