

Recap of Nathan Dungan PCN Speaking Event
10/12/09

"The choices we make with our money can change the world," Nathan Dungan started his presentation with this challenging statement about how we look and think about money. He talked about money transaction versus money interaction; transaction being the logistics of money and the interaction being the personal story and values each individual has tied to money. He warned the audience that if there is no system in place within the family to teach these values, it falls to the default system which is the broader culture. In other words, if the parent isn't doing the teaching, pop culture and advertisers are!

Studies show that we are subjected to over 5000 advertisements in some form or another every day! And that number is steadily climbing. The message being sent to our children is money = spend. Nathan's objective is to teach people that this is not the only way to think about money. Money can (should) equal saving as well as sharing. With 70% of American households living from paycheck to paycheck, this message is taking its time! What was interesting were his stories that being financially rich did not necessarily mean you were any better at doing the saving and sharing parts. In writing their own money stories, families should think about:

- Sharing—providing for the needs of others which promotes gratitude.
- Saving—teaches patience and discipline.
- Spending—setting goals and differentiating between needs and wants.

Nathan believes that our culture expects way too little from our youth in terms of what they do with their money. Teens spend over 70 billion dollars a year on themselves (clothing, phones, entertainment, food)! We need to raise the bar about what is possible. In order to do this, parents need to speak frankly and open about financial hardships when they occur. They need to engage kids in the transaction parts of money (bill paying) as well as having them be a part of the family's money system. They need to ask the questions like, "If you buy the non-designer jeans, what could you do with the other part of that money?" He thinks it is important to get money into kids' hands as soon as they are able to ask for stuff. The important part of this is for parents to take their other hand and walk them through that process.

Five healthy money habits for kids and families suggested by Nathan are:

1. Identify your financial values.
2. Learn to earn! = Get a job.
3. Money mistakes are okay to make. You learn by fixing them.
4. Monitor your credit score and teach your kids about this.
5. Initiate a process system. Have kids create a budget.

Nathan closed his presentation with his 3-1-1 challenge. Each family should come up with 3 financial goals and follow them through. Decide on 1 thing on which to do more. Decide on 1 thing on which to do less. He challenged the audience to implement these things within the next 72 hours.

"The choices we make with our money can change the world".