Clarion Review

Business & Economics

You Can Do It: An Easy Step-By-Step Guide to Financial Security

Donald H. Young
iUniverse
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Four Stars (out of Five)

With more than forty years of experience in the institutional investment management business former Chairman of Invesco's Global Structured Products Group Donald H. Young shares his personal advice for developing a successful financial plan and avoiding the pitfalls that can derail a well-intentioned plan.

The central theme of the book is that individual investors are ultimately responsible for developing and maintaining their own personal financial plan and achieving their long-term financial goals. Through the use of examples and figures this book shows readers how to create a basic personal financial plan. It focuses on developing implementing and maintaining the plan. Once the basic concepts are understood readers should be able to take it from there adjusting it as variables and situations change over time. This book is meant to be read as a whole since all the concepts tie together and later chapters build on the prior.

Young delivers sound advice through a tough love consultative approach. "There is no shortcut for developing a personal balance sheet and no substitute for doing it" he writes. "Without a proper balance sheet you are almost guaranteed to fail to meet your objectives." The book offers a sample balance sheet for tracking assets versus liabilities that can easily be duplicated and modified using Excel Quicken or other software. It advises readers on the appreciation potential of stocks and bonds as part of the plan. Young helps readers estimate income needed for retirement and structure investments to reach that target. He also provides some particularly helpful tips on improving cash flow management like linking a checking account to a money market fund.

The examples are useful and based on historical growth and inflation rates. Additional examples reflecting the effect of current economic conditions could make the book even more appealing to readers and set it apart from other financial advisor books in print. Gone are the

days of expecting four percent salary growth per year for many Americans. The illustration of a person earning 75000 a year with thirty-five years until retirement effectively illustrates the financial model and the power of compound interest although some points may be lost on readers earning far less and that's where additional comparisons could help.

The investment program advocated in the book applies to people of any age though readers who would benefit most are those with years until retirement who have enough time to see the benefit of compound interest from the "Pay Yourself First" concept.

You Can Do It is full of sound advice for readers who are serious about taking charge of saving for their future and want a solid roadmap to get there.

Cindy Kryszak