WORK THOUGHTS

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That Dirty Green Stuff

What looms so powerful in our culture that it commands our undivided attention and speaks volumes about us? It turns out that ***money*** and our relationship to it does all that and more—even though *discussing* money just isn't done. Money, in fact, is a secret both in private and in public. People consider their money to be more private than even the most intimate details of their *personal* relationships. Unfortunately, this is especially true when there's a problem. After all, in our culture, financial problems suggest *personal* failure.

Furthermore, messages about money get passed down from one generation to the next—messages planted deep in our beliefs about how we "should" spend, save, share, and so on. Because of this, money and emotions become so closely linked that people have difficulty evaluating their relationship to money. The EAP professional can help clients address the shame and fear that many people experience as a result of having mishandled their financial resources. People often minimize their anxiety about money and, therefore, resist addressing the myriad of issues that stem from poor money management.

In the confidential EAP environment, however, discussing money is not threatening. For example, EAP professionals recommend that clients remember their first experiences with money—like the first time money was associated with power. "The road to financial freedom," according to Suze Orman, author of *The Nine Steps to Financial Freedom,* "begins not in a bank or even in a financial planner's office, but in your head." Orman suggests, "Step back in time to the earliest moments you can recall, when money meant something to you and when you truly understood what it could do." This critical exercise, when facilitated by an EAP professional, brings insight to the client's present relationship with money.

EAP professionals also suggest that clients read books and magazines on money; and listen to the ways those around them make money decisions. We encourage clients to identify those times when they have made good financial decisions. It often takes *several* good first steps to regain the confidence necessary to improve a difficult financial picture.

Finally, because money management is a large, complex field, we are also comfortable referring clients for legal and financial assistance. We know that when clients feel supported they move forward. Nothing beats good professional direction, straight-talk, and a game plan. Those three can and do produce miracles—especially where money is concerned!

For more information, contact ***Performance*** Employee Assistance and Business Services at 337-436-9533.

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