

# MatriMONEY

by Marissa Morningstaur

If you're planning to tie the knot in the next year, now is a good time to sit down with a Realtor and a mortgage planner so there are no surprises or disappointments when you are ready to buy a home. I like to call it premarital mortgage counseling .... or in central Oregon, a reality check!

## What Can You Afford?

That's the most important question. Often couples come to me thinking they can buy a house in Bend for the low "teaser" interest rates they see advertised on the internet or elsewhere. That's not realistic because those rates are artificially low for a short time, and in most cases you must qualify for the higher "real" payment.

Take a look at your combined gross income. A standard conventional loan will allow no more than 28% of that total to go towards your house payment, which includes principal, interest, taxes and insurance. Now look at the debt payments you have ... car, credit cards, student loans. No more than 36% of your gross income should go to total debt payments.

## Time for a Credit Check Up

Before merging into a marriage partnership, take a look at your credit report and make sure you correct anything that is reported inaccurately. I recommend that you check your report at least once a year, and with the increasing incidence of identity theft and just plain mistakes by the credit bureaus, it's worth it to subscribe to a service that alerts you if a new account is reported to the bureaus or a negative item is added to your report.

Your credit will have a major impact on what kind of mortgage you will qualify for, or even IF you can qualify. You should be honest with your future partner and disclose any problems you have had, like a past foreclosure, bankruptcy, charge-offs, etc. If you've been through rough times, you are not alone, but the worst thing you can do is decide to run away from using credit. You can reestablish your credit and improve your credit score with discipline and judicious use of credit. We'll deal with that in a future article.

## Rental History

You may think it's great to live with mom and dad, or family members, but if you aren't paying rent and can't prove it with canceled checks or a letter from a property management company, it will hurt you when you apply for a mortgage loan. Lenders want to see a good rental history of on-time payment, and combined rent that you and your future partner are paying should be within a few hundred dollars of the mortgage you want to qualify for.

## Down Payment and Savings

Finally, don't blow it all on the wedding and honeymoon if you want to buy a house! You will need funds for a down payment, closing costs, and reserves.

Bottom line: Meet with a Realtor and a Mortgage Planner for more information and to create a plan that will get you into a home sooner rather than later.

*Article appeared in December issue of Spirited Woman magazine.*

# Top 5 Reasons to Refinance Your Mortgage

by Marissa Morningstaur

Is it time to look at refinancing your mortgage? Refinancing makes good financial sense if it enables you to:

1. Lower your monthly payment
2. Switch to a fixed rate loan
3. Pay off a balloon payment
4. Cash-out home equity
5. Pay off high interest consumer debt

## Lower Monthly Payment

If your financial picture has improved since you bought your house and you have a higher credit score, more household income or less total debt, you might qualify for a better interest rate and lower monthly payments. But rate isn't the whole story. Work with a qualified mortgage planner to see if refinancing makes sense for you.

## Switch to Fixed

If your adjustable rate mortgage (ARM) is about to start adjusting, it's probably time to start comparing fixed rate loans to see if you can decrease your monthly payment and achieve more long-term security.

You might want to look at the new "level option" product offered by a few lenders. Unlike the original Option Payment ARM with an interest rate that changed monthly, the level payment option carries a fixed rate for 5 - 10 years. It still allows you to choose from four payment amounts based on a minimum payment, interest only, 30 or 15 year fixed amortization.

**Caution:** *Option loans are appropriate for the more sophisticated borrower who uses it to manage their tax deductions, free up cash for investment, or other smart money moves. Since the minimum payment adds to the principal balance, it can be financially disastrous if used irresponsibly.*

## Pop a Balloon

Some second mortgages, or even some first mortgages, carry a balloon payment clause where the entire amount is due in a specified period of time, usually five years. Sometimes the only way a person could purchase a house

is to finance the entire amount, and that often involves and 80% first mortgage and a 20% second with a balloon payment. If you're reading this, you're in central Oregon and the value of your house has likely increased since you bought it. You can now refinance with a first mortgage at a low rate for 80% of the appraised value, pay off the original first and second mortgage and maybe even take some cash out.

## Cash Out

Today home owners are learning how to leverage their most valuable asset, their home, and invest their equity instead of leaving it "in their walls". Equity in the walls of your house is earning 0% interest - that's like stuffing cash in your mattress or burying it in the back yard. A mortgage loan is the cheapest money you can borrow. In most cases, you can invest your equity and achieve a higher return than the cost of the mortgage you use to liberate it from your walls.

**Caution:** *Don't use your cash-out refinance irresponsibly. I strongly discourage home owners from cashing out to purchase luxury items or consumer goods.*

## Debt Consolidation

Many people refinance their mortgage to tap the equity to pay off high interest credit card balances. This is a great idea with a big IF: Don't run up those credit card balances again!

**Caution:** *You are trading unsecured debt for debt secured by your home. If you continue to have financial challenges and live beyond your means, you could lose your home.*

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Most mortgage planners offer free consultations to help home owners determine if refinancing is the right choice for their unique situation. You can shop rates by reading newspaper ads or on the internet, but working with a mortgage planner that understand what makes sense for you is the best way to go. They typically have access to hundreds of loans from the top lending institutions, so their rates are competitive with the top banks.

*Article appeared in November issue of Spirited Woman magazine.*

The following three pages show a before/after writing sample from one of our authors. “Before” is unedited, as given to Alliance Press as a manuscript. “After” is edited and enhanced with additional content.

## Before

The beginning to any climb or journey always starts with trying to find out why you are going on that journey. You might enjoy going on a hike, but there are many reasons why people like hiking. Some people do it just for the exercise, some people could care less about the exercise and like the exploring aspect of hiking. Some people just want the satisfaction of summiting a peak. Some people just love to look for beautiful views and some people might think it is just a wonderful way to spend time with your loved ones. All those are reasons why people like to hike. The parallel here is that you have to really discover why you are making that change in your life before you can really commit to that change.

The reasons “why” are the motivators for you to change your habits or accomplish your goals. These motivators become the strengths or cornerstones of implementing any system. This chapter is designed to help you understand how to build the cornerstones that will insure you to successfully annihilate your goals. It is extremely important that you follow the exercises outlined in this chapter to begin the process. As we figure out what your “whys” are and we reinforce those “whys” as an everyday part of your life, you will accelerate obtaining your goals and to climb up to the summit of the mountain of wealth you so desire to have.

### Establishing the Outcome

So to begin we really need to start with the end. Starting with the end is the most critical part of discovering your “why”. We need to find out where you want to go or be, so that we can draw a straight line to it. It’s as Albert Einstein concluded that the shortest distance between two points is a straight line.

Many time people just say “I want to be rich.” Well, that is way too vague. We have to clearly define where we want to be financially before we can draw or formulate that straight line. Then we have to commit to that end result. If your goal is to have 50 billion dollars, it is possible. You just have to figure out your time line and commit to putting what ever kind of effort it takes to get to that goal. If your goal is that in 20 years that you want to have a net worth of say 10 million dollars, I would say that could be very likely that you could obtain that goal.

## After

Before you begin any climb or journey, you must determine why you are going on that journey. You have done some work in the previous chapter to uncover some of your limiting beliefs about wealth and money. You’ve looked at some of your early programming. That’s important, but knowing your WHY provides the fuel that enables you to complete the journey.

For instance, there are many reasons why people like hiking. Some people do it just for the exercise. Others could care less about the exercise and just like to explore. Some people just want the satisfaction of climbing to the top of a peak. Some people just love to look for beautiful views and some people might think it is just a wonderful way to spend time with their loved ones. These are all reasons why people like to hike.

You have to discover *why* you are making any change in your life before you can really commit to that change. The reasons “why” are the motivators for you to change your habits or accomplish your goals. These motivators become the strengths or cornerstones of implementing any system. This chapter is designed to help you understand how to build the cornerstones that assure that you successfully annihilate your goals. It is extremely important that you follow the exercises outlined in this chapter to begin the process. As we figure out what your “whys” are and we reinforce them as an everyday part of your life, you will accelerate obtaining your goals and begin to climb up to the summit of the mountain of wealth you so desire to have.

### Establishing the Outcome

To begin, you really need to start with the end. Starting with your destination is the most critical part of discovering your why. You need to find out where you want to go or be, so that you can draw a straight

# Before

So the first key is to start with the end. We want to look at what your 20 year goals are. Begin thinking what you want your life to look like in 20 years, what kind of house will you own? What kind of car are you going to drive? Where will you go on vacation? How long will you be on that vacation? Start describing January through December 20 years from now. Outline what you would do every month. Describe what kind of businesses you own, what kind of real estate you own, what kind of investments you are into. Figure out what you want your net worth to be 20 years from now and come up with the monthly income that all your investments are paying. The greatest part of this exercise is that you are allowed to dream, there are absolutely no limits to what you can ask for and you can have total fun creating this. The most critical part of this exercise is that whatever financial goals you have decided on, you have to be committed to seeing it through. So if you are perfectly satisfied with living off of \$5000.00 per month for the rest of your life then that is good, but if you are happy with \$1 million per month then that is good too. There are no wrong answers.

If you are married or have a partner, then it is extremely critical that you go through this exercise together. If you both are not attacking this together then there can be a myriad of problems that you will face. Many times one partner is much more ambitious than the other. This is easily resolved if the more ambitious partner explains their passions to the other and the ambitious one does not mind taking up the slack for the other one. It is an absolute wonderful situation when both are equally ambitious to hit the end goals.

So right now, before you go any further, stop reading the book and get with your partner and start writing down your life as you want it to be 20 years from now. It needs to be written out just as how I described above. Outlining each month of your life, setting specific financial numbers for net worth and monthly income. Which type of businesses you own, what type of investments you want. (It is OK that businesses and investments change, but it is important to start thinking about it. In later books we will give you investment ideas and strategies.) Imagine what kind of house you will own and what kind of real estate you would invest in. Start writing this down now and before you start reading any further have this completely outlined.

# After

line to it. It's as Albert Einstein concluded; the shortest distance between two points is a straight line.

Many times people just say, "I want to be rich!" Well, that's way too vague. You have to clearly define where you want to be financially before you can draw or formulate that straight line. Then you have to commit to that end result. If your goal is to have a gazillion dollars, it is possible, just not probable. You just have to figure out your time line and commit to whatever kind of effort it takes to get to that goal. If your goal is to have a net worth of 10 million dollars in 20 years, it is very likely that you can accomplish that goal by following my Integrated Performance Formula.

So the first key is to start with defining your destination. Look at what your 20 year goals are. Begin by thinking about what you want your life to look like in 20 years.

- What kind of house will you own? A country home on 5 acres with a mountain view, a condo overlooking a beach in Mexico, a town home with no maintenance?
- What kind of car are you going to drive? A BMW, Cadillac Escalade, Honda hybrid, or yet to be invented hydrogen car?
- Where will you go on vacation? Australia, Hawaii, Yellowstone, Branson, MO, Disneyland?
- How long will you be on that vacation? A long weekend, 10 days, 3 weeks?

Start describing what your life looks like 20 years from now. Outline what you would do every month. Describe what kind of businesses you own, what kind of real estate you own, what kind of investments you are into. Figure out what you want your net worth to be 20 years from now and come up with the monthly  
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# After

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The most critical part of this exercise is that whatever financial goals you have decided on, you have to be committed to seeing it through. So if you are perfectly satisfied with living off of \$5000.00 per month for the rest of your life, that's fine. But if your goal is to have \$1 million per month, then *go for it* and describe what that looks like. There are no wrong answers.

If you are married or have a partner, then it is important that you do this exercise together. If you are not attacking this together, there can be a myriad of problems. Many times one partner is much more ambitious than the other. This difference is easily resolved if the more ambitious partner explains their passions to the other and doesn't mind taking up the slack. When both are equally ambitious and motivated to achieve the end goals, that is the best situation by far.

*The following excerpt is from The Art of Smart Thinking. For this project I combined research with Dr. Jim Hardt's academic papers to create a complete book for the lay person about brain wave biofeedback.*

In the last chapter, we learned some of the consequences of living in the internal hurricane that is the beta brain wave state. We saw how our society has created expectations, habits, preferences, structures, institutions, a vast unhealthy playing field that violates fundamental principles of our physiology. The problems arising out of too much beta brain wave activity have upset our physical and mental ecology and have even damaged the ecology of our planet. Everywhere we look are stimulants for the constant "Hurricane in the Brain," including our food supply and a diet laced with garlic, onions, and caffeine. In this chapter, I'll present some alternatives to a highly ego-driven beta brain wave lifestyle so you can begin to understand more of the benefits gained by surfing alpha waves. At the end of this chapter is a detailed description of the neurofeedback process of the Biocybernaut Alpha One Brain Wave Training.

The following list offers some of the many benefits that my clients have experienced during brain wave training sessions in neurofeedback held at the Biocybernaut Institute:

- Restoring a Youthful Higher Alpha Brain Wave Pattern
- Improving Relationships
- Increasing Creativity
- Enhancing Peak Performance
- Meditation and Expanded Awareness
- Super Learning and IQ Increases
- Resourceful Personality Change

### **Restoring a Youthful Brain Wave Pattern**

While it has been possible for celebrities and the wealthy to stave off the external effects of physical aging with creams and potions, skin peels, laser treatments, liposuction, and surgical face and body lifts, until now no one has offered a makeover for your brain! Instead of having to submit to the seemingly inevitable effects of brain aging—and eventual senescence—now you can intervene and make some wonderful changes. Instead of waiting helplessly while the clock ticks and your mental and intellectual functions and joy for life decline, you can successfully intervene. When you train your brain to produce more alpha waves, the benefit goes far beyond anti-aging—it actually reverses the aging of the brain. Experiences with hundreds of trainees demonstrate that a 70 year old can be trained to create the brain wave pattern of someone who is 35 or 40! Even though the person may have lived seven decades, their newly re-awakened youthful brain wave pattern will give them youthful motivation, interest and abilities. Imagine! The wisdom of seven decades and the motivation and the energy and the enthusiasm of someone in their 30's—now that is a winning combination! How, you ask, can this be possible? Let us look at the science.

Atherosclerosis can begin at remarkably early ages, and once it begins, the alpha frequency slows down at a rate of about 0.8 Hz per decade. Alpha ranges from 8 - 13 Hz. So if someone started out with Alpha activity at 10 Hz, which is common, in less than three decades the alpha would be gone. If the alpha has slowed below 8 Hz, it's not alpha any more. That person has entered the brain wave twilight zone of senescence or senility. Once the alpha is gone—has slowed out of existence—people tend to die fairly soon. One hospital admission looked at the relation of non-alpha EEG records and early death. In this study the hospital technicians routinely made an EEG recording of everyone admitted for any reason—pregnancies, elective surgeries, stabbings, gunshot wounds, auto accidents—any reason. They followed up on those people six months later. Half of those admitted with no alpha in their EEG record were dead within six months. Alpha indicates life, and when alpha fades away so does life.

One of my former colleagues, Dr. Charles L. Yeager, studied EEG activity all of his professional career. In the 1950s he set up EEG labs in all of the California state hospitals. California had a model system of state hospi-

tals. During the 1950s and up into the 1980s Dr. Yeager made annual visits to each hospital to record EEGs from the patients, some of whom were quite elderly. Dr. Yeager obtained healthy looking EEGs from some patients who were over 100 years old. In this 30+ span of research Dr. Yeager learned that if an aged patient had abundant or even just normal alpha in their EEG record, they would still be alive and well when he visited again the next year. However, if a patient's annual recording showed the loss of alpha activity in the year since the prior recording, Dr. Yeager would say a special "good bye" to that patient because he knew the person would probably die before his next annual visit. So a 97-year old patient whose alpha had disappeared would be much more likely to die within the next year than a 100 year old patient who had good alpha in their EEG record. To a certain extent, alpha trumps age when it comes to life expectancy and everyone's hopes for healthy longevity. Remember, alpha isn't what you think.

When we look at the biological science underlying alpha waves and the processes by which people lose their alpha waves, it is perfectly understandable how a 100 year old person with good alpha waves would have a better life expectancy than someone in their 20s or 30s with no alpha waves. As you learned in the previous chapter, "Calming the Hurricane in Your Brain," many stressful aspects of modern life to reduce your alpha and instead promote beta brain waves. But more than stress is at work in a person's loss of beneficial alpha waves.

The mechanisms involved in loss of alpha include reduction of blood flow to the brain. It has been shown that clamping one of the carotid arteries in monkeys results in loss of alpha in that one hemisphere. Clamping the left carotid artery shuts off most of the blood flow to the left hemisphere. There is a bit of interhemispheric circulation in the Circle of Willis, but not much compared to the volume of blood that surge into the brain via the carotid arteries, on the left and right sides of the neck. In that study with monkeys, when the blood flow was interrupted to one hemisphere, the alpha in that hemisphere disappeared and was replaced by the senile EEG pattern of mixed theta and beta. When the monkey's carotid artery was unclamped and blood flow resumed, the senile pattern of mixed theta and beta went away and was replaced by alpha activity, which then returned to its normal alpha pattern.

So now we can understand that when alpha begins to diminish in an older person (or even a younger person), this may signal an unhealthy and hazardous reduction in blood flow to the brain. The most common cause of reduced blood flow to the brain is clogged arteries. Indeed, blood flow varies as the inverse third power of the diameter of the blood vessel. This simple mathematical relationship has alarming consequences for the brain when arteries get clogged and the effective diameter of the blood vessel shrinks. For example if the opening inside a blood vessel shrinks to  $\frac{1}{2}$  of normal size, the blood flow is reduced to  $\frac{1}{8}$ th of the normal flow. That is because 2 to the 3rd power is 8, i.e.,  $2 \times 2 \times 2 = 8$ . So if the diameter is reduced to  $\frac{1}{2}$ , the blood flow is reduced to  $\frac{1}{8}$ th. Reducing blood flow to  $\frac{1}{8}$ th of normal starves the brain, and in the resulting famine as the brain is deprived of the oxygen and glucose that it needs to run itself, the alpha waves vanish. Reduction of blood flow also impairs the function of all the brain's hormonal and biochemical regulation. Digestion can go awry, nutrition can suffer, and general health can enter a steep and rapid decline, resulting in death.

The body does have some defenses against this reduction in brain blood flow that result from clogged arteries. The number one response of the body is to raise the blood pressure. Why? If the blood vessels get clogged so the open passages inside them are smaller, blood flow is reduced. However if the blood pressure goes up, that higher pressure will force more blood through the clogged arteries and veins. You may have had this experience in the shower. You may have a strong stream of water, and the temperature is adjusted perfectly, then someone flushes a toilet or opens a faucet or starts the washer. Suddenly, the pressure drops and less water comes out. Or perhaps you started your shower when the washer was filling, When the washer is full and stops drawing off water, the pressure in the pipes surges and you get blasted with more water than you want. You have just demonstrated how a reduction in pressure will reduce the flow of water and how an increase of pressure will increase the flow of water. Blood flow works the same in your body..

*The above excerpt is from the book *The Art of Smart Thinking*.  
To order the whole book, go to:  
[www.biocybernaut.com](http://www.biocybernaut.com).*

The following is an excerpt from the introduction to an E-book called "The Gentle Art of Embracing Peace in a Fearful World." Full document available at [www.alliancepress.org/samples.htm](http://www.alliancepress.org/samples.htm)

## Create Your Own Personal Fear Filter

*There's no greater block to world peace or inner peace than fear.  
What we fear we tend to develop an unreasoning hatred for,  
so we come to hate and fear. This not only injures us psychologically  
and aggravates world tension, but through such negative  
concentration we tend to attract the things we fear.  
If we fear nothing and radiate love, we can expect good things to come.  
How much this world needs the message and example of love and faith!*

Peace Pilgrim

We are exposed to messages of FEAR every day from multiple sources. Remember, the key to propaganda is repetition, repetition, repetition, and the FEAR makers have been well-trained. To counter this influence we must repeat thoughts of peace and joy more often than the messages of FEAR. Repetition of peaceful loving empowering words is the path to the choice of peace and joy.

### Let go of fear-based thoughts.

Filter out perceptions, thoughts or beliefs that disrupt your peace of mind. Replace them with words and thoughts that support a peaceful mind. Write down some statements that feel right to you; use language that places you in the present moment as if what you are saying is true.

I feel peaceful, happy, and content.  
I celebrate peace on earth.

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### Watch less television.

Commercials and emotionally charged "news" programs feed you FEAR. Messages are carefully crafted to cause fear and open you to manipulation. Remember, a fearful population does not ask questions. The leaders of our nation successfully linked Saddam Hussein to the events of September 11, even though there was no direct involvement. Even today, with all the truth coming forward, the majority of Americans believe that Saddam was responsible for 9-11 and that weapons of mass destruction were found in Iraq - both are obviously false assertions. The power of the media is tremendous. Researchers have found that Fox News viewers are more likely than the population as a whole to believe these erroneous statements.

Repetition, repetition, repetition.

Television uses FEAR to make profits and train views by repetition on what they need to buy to solve problems created by previous repeated messages for them to worry about!

## **Capture the Moments That You Want to Remember.**

Write them down and go back to them in your imagination and memory. Go to [TreasureWisdom.com/words.htm](http://TreasureWisdom.com/words.htm) where you can create an impenetrable FEAR Filter of great experiences.

## **Reclaim the Magic of Childhood**

Adopt or reclaim your playful, happy innocence. Bring lightheartedness to your activities. Laugh at your mistakes, say “oops” when you fall down or mess up. Let go of attachments with a simple “bye bye” or “all gone”, and become open to receive more.

## **See Problems As Creative Opportunities**

A wise man once said “Every mistake is a new beginning.” There are no mistakes in the universe. It is only our perceptions that label something a mistake. If we take the time to view our problems as opportunities we then create the possibility that an obstacle is actual leverage for a greater outcome. Example: The inconvenience of a flat tire that happens on the way to an appointment in town is superior to having the same event happen on a curvy, narrow, mountain road in the snow the next week!

*The following is an excerpt from a book that was ghost-written using transcribed interviews with the author combined with additional content research. My job was to capture and maintain the author's voice throughout the book, while making the content readable and grammatically correct.*

One of the greatest challenges in self-development is making change last. We have learned how we have become conditioned all of our lives to be a certain way, act with certain habits, believe limiting beliefs. Reading this book has perhaps opened a crack in the unconscious being you have been to the Ultimate You where the light of choice has begun to shine. We now have to condition our minds to accept NEW patterns of thought and behavior that we choose consciously.

## **RIP**

No, I'm not talking about "rest in peace". Lasting personal change requires three things - Readiness, Insight and Practice. Lacking any of these will sabotage your efforts, according to Earnie Larsen. He has studied the topic of personal change for 40 years, first as a priest, and now as an author, speaker and workshop leader.

Readiness cannot be forced. By choosing to read this book, you have at least one indication of your readiness to change something in your life. Sometimes, like me, people have to experience traumatic consequences before they are ready to change. It took losing my business and being homeless and suicidal to bring me to the brink of change! In this book thus far we have addressed readiness to change with the fifth key: Self-Imposed Leverage and Inspiration. Looking down the road and describing what our lives will be like without change is often powerful motivation to get ready!

Insight means that we are able to distinguish between the past and the present. In the past, we adopted certain behaviors that served a purpose – consciously or unconsciously. Today – in the present – these behaviors no longer serve us. They have become self-defeating habits that have taken on a life of their own. Change hinges on making ourselves fully aware of those habits and their effects on our lives. We did several exercises in the first key: Understanding Our Identity, that have lead to some insight about our behavior and true selves – The Ultimate You.

Practice is what I want to discuss in this chapter – using the awareness we have gained to consciously choose and practice new habits in the present. The key is to respond to events in our lives with an intensity that is appropriate to the present – not with the automatic and destructive, self-sabotaging reactions and behaviors we learned and became proficient at in the past.

The result of reading and doing the discovery processes in the previous chapters leads to readiness and insight which allows us now to see each day as a fresh opportunity to practice. Now we can experience the miracle of personal change that lasts for the rest of our lives!