

MAKING DOLLAR\$ OUT OF \$ENSE

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paid and didn’t have bad credit.”*

Angie Hollerich, CEP, CCA

Her income had been cut by 80 percent. Yet her expenses remained largely unchanged. Suddenly single after her divorce in 1988, Angie Hollerich knew she had to make ends meet.

She found a two-bedroom condominium for \$485 a month and decided to take it, despite the fact that she’d already figured she could only afford \$395. Somehow, she’d make the rent payments. She didn’t want to sacrifice the quality of life of her children, ages 10 and 12.

But considering that her \$17,500 salary as a YMCA aerobics instructor was just a fraction of the income she had grown accustomed to during her marriage, she was in a predicament. “After I signed the lease, I went home and cried and thought there was no way I could afford it.” She says.

She allotted the bedrooms to her children, and she set up residency in the family room, using laundry baskets as a makeshift dresser for three years. “Sometimes I was pretty scared,” she remembers. “I always wondered how I got my bills paid and didn’t have back credit.”

She’s come a long way since those days, having become – of all things – an investment advisor managing more than \$30 million for clients. In fact, she was so successful in the investment arena that after 10 years, she sold her asset management business for a six-figure amount in June 2000 to embark full time upon a speaking and writing career. She’s calling her new company Brass Ring Productions, Ltd.

Here’s how she made the turnaround.

FINDING \$ECURITY

Hollerich’s first move was to **get a handle on her money situation.**

“I never balanced the checkbook,” she says of her money management during her marriage. “I just always got a balance when I went to the bank.” After the divorce, however, the cushion that had always been in the bank account was gone; she had to put herself on a budget – and learn to manage her finances – quickly.

“I was scared, but I always thought, “That’s not going to get me anywhere,” Hollerich says. “I felt I had the ability to do anything I wanted to do as long as I worked at it.” “A lot of my motivation was seeing how other people struggled, and I didn’t want to have to rely on my family. I wanted to take responsibility for myself,” she says.

She **sought the help of financial planner** Tom Harrington, who she knew through her work at the Y. “Tom educated me and told me why it was important to put money away. You should put money away because you’re not going to want to work forever,” she says.

Therefore, even though money was extremely tight at the time, she used 40 percent of her cash settlement from the divorce to pay off credit card debt - and invested the rest. She deposited some in a money market account for emergencies, bought some life insurance, started an IRA to decrease her taxes and invested in a mutual fund. She wanted, as Harrington explained, to **have her money work for her**. Meanwhile she scrimped.

She was open with her children about the lack of money. They would sit down with her to make choices about what they wanted, for example, to eat macaroni and cheese for a while or to have money for other things. Already they knew the reality of sacrifice, they had to leave their Catholic schools to attend public school because the tuition cost were simply beyond their new budget.

“There would be some times when I’d do my budgeting and I’d have \$129 and I hadn’t done my food shopping for the month,” Hollerich says. But somehow, the money always stretched to cover the necessities.

Hollerich says her credit report never showed a late payment. She also managed to teach her children the same skills. They saved 50 percent of whatever money they made after they started working at about age 14; both bought their own first cars.

Realizing she had a knack for sales - and that living within her means would be easier if the dollar figure on the top line of her budget were a bit larger - Hollerich took a job selling Tradecard, which boosted her pay by more than 40 percent.

Harrington, however, recognized Hollerich’s skill: He advised her to get into the investment business. She started her own asset management company on 1990, becoming an independent contractor with Harrington Asset Management.

“I went from the Y at \$17,5000, to \$25,000 selling Tradecard, to \$10,000 my first year in this business,” she says, describing the ups and downs of her salaries. “But I stuck with it. **I’m very bullheaded.**”

That same year, she moved into a new home. Even though the timing was bad, she didn’t want to miss the opportunity. So she bit the bullet and borrowed \$5,000 from her parents as a down payment and leased the house with an option to buy.

“I didn’t like the idea of having to borrow money from my parents, but it was the Catch 22,” she says. The **belt tightening** she learned during her first three years after the divorce served her well. She went to cosmetic counters to look for free make-up samples instead of buying her own supply. She always went to the store with coupons - and a list that she stuck to so she wouldn’t override her budget. Even now, she continues the habit she developed of shopping at clearance racks and thrift stores.

“It’s amazing what you can do if you have to,” she says. “we have so much stuff in our lives that we forget its OK if you don’t wear mascara.”

KEEPING THE \$AFETY NET

In 1994, Hollerich remarried.

“There were two reasons we married. The first motivation was we were in love. The second was his pension and health insurance,” she says, noting her husband takes lightly her jokes that she married him for money.

In reality, however, her remarriage did improve her finances, as her husband paid half the rent, electric, food and gas bills.

Meanwhile, Hollerich's business - and therefore her income - continued to grow every year; in 10 years, it increased from \$10,000 to the six-figure range. Still, her experience made her cautious. She kept her emergency fund and she continued to have money taken out to her paycheck every month to invest toward retirement. She started a simplified employee pension plan, purchased additional life insurance because her liabilities had increased as a business owner, and opened an annuity for tax-deferred growth.

She also made moves to enhance her expertise, obtaining an insurance license and more accreditations in the financial realm. Because of her experience, Hollerich often has been called upon to speak about financial topics to businesses and organizations including Columbia Gas, Cardinal Health, the city of Columbus and the Center for New Directions.

In 1995 she wrote her first book, "Grab the Brass Ring of Financial Security," so she could help people who couldn't afford to pay financial planners. By March 2000, she'd published her second book, "The Weight and Wealth Factors," to show the parallels between weight management and financial fitness.

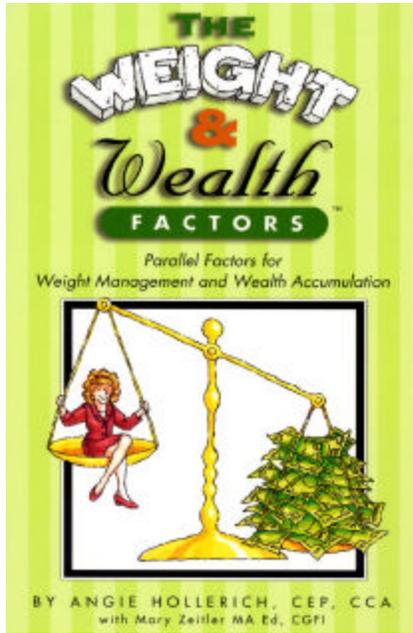
She enjoyed the speaking engagement and book promotions so much, in fact, that she decided to make them her full-time job. "I could've - unethically - stayed in the (investment) business and spent less and less time on my clients' portfolios," she says. "I felt I wasn't doing them justice."

When she sold the business to her associates, her money management came into play again. She arranged to have the money paid to her over three years so she could use it until her speaking career got off the ground.

Essentially, she's starting over with very little income, but knowing how to **take control** of her finances leaves her without the fears she had after her divorce. "I'm going to be successful again," Hollerich says. "I'm building the foundation now for a business I can take into retirement and work as often as I want."

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[COVER STORY]

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A WEIGHTY MATTER

Even though Angie Hollerich was successful financially, she'd struggled for years with weight problems that she feared would affect her career, especially when she went on speaking engagements.

She had a perception of what her audiences might be thinking about her: "How can she tell me how to manage my money when she can't even manage her weight?"

When Hollerich embarked upon a 15-month effort to take off 65 pounds she's gained over eight years, she noticed something interesting. She began to see parallels between the factors that most influenced her weight and those that affected how she - and her client - dealt with money.

She put pen to paper and boiled down her theories on weight management and wealth accumulation to 12 factors:

1. Environment.
2. Motivation.
3. Attitude.
4. Habits.
5. Family.
6. Budget.
7. Education.
8. Goals.
9. Time.
10. Age.
11. Needs vs. wants.
12. Risks.

In her case, Hollerich's habits eating whenever she was around other people and food was available, even if she wasn't hungry - were significant factors in her weight management. Age was another factor; now 54, she finds it more difficult to lose weight as she gets older.

By understanding these and other factors, she made healthier eating choices and had been able to keep the weight off for a year. She's gone from a size 18-20 to a size 10-12. She's also progressed from barely managing five minutes of exercise on a StairMaster to resistance training, along with enough aerobic activity to burn off at least 500 calories about six days a week.

The same principles that helped her lose weight can be applied, she says, to successful money management.

"The bottom line is we have to look at the internal and external forces that affect what we do," Hollerich says. "Once you can identify whether they're positive or negative, you can build on the positive and then change the negative."

By March 2000, Hollerich had finished writing a book showing the many parallels between weight management and wealth accumulation, "The Weight and Wealth Factors."

It comes with a strategy box concept to help people manage their financial and physical fitness through various stages of life - graduation, newlyweds, new parent, suddenly single and retirement - the same stages during which she used to re-evaluate finances with her clients.

"I've actually lived this. This is my story," Hollerich says of her success so far in promoting the book for nearly a year.

She's had a story printed in The Columbus Dispatch and has been interviewed on radio stations in San Francisco and Michigan.

"I think it's motivating," Hollerich says, "because someone will look at me and say, 'If she can do it and I get the concepts and understand the factors, I can do it, too.'"