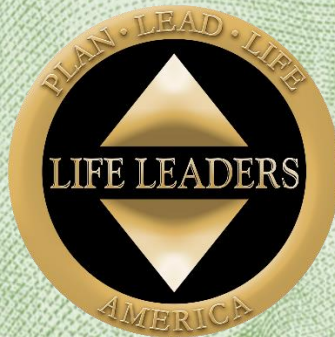


Financial Fitness

Plan Book



7 Minutes for Your Checkup

7 Minutes for Your Plan to Improve Actions and Results

7 Minutes of Lessons on Financial Fitness and Improving Plans

Prepared by

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&

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Planbook: we introduce the term *planbook*, a *proactive workbook*, because we believe people learn and take action better when determining how we can operationalize what we are learning.

You may get extra complimentary copies of the *Financial Fitness Planbook* and others at the Life Leaders Institute web site:

<http://lifeleadersinstitute.org/publications-and-presentations/financial-fitness-planbook/>

Take Notes at the Financial Fitness Seminar

Assessment

Financial Survival

Financial Fitness

Financial Freedom to Flourish

Financial Fitness Solutions and Best Practices

Plan

Mission and Vision

7 Motivating Values

Goals and Actions Financial Fitness and other Areas of Life

Coaching for Your Financial Fitness Checkup

Your personal finance is one of the seven areas of your overall well-being. To help you and others, Life Leaders Institute is providing you with this simple—though potentially powerful—planbook with templates for you to assess your *Financial Fitness* and improve your *Plan for Action*.

I expect, you are likely busy dealing with all sorts of "life issues" and may feel you don't have time to assess and plan. However, money is often the number one stress issue for people, so investing 21 minutes can provide a big payoff. What most people don't realize is that it is easier to take control of your finances if you have a vision, goals, and a plan of action, backed up by meaning motivation. The assessment and plan pages provide you with a simple process to know where you stand and how to improve.

The Checkup has been part of my workshops and coaching with clients for years. For this new planbook, David and I also reviewed other popular tools used nationally to improve our tools offered to you. If you have suggestions to improve the checkup, or questions, please let us know.

Assess yourself honestly on the good and bad of your checkup so you know where you are and can improve your plan for financial fitness. I feel sure you have completed many of the items listed, but if you haven't done them all, you may be leaving an unnecessary gap that can cause you and/or your family significant problems. At the very least, this planbook can provide a good annual check-up for you and those you encourage to *plan and lead their lives*.

The *Financial Fitness Checkup* takes less than seven minutes to complete, but if it helps you identify just one gap in your financial well-being AND you can TAKE ACTION to correct that gap, it may be a valuable, even crucial, seven minutes. I urge you to complete the checkup and correct gaps to enrich your finances and your overall well-being.

When helping people as a financial consultant, I generally find most individuals are in one of three stages of financial fitness. The first stage is *Survival* in which an individual is still getting his or her financial life in order. Many in this stage have too much debt, little or no savings, and have not taken action to protect the assets they do have.

Next is the *Fitness Stage*. By actions they have taken, they have control of their debts, are making significant investment in retirement and other savings, and have taken many of the steps to get their financial house in order. This stage is critical because it allows an individual to move toward the most important stage of financial well-being, which is *Financial Freedom*.

Financial Freedom not only allows you to take control of your finances, but also allows you more time freedom to take actions on what is most important to your family, community, and you. This could mean you could take your career in a different direction including getting a more satisfying job, go into a completely new field, become an entrepreneur, work from home, or invest in more of your callings.

The *Freedom Stage* may be challenging to obtain though you can do it better and faster with a clear vision of where you want to go and a well-defined plan of action. Most importantly, you have to implement a process to plan for what you want and do what you need to succeed.

The check up and plan will likely prompt you to consider if you need to review and update vital documents such as your will and instructions for your executor. Have you included important decisions, such as who will be guardian or executor when something happens to you? Does your executor know how to locate your vital information?

The financial market has gone through many changes in past years. Does the allocation of your investments match your goals, risk tolerance, and timeframe or do you need to update your strategy? Based on an updated assessment of your situation, do you need to add or change ways to protect your assets such as with insurance for property, life, and disability. These are just a few of the many areas we need to consider and figure out options.

One of the services Life Leaders provides to the community is a complimentary consultation on getting you started to identify your financial needs and to implement your plan. Please feel free to contact me with questions you may have on financial assessment and planning.

-Melvin Carrington Smith, Sr.-

FINANCIAL FITNESS CHECKUP

Place a check (✓) by items completed, encircle (○) ones needing action, or NA if not applicable.

SURVIVAL

1. Take great care of my health including exercise, diet, attitude, stress management, medical checkups, to improve life, performance, and income, plus reduce cost of insurance and medical expenses.
2. Save on expenses by purchasing priorities wisely, including discount clubs and online shopping.
3. Pay credit card balances in full monthly, using only for convenience and reporting expenses.
4. Check my credit report at least twice a year to protect against identity theft and mistakes to keep my purchasing power and cost of money as low as possible.

FITNESS

5. Use proven strategies such as “pay yourself first” and use work benefits optimally.
6. Live below my means with a personal spending plan (budget) and good financial habits.
7. Review and adjust my plan as life priorities and events change my goals and results.
8. Have a plan of action to pay off debts such as credit cards, loans, and mortgage(s).
9. Know my net worth and how much I need to be saving for retirement (generally 10–15% of income).
10. Adjust my investments to match my goals and risk tolerance (conservative, moderate, or aggressive).
11. Allocate and diversify assets properly (domestic vs. international, bonds, equities, cash, etc.).
12. Assess insurance coverages needed and purchase priority coverage (life, medical, disability, long-term care, car, home/renters, business, etc.).
13. Determine how and when to say “No” to personal temptations or improper requests from others.
14. Read and learn about money concepts such as compound interest, dollar cost averaging, and investing.
15. Title and list assets (home, car, checking/saving accounts, safety deposit box, etc.) and inventory assets (videotaping/photos support), especially related to death or destruction of property.
16. Save three to six months of living expenses for my emergency fund.
17. Develop a backup plan in case job, business, or main source of income is eliminated.

FREEDOM

18. List or write a clear and dynamic vision, goals, and strategy for my financial future.
19. Write priorities to make my vision and goals become reality and adjust as needed.
20. Outline a plan with actions needed, including developing my capacities to earn money needed.
21. Prepare a legacy plan for my heirs including estate documents such as will, trusts, guardianship, Durable Power of Attorney, Advanced Health Care Directive, and Information/Instructions for My Executor.
22. Save on my taxes through tax planning considering Roth IRA, 401k, SEP, other retirement plans, etc.
23. Give to others such as for children or grandchildren, through plans like 529 college funding, etc.
24. Give to charity, church, non-profit organizations, and others in need.
25. Teach others about money, such as children and grandchildren, as soon as they can understand.

___ **Total number checked**

Score yourself 1 point for each item checked, total, and assess where you are and want to be.

22-25: You are on track. Keep up the good work. Take care of items not completed to keep your future secure.

19-21: You are doing well, but can do better. Get started on items undone to improve your financial freedom.

16-18: Your finances need immediate action or your future financial freedom may be in jeopardy.

1-15: Your finances are on life support and emergency treatment is required. Take action now.

Melvin C. Smith is a registered investment advisor representative with Lincoln Financial Advisors Corp., a broker/dealer (member SIPC) and registered investment advisor through Lincoln affiliates and other companies. Lincoln Financial Advisors Corp. and its representatives do not provide legal or tax advice. CRN-1603136-092616

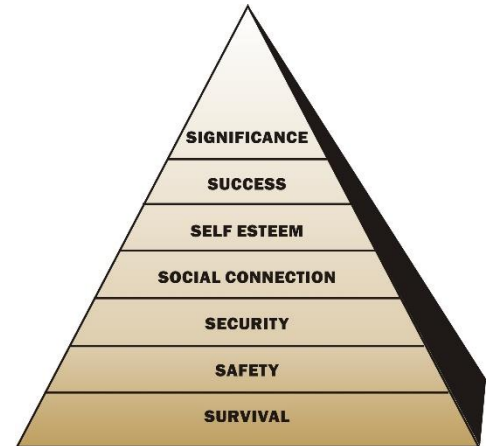
Coaching for Your Financial Fitness Plan

The 7 Motivating Values

Choose the Motivating Values you want to satisfy now as well as in your vision. If you are focused on *Financial Survival and Security*, your goals will be more basic like food and shelter than if you earn the right to focus on *Success and Significance*, which can include more charitable giving, investment in legacy, and freedom of time.

Admit what drives you when you respond to daily needs and when you think of lifetime legacy. When you feel inspired, what do you envision? When you feel stresses, what do you seek to relieve that pressure? Your motivations are likely different if you are “making a living” for yourself (Survival) than if you are sacrificing to support loved ones (Social Connection) and if you are inspired to fulfill your God-given callings as a good steward of your gifts and talents (Significance).

The *Dyson Hierarchy of Motivating Values* was inspired by “Maslow’s Hierarchy of Needs” taught in many college courses on psychology, management, and leadership. The Dyson Model expands from five needs to seven values and improves our ability to apply values and needs in a plan for the *7 Areas of Life* (each of the seven values listed in the model has sub-values in a menu you can choose on the ascending hierarchy and add vision, goals, and actions to move you toward fulfilling the values that motivate you—this is an inspiring tool to write your constitution).



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Vision for Your Values

Write your *Financial Vision* statement as you optimistically see yourself fulfilling your motivating values. You can envision yourself *Surviving* now and earning your way to *Fitness* and *Freedom* up the hierarchy to *Significance*. There, you may spend more time on your creative callings and leading solutions for society than in working to pay bills. If your plan is developed enough to give you confidence in *Success* once you do the actions needed, you will feel more inspiration for your vision even if you are still laboring over basic needs most days. If you write your desired results and plans to get them, you will do better. It’s part of the process for *Best-Self Leadership*.

The 7 Areas of Life

Financial is one of the *7 Areas of Life* in the model developed and taught in public seminars and leadership programs—*Physical, Financial, Professional, Personal, Social, Philanthropical, and Spiritual*. Everything we do falls into one or more of the *7 Areas*. Planning within the *7 Areas* adds more balance and synergy than if you only identify long-term and short-term goals.

Plans and Actions

State your desired Plans for Actions that can lead to your envisioned Results. Based on your *Financial Fitness Checkup*, list what you should do. If you also list important roles and goals for all *7 Areas of Life* you will create more synergy. For example, if you envision and write goals for you to develop yourself personally to be more effective professionally so you can earn more financially and earn more time for rich relationships socially and more significance in service spiritually, you will feel more inspiration instinctively—and likely take more action with more commitment to sustain you.

Attitude inspires. Are you “laying bricks or building a cathedral”? By keeping your desired future in mind as you focus on priorities today, you can create inspiration and action at a higher level.

-Dr. David Dyson-



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FINANCIAL FITNESS PLAN

Mission

To get from where you are: []Survival []Fitness []Freedom
To where you seek, improved: []Fitness []Freedom

Vision

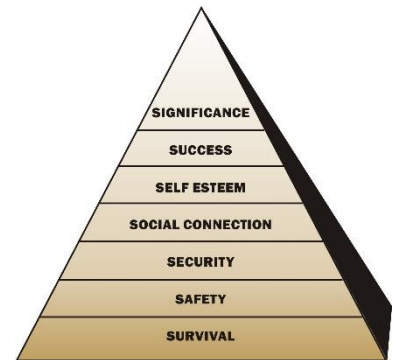
I (state your desired results/what success looks like):

7 Motivating Values for Your Life and Legacy

[why you want your goal—check those that motivate you and a vision word/phrase for fulfilling each]

Main motivator: _____.

- [] **Survival:** to earn money for food, emergencies, and medical care.
- [] **Safety:** provide shelter in a safe environment.
- [] **Security:** live without worry about expenses and retirement.
- [] **Social:** provide for and support others.
- [] **Self Esteem:** feel I am doing my best doing the right things.
- [] **Success:** achieve at a high level in my community and/or profession.
- [] **Significance:** earn freedom to spend time and money on callings/choices.



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Goals and Actions for *Fitness* in all 7 Areas of Your Life

Financial

- Improve Plans & Actions for Results:
- Listen, Read, Learn to Know & Do:
- Save and Invest for Security:
- Save and Purchase for Self & Others:
- Save and Invest in Significance:
- Save and Donate to Callings and Causes:
- Stop/Adjust Habits Holding You Back:

Professional

Personal

Social

Physical

Philanthropical

Spiritual



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About the Financial Fitness Planbook

In this planbook, you get two tools you can use: 1) *Financial Fitness Checkup* to assess your progress and inspire action, plus 2) a *Plan Page* to write goals and actions needed to advance your *plans, actions, and results for Financial Fitness*. To support your thinking and using the tools, each author provides a page of insight and instruction to coach you to use the assessment and action plan.

About the Authors and Life Leaders Institute



Melvin Carrington Smith, Sr. is a registered representative and investment advisor (semi-retired) with Lincoln Financial Advisors Corp. based in Birmingham, Alabama. Previously, he worked as Director of Marketing at BellSouth Corporation.

Melvin presents and hosts public seminars for Life Leaders Association and serves as a trustee. He coaches members and friends of Life Leaders and others motivated to improve plans for life, especially for *Financial Fitness*.

Melvin also has donated service to groups such as the Alabama Money Expo, Optimist Club, and Crisis Center in Birmingham.

He is married to Shandra.

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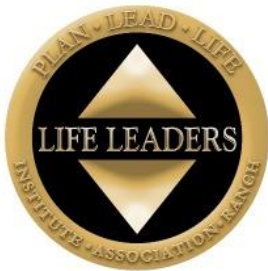


Dr. David Dyson serves as lecturer at Troy University as well as trustee and founder of Life Leaders Institute. His work as author, teacher, and coach aims to *empower people, organizations, and communities to PLAN and LEAD in LIFE*.

Planbooks include *Best-Self Leadership, Plan for College and Life, Achievable Resolutions, Master Your Goliaths, Veterans Making Comebacks, Earning and Delegating Empowerment, Assessing Attitude and Ability, 7 Best Practices for Life Leadership, The 7 Areas of Life, and the Hierarchy of 7 Motivating Values*. Books-in-print include *Professionalism Under Stress* and *Patriotism in Action* with Col. Stretch Dunn (1943-2017).

He cares for 20 rescued and adopted animals: horses, donkeys, dogs, and cats.

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Life Leaders America is a 501 (c)(3) public service organization.

Institute: research and publication of books, planbooks, models, tools, and templates plus service to leaders, true professionals, and organizations, 1988.

Association: public seminars, workshops, and events, such as *Best-Self Leadership, Plan for the 7 Areas of Life, Master Your Goliaths, Freedom to Flourish; Financial Fitness, Personal Leadership for Patriots, Tribute to the Founder of Veterans Day; and History, Character, and Leadership Lessons for the Founding of America's Veterans Day in Alabama, 1992*.

Ranch: people plan, develop, renew with animals, plants, and nature, 2010.

National Distinctions: Life Leaders is a national resource for providing free online resources for teaching, learning, and doing: Planning, Best-Self Leadership, Veterans Day Founding History and Character Traits, Freedom to Flourish....

Complimentary online journal: www.LifeLeadersInstitute.org/blog

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This planbook supports the Leadership Conference at Troy University Celebrating African American History