

# **THIS IS HOW YOU DO IT: HOUSING FIRST AND MONEY FIRST**

**ELEVEN TIPS FOR SOCIAL  
WORKERS AND POLICY MAKERS  
ON HOW TO LEARN TO PUT YOUR  
MONEY WHERE YOUR MOUTH IS**

**DOOR ROKUS LOOPIK**

**THIS IS HOW YOU DO IT**

# **MONEY FIRST**

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# FOR WHAT IT'S WORTH

The numbers on Homelessness and Poverty are rising. There is no time to waste.

## **We have to bring these numbers down**

People who are a victim of our failing welfare state, of our failing systems, have to work hard to deserve services (read; Housing, Money, Community, Love). Only in exchange for good behaviour our systems are willing to reconsider and listen to what people wish for.

## **It's time for change**

Housing First Programs in every big city in The World, the London-, Amsterdam-, Rotterdam- and Haarlem Project (Money First) have proven to be effective in solving homelessness and poverty and thus in providing people with future perspectives.

## **Here's some reasons why it is worthwhile to give people Money without preconditions**

# **GIVE A HOMELESS PERSON \$10 AND HE OR SHE WILL THINK OF BUYING DOPE OR BOOSE. GIVE A PERSON \$10.000 AND HE OR SHE WILL THINK OF APPLYING FOR HOUSING AND EDUCATION.**

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It is a myth that people will spend the money that you give them without preconditions on bullshit. When you state, after handing over the money, that they don't have to do something in return, they will never disappoint you.

Giving people a big amount of money means that in fact you trust them to use the money in a clever way. It's all about trust, not the money.

## **PEOPLE CAN NEVER DISAPPOINT YOU**

It might be the case that some of the money will be spent on bullshit. So what? Everybody has the right to make the wrong choices. On average people learn from their mistakes. Specially if they have a friend, a good coach who guides them on their new path in life in a clever and forgiving way. On what do you spend your money? Do you use your money in a clever way? Are you a forgiving person? Do you believe in second chances? Believe in prosperity. Success and positivism are contagious.

## **YOU ARE NOT SENT FROM HEAVEN TO SAVE PEOPLE'S LIVES**



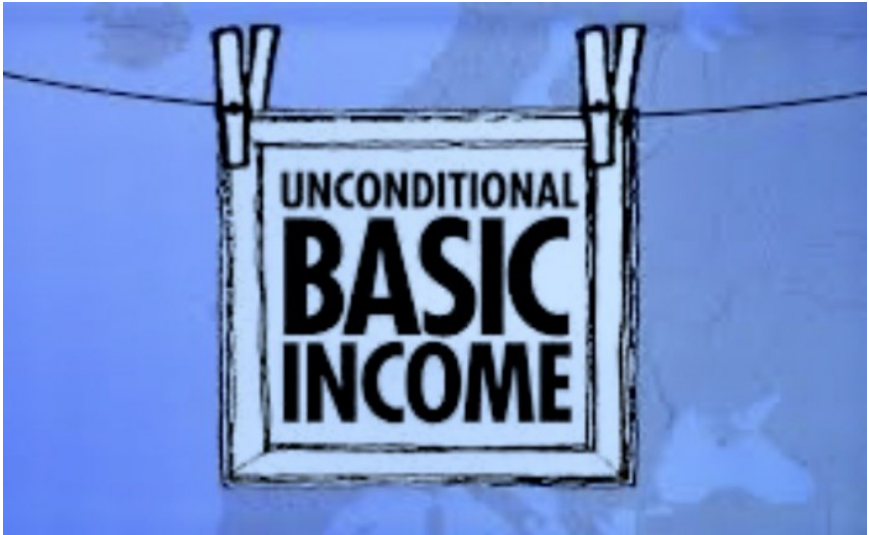
Be humble. Stay in the moment. Celebrate when you provide people with houses and money. Watch in wonder how they react and yell, cry, be happy with them. When this moment and party has passed, forget about it. Proceed with every day life. Because that is when the hard part appears. How will people spend their first week in the apartment? On what will they spend their first dollars? What does money management look like? How can I spread spending the money over a period of a year? What services and coaching do we provide to achieve success?

Build on a tolerance for uncertainty. There is no truth in this world. What is true today might be different tomorrow. The outcome of Money First is certain and clear. Nevertheless, predicting is a waste of time. Watch in Wonder.

### **PEOPLE DON'T HAVE TO BE MONEY-READY**

Sit with your own discomfort. We can never predict what will happen when we provide people with money. Fact is, like in Housing First Programs, that your success rate will be high (85% or more). Set your worry on a bad outcome aside. It belongs to you, not to the person who was just offered the money.

Again, provided with the right guidance, people can never disappoint you. Otherwise, Housing and Money is a basic human right, according to the declaration of Human Rights. Read the book, Utopia for Realists by Rutger Bregman. Practice it and we will be heading for a world that works for everybody.



## **DON'T EXPECT GRATEFULNESS**

Remember, a basic income is a basic human right. You are not sent from heaven. Homelessness and Poverty are symptoms of a world where survival of the fittest is the rule. Symptoms of a world out of order. Symptoms of a system that holds people hostage in homelessness and poverty. I can't say it in a better and more forgiving way than this quote from the Recovery Learning Community of Western Mass, USA.

To those who have found solace and much needed support within the mental health system and its various treatments, this piece is not intended to devalue or deny your experiences.

To those who work hard and give so much of yourselves towards helping people move through the darkest of places, this piece is not intended to discredit your efforts, your caring or the positive impact of what you do. We are well aware that things are not completely right or wrong, not all good or bad.

We know that some are truly helped.

It is the cogs and wheels of a broader system – the forceful actions taken based on so many assumptions of knowing what is not truly known – about which we generally speak.

However, to those

Who have lost any sense of self  
Who have had your truth denied  
Who have been forced and pushed  
Who are angry about missing years  
Who have had your real pain ignored  
Who have been refused an honest choice  
Who have been made to feel less than real  
Who have been told, 'you don't know your own self'  
Who have been medicated into zombies shuffling along  
Who have had your creativity and personhood stripped away  
Who are just beginning to realise that the problem is not all yours  
Who have been made sick by those charged with making you well  
Who have been led to believe that your expectations should be low  
Who have been ripped away from families and children and jobs and homes  
Who have had to spend longer recovering from treatment than the initial distress  
Who have found healing by reclaiming your right to say NO and to write your own story

This one is for you.

(From *The Virtue of Non-Compliance*, Recovery Learning Community, Western Mass, USA)



## **IF I MAKE MORE MISTAKES THEN YOU DO, I 'WIN' (THE SCHOOL OF LIFE, AMSTERDAM)**

People learn from making mistakes, from experiencing hardship, from experimenting, from practicing. The best thing to do if a treasurer is making a mess of your money management, is hire the same person again after going through the mistakes that were made. It will never happen again.

## **DISCONNECT MONEY FROM TREATMENT, SUPPORT AND GUIDANCE**

It has nothing to do with each other. People were offered the money because it's their basic human right. They don't have to show 'positive behaviour' in exchange.

## **INCLUDE PEOPLE WITH LIVED EXPERIENCE IN YOUR PROGRAM IF YOU DON'T HAVE LIVED EXPERIENCE YOURSELF**

Social Workers have a tendency to 'give up' when the tough gets going. People with lived experience will tell you to never give up and stick to your Plan and Mission. They know what it takes to drag people out of the mud.

## **PRACTICE THE 3 A'S FOR SOCIAL WORKERS. (LEAP, XAVIER AMADOR)**

### **Apologize**

Making mistakes is human. Offer a person your apologies.



## Accept

Accept that you can make mistakes. That you have made a wrong decision. Even if you think you are right. My perception just might not be right. I don't have all the wisdom.

## Agree

I offer my apologies for what I am going to say. Can we agree to disagree and still be friends?

## **BUILD COMMUNITY**

Offering people money is not enough. In the end, when people have gained trust, live in a home, have a job and experiencing meaningful conversations, it's not the money that is important. What is important is the fact that you will never let your friend down. That you will stand by somebody, no matter what. Start the search for lost friends and family. Reunite people and families. Include important other people in the process and program. Talk about education, talk about jobs, talk about talents. Nobody was meant to be alone. We were meant to be together. Together we are stronger. Together we can solve any problem.

## **DON'T FOCUS ON BEHAVIOUR. FOCUS ON WHAT HAPPENED TO PEOPLE.**

Sometimes we are shocked by the behaviour of people. If you realize that everybody has a reason to act like they act, to say the things they are saying, everything becomes easier. People were not born to make a mess of your life. They don't know you. They are overwhelmed by circumstance. It has nothing to do with you. Read *A new Earth* by Eckhart Tolle and learn what it means to act from your pain body.

**hope first, love first**

**community first**

