



BEING FRUGAL DOESN'T MEAN YOU WILL HAVE TO DO WITHOUT

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CARLA SEELY – Guest Columnist

So what is frugal or what is a frugal lifestyle? There is a lot of controversy out there regarding this subject because a lot of people mistake being frugal for just being cheap. The definition of the word “frugal” as outlined in Webster’s dictionary is simple – economical in the use or appropriation of resources; living without waste.

Being frugal is not about washing your plastic bags and reusing them or planting your own vegetables and walking instead of driving (although these are good things to do). Frugal means being smart when it comes to saving money and managing your finances. It is about thinking before you spend and conserving what you do have.

While many people think about being frugal as a way to save money for the proverbial rainy day, a lot of frugal people never use the money they have saved even when it is pouring. Somehow the idea of frugality has become equated with never spending money at all.

CHOICES

The reason that people choose to live frugally will vary from person to person, but the true ideal of frugal living is to live on less without living less.

Being dollar wise doesn’t mean you will have to do without, or live below the poverty line. It is in fact quite the opposite. It is about preserving your

assets, saving money and managing your finances well. In order to maintain a more frugal lifestyle, every household must look at their own situation and then decide where they should or could become a little more frugal in their spending.

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A dollar wise shopper is careful, and will make wise choices and decisions, find high quality food, clothing and other goods for less money. Frugal living is about reducing what you spend, living within or below your means and maximizing the use of what you already have. It also means taking care of your belongings, including your money. It is about setting personal and family goals and reviewing what you need to do to work towards.

Then, and most importantly, you must decide what you are prepared to sacrifice today in order to gain tomorrow.

However being frugal can backfire; for many people the idea of living frugally has become an obsession. They worry and fret over the tiniest of items and they view everything as having an intrinsic value that can be reduced. They spend the majority of their time looking at every aspect of their lives without taking the time to stop and smell the roses. Life passes them by and opportunities to have fun are missed. Don’t let frugality inhibit your ambitions.

Here are four instances where being frugal can actually cost you:

1. Skipping your car maintenance to save a few dollars
2. Buying something just because it’s on sale
3. Doing it yourself when you actually don’t know how
4. Saving money but wasting time



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Do not sacrifice quality in any area of your life in an attempt to save a few extra dollars. You should know when it makes sense to spend the extra money and, in the long run, you'll be sure to live a comfortable life. Frugality is more than saving a few dollars; it's about pursuing your dreams and not someone else's idea of success.

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