

Review & Reflect #3—Professional Wealth, Professional Health

Financial readiness is based on a 5-step process to building wealth. Answer the following prompts to see how ready you are, or how to get started, so you can make wise money decisions that will set the course for your future professional health and professional wealth.

Step #1: Where am I today?

I am an active college student who, in the past, has been able to work over the summer and earn enough money to not have to work during the school year. However, this has changed in the past two years as fewer and fewer companies are willing to take on a summer hire (whether it is due to the length of employee training or a lack of security that I will return the following year) and thus I am lower on funds than I would like to be. I am currently at the prime time to take on a summer internship. I have not had to worry about finances nearly as much as other people as my parents are well-off enough to not only pay for my college tuition but also cover my rent costs alongside it.

Step #2: Where would I like to be?

I eventually want to be a professional dog trainer and have recently made a connection that has offered me a swath of information and a potential job or internship depending on the requirements and my situation. I also plan to own dogs in the future, so planning how to budget and save for vet costs, food, etc. is something I will have to consider. For goals for the near-future, I would like to finally land a more consistent job, so I don't have to jump from seasonal job to seasonal job, allowing me time to actually sit down and focus on my finances and my future plans more easily. Overall, I would like to be able to sit for a year or two where my life, schedule and finances are not constantly in flux.

Step #3: Can I get there? Why?

In theory I can get there, it is just putting everything into practice that will determine my success. I am driven and willing to put in the work to reach not only my near-future goals, but also my long-term dreams/aspirations. I also have a safety net with my parents, as they have offered me a place to stay after I graduate while I figure out my next steps in 2026 and beyond. This removes a lot of stress from my shoulders and allows me a comfortable place to make mistakes and learn from them early on rather than later down the line.

Step #4: How do I get there?

My first step is not falling behind on my classes, so I continue to graduate on-time (Winter 2026). I am also actively seeking jobs and internships for the summer, even if they are only part-time, so I can continue to earn even a little bit of money. The goal is to land a more secure job post-graduation, whether with a company I interned for, with my dog training connection in Bellingham, or a general retail position to buy some time. I also need to look more inward and “tighten the belt” on my spending habits. My parents are not just well-off monetarily, they also have a large amount of knowledge that got them to where they are today, alongside connections at their jobs that could help me gain my footing as well, so I plan to learn as much as I can from them to set me on the right path.

Step #5: How can I stay on track?

My goal of getting my own dog fairly quickly after I graduate and a plan to gain my certification through a dog training academy are my driving forces, alongside not wanting to inconvenience my parents or take advantage of their hospitality in letting me stay a while. My friends and family also often hold me accountable, so I don't spend money on things I don't really need right this second. I use my banking app for BECU as a way to budget as it gives me a breakdown of spending habits and sorts transactions into various categories for me to view. I think writing down my goals and the steps I need to take to reach them and reminders about important dates/deadlines is the best way for me to stay on track and not make too many mistakes. That's another thing, as well, understanding that I have and will continue to make mistakes, it's what I do in response to that mistake that makes or breaks my future success.

Think about each of these steps--your honest self-assessment will enable you to make better decisions if you truly believe you can do it!