



I knew I loved to coach but only saw it as helping people with their budgets. Financial Coach Academy helped me realize there is so much more involved than just numbers. I love financial coaching because I get to help people get clarity on their financial situation and show them how they can live the life they want while managing their finances with confidence. It's extremely rewarding to see the transformation that happens not just with their money habits, but in their family, relationships, and day-to-day lives. You can't put a price on that kind of transformation.

CYNDIA RIVERA

FAMILY FINANCES REDESIGNED



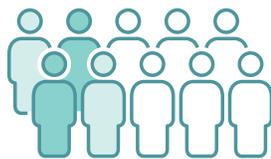
Chapter 01

Getting Started As A Financial Coach

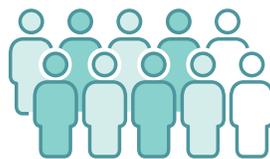
Mind The Gap

As I was compiling the information for this book, a survey was released by The Associated Press-NORC Center for Public Affairs Research. It said roughly two-thirds of Americans (67%) describe their overall financial situation as “generally good.”

However, the same survey revealed the deep anxiety and vulnerability that underlies this outward optimism. Nearly 4 in 10 people said they aren’t sure they could cover an emergency expense of \$1,000. Only 2 in 10 described themselves as “very confident” that they will have enough money in savings for retirement. Almost half said they had “little or no confidence” they’ll be able to save enough.



**UNCERTAINTY OF
EMERGENCY FUNDS**



**UNCERTAINTY OF
ENOUGH SAVINGS**



**UNCERTAINTY OF
RETIREMENT**

About 3 in 4 people nearing retirement age said they feel pretty good about their financial circumstances, although almost one-third of those over age 50 said they are unprepared for retirement, and about 2 in 10 think they won’t be able to stop working. Of people surveyed under age 30, 4 in 10 called their current financial situations “poor,” and 56% said they don’t feel they’ll be prepared for retirement.

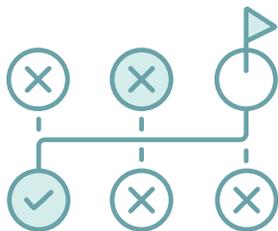
As a financial coach, that confusing gap – between brave optimism and sheer panic – is the area I specialize in. I help people see and confront the core beliefs and spending habits that might be holding them back. I help them home-in on their goals and dreams and make progress toward meeting them.

Most folks are resilient. They figure if they work hard, things will work out, even if they have to juggle expenses or pull out a credit card from time to time. But too often, they end up feeling like they're riding a monthly roller coaster, hoping they're strapped in well enough to survive.

There's a better way to live. Wouldn't you like to show people how to get there?

What The Heck Is A Financial Coach?

A decade ago, the idea of being a financial coach was totally foreign to me. I used to quip that it was a title I simply made up. Michael, my husband and business partner, would gush, *"You're the best financial coach I know!"* It became our running joke – because, of course, I was the only one he knew.



Today, I love being a financial coach – love it to my core! I can't tell you how rewarding it is to help people bring their own financial strengths and pitfalls into focus and learn how to manage them. And my goal in this book is to share the ideas, strategies, and lessons gleaned from my own ups and downs in this business so that you can help people in similar ways and learn to love it, too.

Financial coaching isn't quite like any other business I know. It doesn't purely emphasize numbers and sales, like financial advising. It doesn't emphasize mindset and emotions, like life coaching and most forms of business coaching. It is a precise balance of both – and because of this, your business model needs to be completely different than those other industries. You need to show your experience and financial journey so your clients get to know, like, and trust you. You need to have some conceptual knowledge of finances, but you also need to have coaching skills. Together, they are a useful and even fun blend of traits that can serve your clients well and make for a rewarding career path.

What began at my dining room table as a hobby is now a business that brings in a quarter-million dollars each year. In 2016 our beautiful daughter Carmen Jillian – “CJ” for short – came along, and I slammed into the reality of juggling parenthood with my booming and rewarding financial coaching business. Our son Alex joined the family in 2019.

...look at
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It might sound a little naive, but when I realized I couldn't be everywhere or help everyone, it was honestly a sad moment. However, as an entrepreneur for the past 10 years, one thing I've learned is to look at problems as opportunities. If I don't like the answer, the next question is, *“So, what am I going to do about it?”*

In this case, the answer was to create the Financial Coach Academy. No, I might not be able to help everyone. But I can train wonderful people like you, who have the same desire to help others, and prepare YOU to step into the role of financial coach, confidently and proudly. Together, maybe we can help everyone!

How To Use This Book

Most people go into business for themselves feeling hopeful and highly motivated. They're thrilled at the prospect of making their own decisions and setting their own priorities. They'll be the masters of their own schedules – imagine the flexibility!

In most cases, the reality is a lot more challenging. Entrepreneurship can be a bumpy road and this playbook is meant to help you avoid some of the potholes. You may find yourself in a rut one month and excited the next. Feeling self-doubt one week, then brimming with ideas the next. You may find yourself putting off certain steps in the process of opening your doors – convincing yourself that everything has to be perfect – when really, it does not.

I've packed as much information as I can into this playbook – shortcuts, lessons and some best practices – but it's only the framework. Along the way, you'll need to tap into your own creativity and use your intuition to develop your coaching business and make it work for you.

In the next eight chapters, we will cover:

How to determine what kind of coaching business you want to create.	How to decide the types of clients you want to work with.	The basics of setting up shop as a financial coach.
Tips for designing every step of your coaching program: from first contact, to the goals and skills you want clients to take away from this experience.	How to have sales conversations with prospective clients and respond to the questions, concerns, and/or objections you might encounter.	Strategies for creating interesting, meaningful content about financial topics to share with clients, along with online resources for assistance.
How to help clients set goals and examine their values and fears around money.	Teach clients how to use the Ultimate Financial Power Plan: a method I've created for budgeting and paying off debt.	Ways to market your coaching services effectively, including developing and working with referral partners.
	Additional services you can use to grow your business, from daily money management to financial wellness workshops for businesses.	

Some of the playbook content is designed for self-reflection, helping you home-in on the kinds of financial issues and clientele you want to work with. You'll want to use those worksheets as you read the chapters in which they are mentioned. Other content is for sharing, or adapting to share, with clients.

The goal is to provide you with clarity of purpose and a streamlined, successful system for running your business. I truly believe the more efficient, organized, and effective you are in conducting your business, the more focus and attention you'll be able to provide your clients. They'll feel better supported, they'll get better results, and they'll be lifelong, loyal clients for you. Your business will be that much more successful because of the strong foundation we build together, using this book.

Yes, it's a lot to cover! And you might not do it all flawlessly, especially when you first start out.

In my experience, most financial coaches have perfectionist tendencies. This comes from a desire to not be criticized, or not receive feedback, or not be embarrassed – thinking, 'If I'm perfect, I'll avoid all of that.' Perfection may be a protective shield. But on the flip side, perfection is also the enemy of greatness. You can't grow and improve if you won't listen to and learn from feedback.

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So, accept the fact that, with your first few clients, you might be nervous or even scared. That does not mean you won't know how to help them!

It's easy to compare your prospective clients' financial lives to being on a roller coaster. And for you, self-employment can be a roller coaster too. The advice you'll get here won't prevent your belly from dropping, but it shouldn't keep you from getting on the ride at all. Think of it instead as the guidance of a seasoned rider, reminding you to buckle up, hang on tight, scream as loud as you want, and laugh as often as possible through the twists, turns, and loops!

It's important to note that my purpose is not to create a bunch of mini-Kelsas. You don't have to adopt my financial philosophy, my beliefs, or even my coaching style. In these pages, you might even read some ideas or philosophies about spending, saving, and budgeting that you don't agree with. Remember this: personal finance is personal! The key is not to follow the book in literal terms, but to use the lessons as inspiration and guideposts for turning your own financial principles and practices into skills and exercises for others to follow.