

Book reviews

Money Habitudes™: A Guide for Professionals Working with Money Related Issues

Sue McGregor

Money Habitudes™: A Guide for Professionals Working with Money Related Issues 2nd edn. Syble Solomon (2005). Rockville, MD, USA. Published by LifeWise Productions. \$US19.95. ISBN 0-9742531-1-1. 73 pages. The deck of Money Habitude™ cards that goes with the professional guide noted above is available for \$US15.00. Order both from <http://www.amazon.com> or get discounted prices and special packages when ordering direct at <http://www.moneyhabitudes.com>.

I am familiar with this resource and was impressed enough to want to bring it to your attention. Solomon has succeeded in creating a unique way to help people who are struggling with debt to overcome their inhibitions so they can open up and gain insights that will help them take control of their money. She has done this via the development of a deck of cards that professionals can use and are interactive, quick, fun and educational. They can be used to explore how habits and attitudes about money affect our financial and life decisions. The combination of habits and attitudes forms the catchy term 'Habitude'.

The professional guide is 73 pages in length, comprising 10 sections. In the Introduction, Solomon clarifies that the Money Habitude™ system is not a serious diagnostic tool, nor is it intended to help form prescriptive assessments. It is intended to initiate serious conversations about money-related issues. She also provides a discussion of what you can expect when using these cards (benefits, outcomes). She provides a brief background story of what prompted her to develop the 65 cards. The result is three blue cards (that's me, that's not me, that's sometimes me or that's partially true); six yellow interpretation cards for the six dominant habitudes (selfless, free spirit, security, status, spontaneous and targeted goals); and 54 white playing cards, nine each for the six habitudes. She also identified six typical money behaviours (earning, spending, saving, investing, giving and debt).

Solomon then launches into three sections on: (a) how to use the white cards to do a basic card sort with the blue information cards (she calls this Money Habitude™ Solitaire) as well as four other approaches; (b) how to interpret the results using the six yellow cards; and (c) how to initiate in-depth conversations using the yellow interpretation/statement cards. She provides two very valuable tables: one about the typical money behaviours associated with each of the six dominant habitudes and the other on the typical life challenges associated with each of the six dominant habitudes. A section titled 'Next Steps' is presented in a five-page chart, summarizing which action steps are appropriate depending on the dominant habitude. The guide ends with a section of resources, differentiated for financial counsellors and other types of practitioners who can use the resources.

Solomon acknowledges that she does not have empirical evidence that illustrates the efficacy and effectiveness of this approach to money matters, but she also noted a full description of the scholars she drew on for her work, scholars who did have empirical evidence for their ideas (pp. 9, 62–65). I take issue with her use of the term 'client' because it conveys a power-over relationship. Others may not have any problem with this term. As an aside, while contributing to the development of the course

that people take to counsel Canadian bankrupts, we consciously shifted paradigms and excluded the term 'client' in favour of participant in the counselling process.

I feel confident recommending this tool. Solomon is Adjunct Faculty at the University of North Carolina and on the Board of the Association of Financial Counselling and Planning Education (AFCPE). I think you will enjoy this new approach to working with individuals and families in debt. It looks like an exciting new way to help people discover their hidden habits and attitudes about money, freeing them to embark on a more empowering future financial life.

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