

Intentional Economics Resource Sheet: My Intention with Money

This guide is meant to assist in creating intention about how we use money. In our economic system, money is a powerful tool in creating the society within which we want to live. How we harness that tool is up to us. This guide isn't all inclusive, but hopefully provides some inspiration or perhaps spurs deeper questions.

We have a choice, we can either use our own intention on how we spend our money or we can let the intention of others dictate our actions. With billions of dollars spent on marketing in the United States each year, we are constantly inundated with the intentions of others. But are those intentions ours? Ultimately, whether we have intention of how we use our money or not, our financial behavior has a significant impact on our lives. After all, most of us are putting over forty percent of our waking lives toward earning money. Below are some ways in which one can use intention as a consumer.

Stepping Forward

- Determine what matters to you with your money
 - * What kind of world do you want?
 - * Who do you want to benefit from your expenditures?
 - * What are the times that make you most happy? How do your money habits support or distract from those?
- Jump in.
 - * The shallow end: Start either with one area of expenditures or one value. For example, where you buy your groceries or buying only organic. Shift from stuff to experiences.
 - * Waist deep: Map out how you can align your values across all expenditures.
 - * The deep end: Become a producer of the things you consume. Backyard farming, making clothes.
 - * And beyond: Organize others to create cooperatives or sharing economies, address economic or environmental justice at the policy level.

A note on value

What does the term value mean? How is value used in the marketplace?

When we make purchases often the predominant question is “am I paying the lowest price possible for this product.”

Why is this the case?

What does paying the lowest price mean for those producing the product or the environment?

Pathways

Buy Local

Level of difficulty: Finding local businesses in your area can be time consuming. Shifting mindset about saving money can be difficult. But once adopted, fairly

The Washington state organization Sustainable Connections has a great list of reasons to buy local. Connect to that list [here](#).

Here are some ways to find local, independent retailers:

- Farmers Markets: The epitome of buying local. “Certified” markets require that the seller must be the producer of goods sold at its stand. Often times, the farmer or artisan is the person you interact with at the

easy to maintain.

market. Local Harvest (www.localharvest.org) is a great directory of farmers markets across the country.

- “Buy Local” Campaigns: In the last few years many communities have initiated “Buy Local” campaigns such as BuyLocalSantaMonica.
- Shop downtown: Large shopping centers cater to large chain businesses whereas downtowns, or “main street” are more likely to house independent businesses.
- Cooperatives and CSAs – Many communities have cooperative grocery stores where customers can also become members. As a member, you have a vote in how the store operates. The Cooperative Grocer Network provides a directory of cooperatives: <http://www.cooperativegrocer.coop/coops>. CSA, or Community Supported Agriculture, is a partnership between communities and local farms. Members receive a weekly “share” in the produce/meat/dairy produced by the farm. Local Harvest (see above) also has a directory of CSAs across the country.
- Create an Independent Business Directory: Many members in our religious groups or parents in our children’s schools are small business owners. Creating a directory of these businesses provides access to local services that otherwise might remain undiscovered.

Certified “B” Corporations

Level of difficulty: Easy to access, though not available in every industry. Goods and services might not be located near you.

Twenty-seven states and 34 countries have passed legislation to allow a new type of corporation, the B Corp. As mentioned earlier, corporations are required by law to maximize shareholder value. B corp. legislation allows corporations to add a social mission (the B stands for Benefit) to its charter which allows companies to pursue goals (like environmental sustainability) other than maximizing profit. “B Certified” companies are businesses that have been certified by a 3rd party to be following a social mission, much like USDA Organic certifies farmers. Look for the B Corp symbol on products you buy or check the online directory: www.bcorporation.net.



Fair Trade and Organic Certification

Level of difficulty: Adjusting price expectation can be challenging. Not always readily available (particularly in suburban or lower income communities).

Fair Trade and Organic certifications ensure that agricultural products are produced within certain labor or environmental standards. Fair Trade certifies that producers receive a fair price for their products, typically significantly higher than the standard market price and typically targeting small producers. Most widely associated with coffee, Fair Trade certification can be found on other food products such as bananas and sugar and has recently expanded to clothing. Organic certification ensures that agricultural products were produced without the use of chemical based pesticides or herbicides that can be harmful to the environment.