

Pay now and play later

By Jeff “Chief” Urbaniak
COLUMNIST (www.AdviceChief.com)

There are two paths you can take in life: you either can *pay now and play later*, or *play now and pay later*. Regardless which path you choose, one thing is for certain: your life will demand a payment.

If you want to get somewhere in life, whether it's with a career, money, talent, or even with a relationship, you're going to have to exert yourself at some point in order to reap the rewards you desire. There's no free lunch in life that ultimately doesn't require a payment of some kind.

In the business, labor, or service world, the people who have moved up in their careers or jobs are often the ones who made great sacrifices to obtain the capabilities necessary to open doors of opportunity. They buckled down at some point in their lives, despite any personal or domestic challenges, and obtained the education, certifications, credentials, or special experience necessary to improve their lives or their job/career situation. They paid a price up front to be where they are now. Without that price paid, their life situations would be the exact same today as or worse than yesteryear with next year not looking much brighter.

Look around and observe different people's retirement situations. Those who paid and invested earlier in their

careers, and kept it up, are living with more financial freedom and great medical benefits. Those who chose to spend their extra money on other “more important” things at that time, are having to work with aged bodies or are struggling to live on social security. Many have bare minimum healthcare and some have no choice but to burden family members for assistance.

It's important to *pay now and play later* with finances as well, especially with people on a super tight budget. Look how many people get antsy and spend their money “before it's gone”--like it's going to run away or something! When some extra money lands in their lap, they act with urgency to spend it for the sake of spending it. Very little gets saved for the cost of life that occasionally jumps up and bites. Quite often leisure, entertainment, and feel-good things leave them with empty pockets and purses when routine or emergency costs come due.

Playing first and paying later may work for some people, but for most it's like indulging in a scrumptious plate of steak and lobster while the quicksand is rising above their waste. It tastes good for sure--until their head begins to sink. Me personally, I'd rather work hard to get out of the quicksand, rinse off, shower, then head to Red Lobster.

When it comes to credit cards, I give young adults this advice when

purchasing medium and small-ticket items: it's better to save then buy than to borrow, buy, and owe. Credit cards, when not properly managed, are the perfect example of how playing first will make the cost of paying later much greater than it would have been had the discipline of saving been exercised in advance of spending. Credit cards aren't completely evil. They can help disciplined people in a pinch who have an organized pay-back plan. But in general, my advice about spending is this: *If you want it but don't need it and can't afford it, then don't buy it or pay for it.*

Lastly, if you're someone who is fortunate enough to have a God-given talent that most people can only dream about, don't waste that talent or the opportunity to hone it. Put in the work to develop and exhibit it. I can't tell you how many times I've witnessed someone who “took the summer off” or took their talent for granted and then got their butt kicked by someone with less talent and more motivation. They decided to play and not pay and lost!

So choose the path of *paying now and playing later*. It's smarter and healthier. And don't worry, you won't be missing out on anything. In no time you'll be basking in the sun despite the rainy clouds.

~ The End ~