



Build Your Net Worth

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Save \$20 in 5 minutes

Sherry Ridge



Comparison shopping really can be worth the time. Today when looking for an airline ticket, I recalled a website I read about in a newspaper article sometime last year, Kayak.com. The site allows you to see what the price would be from different vendors, such as Priceline, Expedia, Travelocity, etc., as well as the best price that other users have found. So spending less than 5 minutes on the Internet saved me \$20. That's equivalent to \$240 an hour, I think the average American would see value in \$240 an hour.

An issue we seem to consistently have is not seeing the big picture, not understanding or the very least admitting that little things can make a big difference. Don't feel embarrassed, individuals are not the only ones, businesses and unfortunately our own government doesn't always take the time to save money. Recently in my role as an elected official, I reported how I made a simple phone call, which too was less than 5 minutes, to inquire about the cost of a service. That phone call resulted in a savings of \$39.21; this savings could be turned into 11,000 pounds of food for our

local food pantry. Once again, little things can make a big difference.

So many feel that comparison shopping is not worth the time, I could probably see that point if we had to add in the cost to get all the information. But this day and age, when it is mostly a click or phone call away, there really is no cost. Years ago, the only option was to drive to different stores/vendors looking for the best deal on an item, but today we can use the Internet. That too many have found to be cumbersome, not knowing where to start, and spending time to just find that out. So when you do, make sure like me you share that information. There are many sites that allow for comparison shopping and utilizing them can be like getting paid \$240 an hour.

So, in my case, Kayak.com, a travel search



engine, showed me the

airlines with the cheapest ticket that met my criteria, from there I went direct to that airlines site and saved \$20. The purpose of this article is not to promote Kayak.com, which it must be noted I receive no compensation whatsoever in reporting this, but to show how it can be easy and convenient to shop for the best deal and well worth your time. Also important is that we stretch the dollar we have, we get more with less. Shopping around, especially when it's only a click away should certainly be made a part of your purchasing process.

Sherry Ridge conducts Transforming Debt into Wealth® workshops all over Lake County, Illinois. She eliminated over \$150,000 in debt in 7.3 years.

SHERRY DEBT FREEDOM SHOW

Tune in every Wednesday at 1 p.m. CST to WRLR 98.3 FM.

Can't listen via the radio? You can log in to the live video feed at <http://www.wrlr.fm/tv.html>

You can also join the E Fan list to watch/listen at time convenient for you, email Sherry@Sherrydebtfree.com.

Easy Tricks to being HAPPY!

Researchers say that we can make ourselves happy, it's not all about what we have gone through or what our genetic make up is. It has been estimated that about 40% of our personal happiness can come from very specific things that we do, actions we can take.

Try one and see how you feel...

- ✓ Take a walk, even if it jus around your yard
- ✓ Smell a pleasant scent, light a candle that you enjoy
- ✓ Listen to your favorite CD, and get up and dance
- ✓ Let the sunlight in, open your curtains
- ✓ Call a friend, one that always has something funny to say
- ✓ Meditate, relax for just 5 minutes

Save Money During the Holidays – Here are Six Ways Dewey Kearney

Did you know that the average American will spend approximately \$791.10 this year on holiday gifts (including food and decorations), according to a

recent survey by the National Retail Federation?

Here are some ways to make the holidays less painful and a lot more fun.

What's more, consumers will also plan to spend on average \$99.22 each on gifts for themselves.

If spending \$890.32 isn't in your plans (and don't forget to add in



credit card interest to the total), it's time to get smart before you get trapped. Here are some ways to save money during the upcoming holidays.

1. Try a non-traditional tree and save a lot of cash for presents.

If you live near a National Forest, contact your local Forestry Office to see if they sell Christmas tree permits. My son lives in Northern California and his family does this every year. It's cheaper than buying from a lot and you can make a family day of going out and picking your own Christmas tree! They

have done it for years and have a ball!

This is not an endorsement of Christmas tree farmers who let you cut a tree for yourself. Those places are usually more expensive than just going to the local Wal-Mart shopping center and picking a pre-cut tree.

Get a well-made artificial tree. All the major retail stores sell them and if you spend some time checking them out you can find some very realistic looking trees. I bought one last year – an 8-foot tree for about \$100.00. That sounds like a lot but if you figured you would have spent \$50 for a real one, this one is paid for in two years and could last for 10 – 15 years until you get tired of it and want another one.

2. Brave the post-Thanksgiving crowds!

If you're not faint of heart, you can actually save money by shopping the Friday after Thanksgiving according to Ellie Kay, author of several money-saving books, including "The Debt Diet." Kay is a firm believer in bargain hunting and has done so for

years. She says, "I often start at 5 a.m. and finish about 9 a.m. just in time for breakfast and a nice cup of coffee."



Kay suggests that you shop strategically. "Plan your day in

advance, and then read through the sales circulars on Thanksgiving so you're well prepared. Be sure you know the store opening times, which often are as early as 5 a.m., and watch



for the fine print regarding popular items such as 'until stock runs out' or 'available to first 100 customers.'" If you have a bargain-minded

buddy she also suggests you take them along. My wife had two of those that she loved to shop with. She said these friends could sniff out a bargain a mile away!

3. Use up store credits and gift cards

I'll bet you've wondered why gift cards are so popular with merchants. It's not for your convenience but theirs – up to 70% of those are never used! Some of them expire after a certain date, which means the money is theirs to keep and you never actually purchased something. If you still have a gift card the holidays are a great time to use it before you forget about it again.

4. Don't shop for yourself

I know it's tempting – the old Madison Avenue mentality, "you deserve it, you've been working hard." Remember that National Retail Federation report that the average shopper will spend \$99 on themselves. Take yourself off the list and save some money.

5. Shop early online

This is a great tip if you know you

will have trouble controlling your spending. Avoid the mall and do targeted online shopping. No need to wait till Thanksgiving, this type of shopping you can do all year and put the items away till the proper time.

Lots of online stores offer free or discounted shipping (plus most of the time you don't have to pay sales tax).

6. Keep a running list of things you want and shop for them throughout the year as they come up for sale

Many times the perfect gift will be on sale after Labor Day for 50%



off. Take advantage of that and pocket the difference. The same thing for After-Christmas sales – they are the same online as at the mall plus you avoid the temptation to overspend. Look for opportunities to save and you will find them. Instead of paying full retail you can get them for practically wholesale and save money all year long.

Where have you been all my life?

... the client reaction!

Here is what some of our clients are saying about our debt elimination and wealth building programs

Since I took your course (April 2007) I have paid off 2 car loans, medical bills, credit card, 401 K loan and a revolving credit line all total just over \$70,000.

I sold a boat and truck (about \$18,000) to help the cause along but doing this also helped my monthly budget by about \$150 dollars each month.

Since taking the course I cut our monthly expenses by \$467 dollars. I am currently working on paying off my house now.

I think the course has/is making a big difference in my family's future. Thank you very much.

*Bert I.
Winnetka, IL*

I took a class from you many, many years ago at Niles West through Oakton.

We have been pretty good. Last year we paid all of our bills except three and am working on these last three.

Thanks a lot.
Cathy S.