

## PENNY WISE

BY NASREEN SATTAR, Former CEO, Standard Chartered Bank, Afghanistan



## Spending plans

If you need to save money you need to create a 'spending plan' or a budget. With a budget you can find out what your income is and what your expenses are. Once you know these two things you can find ways to reduce your expenses or increase your income to allocate an amount of money that you can afford to save. This is how the largest corporations do it and this also how the world's successful business people do it. For individuals like us this method may take a little bit of work at the beginning and a follow up now and then, but trust me it works.

The secret to this method is to identify what you are spending money on so that you can begin to plan your spending. Once you begin to plan your spending you will gain control over it and soon you will realise that you are able to save some money, which can go towards

your savings account. Many people don't like to plan their spending because it involves a little bit of work, at least once a year. Obviously we can never have a 100% plan as there can be unforeseen expenditure, but all the same eventually success will come and this little work in planning will pay

off big time in many areas of your finances.

Here are a few suggestions:

Open one savings account for important purchases, things you need to buy such as a car or household appliances. The money in this account can also be used for a much-needed holiday.



An emergency savings account - in case of a sudden illness especially if you don't have any health insurance.

Another savings account for when you retire.

If you think opening so many accounts is too complicated you can start by opening

one account and put money aside on a regular basis and then grow your savings from there. At a later stage you can open the other accounts.

Once you have saved a substantial amount, take portions out and start investing in various kinds of Government Bonds or

Fixed Deposits giving you high return (or interest) on them. The interest can then be deposited into one of your savings accounts or distributed between them. The earlier you start planning and saving the more benefitted you will be. We all tend to not think of the future, but please do.

I remember when I first started working I was so happy with my paycheck every month, I just found ways to spend the money never once thinking of saving. My friend and colleague who worked with me was so much more

careful in knowing how to save and invest her paycheck - it was years later that I realised how much she had saved whereas my savings was literally nil! I learnt of course and today feel proud that I am happily living off the return on all the wise investments I have done. It is never too late.....

## ENGINE BLOCK

BY EHSANUR RAZA RONNY



## Car repair with scotch tape and baby diapers

HAVE you ever used duct tape or a zip tie to keep a nearly broken down car running? I have. And I feel like McGyver each time I do it. Now the term McGyver may sound like an alien word to many young people reading this. Which is why this needs a backstory of epic proportions.

I come from the time when dinosaurs had just died and started to stink. It's somewhere in the 90s. I come from a time when there was only one TV channel and it was called Almightyly Mighty BTV. Nowadays they changed it to just BTV because of modesty.

Back then, in my pre-pimple years, there was a show called McGyver where the protagonist (also named McGyver) would whip up all kinds of strange solutions to get something working. Some of you older people reading this are smiling and nodding your head despite the creak in your ageing neck joints. McGyver was a god among men.

He wasn't muscle bound or couldn't shoot bullets out of his arm pits. Instead he

occasionally wore reading glasses and carried a small pocket knife to fix everything with. He could build a homing missile out of a carrot. Sometimes he'd rig a defibrillator out of a candle stick and live electric wires. And other times he would fix cars and bikes using duct tape, zip ties and an egg. He had unorthodox yet scientific ways to rescue a hopeless situation.

The best you and I could do most of the times with duct tape or zip ties is to hold up a piece that is falling off the car. Like tail lights that have been hit too hard by a rickshaw. Or a mirror that has been snapped off by a rickshaw. Or a bumper that has been snapped off by a rickshaw. Or truck. You get the picture.

But sometimes, if I think strangely enough, there are sparks of genius to make McGyver proud. For example, once one of my ancient cars stopped because the fuel pump wasn't pumping. It decided to call an impromptu strike like our doctors. And that too in the middle of a Friday in Mirpur. The carburettor needed octane to run but no octane was coming.

So I filled a half litre plastic bottle with fuel, pricked a tiny hole in the side and laid it flat against the carburettor opening. I tied it down with some rope I always have in the car. Old cars must always have rope. And the fuel trickled down and kept me going despite having the hood open and propped up by a brick. I passed my mechanic's workshop and went on to a friend's house because I HAD to show off my brilliance at jury--rigging a fuel delivery system without setting myself (or worse, the car) on fire.

I was McGyver for a day. And that felt good. Old cars have that effect. Some days, they make your future seem bleak. And other days, they can make you feel like the smartest man around. Or just make you feel like a man. Even if you're a woman. Because old cars need something to be fixed or something to be handled just right. And you are smarter by association for figuring that out. It's a puzzle that some of us love to solve. Other days we just hold the duct tape in our hands and call the mechanic.

## MUSINGS

## Cancans and stilettos

THE golden girls in their 60s remember the heyday of the cancans and stilettos—which are seeing a revival again today. Actually now the fashion mood according to Elle and Paris Match is such that whatever length one wears, if one carries it with aplomb it's "in". Such is the style in Paris. Wonder what Coco Chanel would say. In Bangladesh today one sees hemlines of all lengths—from twelve inches below the waist to way down like ballroom dresses.

Wearing "kameezes" at least twelve inches below the knee, or just four inches above the ankles is the done thing. Chiffon is also very much "in". Dhakaiites believe, not realising, that "chiffon" is cloth in French. Similarly the girls and ladies follow the Bollywood style of having a "bon" before the flowing hair starts. There maybe curls or plaits before the hair is let loose or worn in a plait. Shirts, skirts, saris are all in—as long as they are sported with aplomb. One may wear leggings or tights jeans – they are both in. Wearing baggy pants or "shalwar" type pyjamas – even if they are the Punjabi style, very baggy, so to put it are all ok, as long as they go with the mood. Jeans faded at the knee and below, in patches are worn by the leggy, even if they are 27 or so.

One waits for winter to see what the a la mode world will dictate. Of course there will be the coat, the wrapper and cardigans of all shapes and sizes. One wonders how long the ornate fashion will continue.

One recalls the large cancans Miss Mona Michel wore in class at St. Joseph's in Karachi and read "Daddy Long Legs" or "Under the Lilac Tree". One spent one's days reading "The Hoozier School Master" or listening to chapters of translated pieces of Charles Dickens' "Great Expectations" wearing a simple change of clothes, many being the discarded ones of the elder siblings. Gobbling down the Saturday Evening Post, while waiting for the broad belts of the pleated dress to be done was the usual routine while the brothers rode camels at Hakes Bay. The teachers invariably wore the cutest possible skirts with elegant heels, as in the convent school and college either the nuns in their habits, touched up your painting or the Anglo Indian teachers took up your "Fair Daffodils Weep To See You Haste Away So Soon" or the "Fighting Temmeriere". And so the length of the gowns was altered according to the fancy of the fashion plates. And so the world of fashion began early, while one wore dresses at school, and Mum had the big brothers' crayon colouring book dresses coped by the tailor. Ah to be young and full of dreams for the future when one read Father's books instead of doing one's art homework.

By Fayza Haq