
How Much Is Enough?

◆ Issue #8 ◆ Douglas E. Reese

Discipline and Congruence

It has been said that “your priorities in life can be determined by your level of commitment to each.” In February’s Action Step you were given the opportunity to rate your level of commitment to the five top priorities you identified in January. In this month’s Action Step you will be given the opportunity to create your own “Congruency Check” with regards to each of your five most important financial goals.

The following definition has been created to fit into the context of this discussion:

Congruency: a measurement of how closely your commitments match your priorities, for each of your financial goals. Any incongruencies that exist suggest that one (or more) of the following three possibilities may be relevant to your situation:

- 1) Your PRIORITIES may need reassessment.
- 2) Your COMMITMENTS may need reassessment.
- 3) Your RESOURCES may need realignment.

It should be noted that a fairly close congruence (or the absence of any “significant incongruencies”) should be a positive sign that your activities have been in line with your objectives, your resources have been allocated adequately, and little or no change is necessary at this time.

It is when you discover “significant incongruencies” that action must be taken before proceeding with your financial game plan. And in order to follow through with any necessary action, due to any incongruency, you must possess the necessary **discipline** to act!

One of the most “readable” and comprehensive explanations of the importance of discipline, in my opinion, can be found in M. Scott Peck’s book The Road Less Traveled. According to Peck there are four tools of discipline, as follows:

- Delaying of gratification
- Acceptance of responsibility
- Dedication to truth
- Balancing

Although Peck’s book is subtitled “A New Psychology of Love, Traditional Values and Spiritual Growth” I believe his applications of problem solving and responsibility have great merit in the financial planning arena. In the upcoming issues of INSIGHTS we shall take a closer look at the above four tools of discipline and how they can be effectively applied to your personal financial

efforts, to remedy any incongruencies that may exist between your stated financial goals and your current level of commitment (in terms of time, money, planning, etc.) to each.

“If you are not part of the solution, then you are part of the problem.”
Eldridge Cleaver

ACTION STEP #6

A “CONGRUENCY CHECK”

Process: Follow the instructions below to determine if each of your “top five” priorities (financial goals) has received a commensurate level of commitment, to date.

STATED GOAL:	(A)	(B)	(C)	(D)	(E)
_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____

STATED GOAL: List your “top five” financial goals on the five lines above (beginning with the top priority first.)

- (A) List the corresponding priority ranking for each goal.
 [1 = Highest Priority, 5 = Lowest Priority] (from Action Step #4)
- (B) List the corresponding level of commitment for each goal.
 [1 = Lowest Commitment, 10 = Highest Commitment] (Action Step #5)
- (C) From (A) transfer the numbers in reverse order to (C).
 [1 becomes 5, 2 becomes 4, 3 same, 4 becomes 2, 5 becomes 1]
- (D) Multiply across: (B) X (C) = (D). Fill in (D) figures.
- (E) Take the highest number from (D) and assign it a “1” in Column (E), second highest (D) receives “2”, third highest a “3”, fourth highest a “4” and lowest number receives a “5”.

CONGRUENCY CHECK: A perfect match for CONGRUENCY would occur if your priorities (ranked 1 to 5) each match up with the corresponding number in Column (E). In other words if each number listed in Column (A) matches its corresponding number in Column (E) on the same line, you have a congruent relationship.

The “quick check” can be done if you have listed your five goals from top to bottom, 1 to 5. If Column (E) also reads from top to bottom, 1 to 5, you have true congruence.

FOOD FOR THOUGHT: Although you initially selected the priority ranking for the “top five,” it may be helpful to take a close look at column (E), which may be a truer representation of what your actual priority ranking has been, according to your stated levels of commitment to each goal.

Circle any number in Column (E) that doesn’t match Column (A).