

LET'S TALK ABOUT SEX

In the 31 years since International Women's Year started, have women made much financial progress?

On paper there have been huge advances. But while equality has been legislated, attitudes remain stubbornly locked in the past. When you think of someone being a millionaire, does a man or a woman come to mind first? Indeed, if a man focuses on his wealth he is seen as a real go-getter. By contrast, if a woman focuses on money she may be labelled selfish or greedy. At the other end of the spectrum are those women who are still waiting for their knight on the white

horse to financially bail them out.

So what can women do to become financially independent? If you have a partner, work as a team and play to your combined strengths. An American sociologist who studies investing behaviour found that men and women together make more profitable investing decisions than groups comprised of one sex.

Women who lack financial knowledge or who don't have confidence in money matters should arm themselves with lots of information, and surround themselves with good advisers who can help them with their financial decision making.

There is still wage inequality between men and women, and to a lesser extent a glass ceiling in terms of women's career paths. But in investing there is no limit to how much you can earn, and no discrimination. So start choosing your investments and building assets that will earn you an income in the future.



MONEY TALKS

Susanna Stuart explains how women can take control and become financially independent

MAKING CENTS

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Q What does passive income mean?

Nicky, Auckland

A I wish we all had passive income! This is income you receive that is earned by your ownership of a business you no longer work in, a rental property, or investments such as bank deposits and shares. It might even come from intellectual property – royalties from a bestseller or a great idea. The idea is that you can relax while your assets do all the hard work. Financial independence results from having passive income.

TRANSFORM YOUR FINANCES... BY THE BOOK

The latest financial book for women is *Rich Woman*, by Kim Kiyosaki (Rich Press, \$34.95). This is part of the *Rich Dad/Poor Dad* franchise that has sold more than 26 million books – Kim is married to Robert Kiyosaki, the author of the bestsellers – and it repeats most of the ideas found in the series.

After years of reading financial books I'm a bit jaded, so I asked my secretary Donna to read Kim's book with fresh eyes. She gave it good marks for being inspiring and motivational and clearly written. Donna says Kim's anecdotes "relate to my own experiences and to those of my friends".

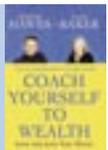
The book surmises that women need to stand on their own two feet and not rely on others (employers or husbands) for their income. It promotes self-education and developing passive income streams through the ownership of a business or good investments. Kim also advises that when starting out in investing it is

best to do it "close to home".

Downsides for Donna: "Some of the stories were too long, and the author frequently repeats herself."

MORE WISE WORDS FOR WOMEN

Coach Yourself to Wealth by Martin Hawes and Joan Baker (Allen & Unwin, \$29.99)



Smart Women Smart Money: Live the Life You Want by Joan Baker (Allen & Unwin, \$29.99)

Get Rich Slow: How to Grow Your Wealth the Safe and Savvy Way by Mary Holm (Penguin, \$29.95)

