

Navigating Through a Financial Storm

By Jean Archary

If there's anything that COVID-19 has taught us, it's that life is unpredictable.

Yet, how do we respond when we're thrust into a 'new normal', constantly being bombarded with rapid changes that threaten to push us over the brink?

It was Charles Darwin, the father of evolution, who said: **"It is not the strongest of the species that survives, nor the most intelligent. It is the one that is most adaptable to change."**

Humankind has been painfully tried and tested by the societal changes brought about by the global pandemic. As a result, several issues were highlighted in countries, businesses and families at large when national lockdowns were imposed, shutting down livelihoods and economies. While none of us could have predicted the impact of a disaster such as this, it's undeniable that those who had proper financial plans in place before the pandemic were far better off than those who did not.

If your income or livelihood was impacted by the national lockdowns, and if you had the foresight to see this coming, what would you have done differently to be better prepared to handle the financial loss or implications?

Adequate savings and sufficient protective measures would have ensured you had access to the

necessary finances needed in the event of loss of income or death of a family member. This would have bought you time to find your feet and **navigate through the financial storm with more security and less stress.**

Most businesses use scenario planning to identify potential events that could impact their operations and revenue. They use this information to put plans in place to mitigate the risk of a potential disaster. We frequently apply these strategies in the workplace, but how many of us apply this same thinking to our personal lives? Scenario planning can help individuals to consider the possibility of the impact of certain events on their lives, and to take the necessary steps to ensure that they at least have a financial plan to offer them some peace of mind.

We can all learn a few lessons from this unfortunate global event, and take the necessary precautions to be better prepared for future potential disasters that may arise. Although it's not always easy to recover from our losses, we can inch forward on the road to becoming

more financially savvy by gaining access to proper education and practising foresight and careful planning.

What can you do to ensure that the next time you're faced with a storm, the last thing you need to worry about is money? Here are some thought-provoking questions to help steer you in the right direction:

- If I were to lose my job, for how long would I be able to cover my expenses?
- If I were to become ill or disabled, would I have sufficient income to pay my expenses?
- If my spouse were to pass away, would my family and I be able to maintain our current lifestyles?
- If I were to pass away, would my family be alright financially?
- Am I saving adequately towards my retirement?

While these reflections are tough to think about, they are a necessary part of making sure we plan for the future. I'll leave you with one more closing question:

What will you change today to be better prepared for the changes of tomorrow?

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Jean Archary is an author, speaker, Certified Financial Planner® and accredited workplace coach with over 20 years of experience within financial services. Her exposure to coaching, psychology and financial planning led to the design of a financial wellness programme that considers both sides of money: IQ and EQ. For more information or to work with Jean, contact jean@moneymessages.co.za.

