

How to Align Assets with Values

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By adopting an approach to align your investments with your values, you use your view of the world to frame your finances. In some ways, this is similar to the framework that Bowdoin provides its students to consider how we will use our education for the common good.

Here are 3 steps I consider:

1. We all have a money story. What is yours? From a young age, we are in a relationship with money. We drink in the money messages from our families - many of which are unspoken. This is more than our socio-economic background though that is part of it. Our relationship with money informs if we have a scarcity or abundance orientation. It touches our marriages and our orientation to a paycheck. Many of us, myself included, have cross class marriages. There's a reason my husband and I couldn't agree whether to pay someone to clean our house. We had different money stories and orientations.

Write your story. It can be short. What is most essential? It changes over time, so write it at different moments in your life, like a compass reading.

2. What are your goals? How are you keeping your lights on now and planning for your future self? This is where we ask "How much is enough?" And then what's next when you have enough?

3. Consider your impact and how your money is serving the world for better. This can include investing in socially responsible investments though that's one piece of a larger framework. It includes how you direct your charitable dollars, your investment dollars, and your spending dollars. Buying local and community supported agriculture (CSAs) were born from the recognition that we are all moving money and have power.

Rudolf Steiner taught money gains its meaning in its movement.

How you are handling your money is a journey. What questions are you asking? Who are your learning partners? Bowdoin is a rich, dynamic community of learners. Our money can be another tool that brings us together with our curiosity, our intellect, and our drive to understand it and its alignment in our lives and for the common good.