

Money is an area of concern in your family. Your dad is not in the picture and it is up to your mom to singularly support the family. She works long hours in a warehouse, often needing to work overtime to make ends meet. Even with the extra hours, it is apparent that your mom is still struggling. She makes every effort to cook for you and your siblings, but sometimes you see her skipping meals. You wonder why she isn't eating. Yesterday, she brought you along on errands. You found it strange that she visited a payday advance shop before going to the grocery store.

Your mom works for tips in a restaurant. When the restaurant is busy, she earns enough tips to make ends meet. However, lately the restaurant has been slow and the tips that she depends on are down. Struggling to get by, she is now very behind on paying the power bill. This is not the first time that this has happened. She's worried that if she doesn't make the payment, they will turn the power off and she won't be able to afford the fee to get the power turned back on. This morning, she brought you with her to the title loan store. She told you that she didn't like putting her car title on the line, but she didn't know what else to do. She explained that although the interest is high, it's better than losing power and having to pay an outrageous fee to get it turned back on.

You come from a family that is unbanked. In other words, the adults in your family do not use any type of bank account or services. You never thought this was a problem. Your family seems to do fine paying for everything in cash and using check cashing services. Since you started taking economics, you asked your mom why your family doesn't use a bank. She explained that they tried it, but the fees were outrageous. Minimum balance fees, overdraft fees – it seemed the bank did more harm than good. She told you she can't imagine how anyone could afford to use the services of a bank.

Your family used to never worry about money. Your mom and dad had well-paying jobs. You lived in a comfortable house, your parents drove nice cars and seemed to never have a financial concern. Then your mom got cancer. For the past year she has been in and out of the hospital a dozen times. You have been consumed over the worry of losing your mom, and then to make things worse, the hospital bills starting rolling in. \$150,000 for cancer treatment? How could anyone afford to pay for that? Because of the cancer, your mom had to quit her job. The loss of income plus the outrageous hospital bills became too much for your family to bear. The other day, you heard your father on the phone talking with someone about bankruptcy.

You have two working adults at home- one in sales, the other in graphic design. Together, your parents earn a reasonable middleclass wage. But a well-paying job isn't everything. Your mom and dad can't seem to get along. They constantly fight and argue. Your mother is a compulsive buyer. You can't tell if the fighting is because of her buying habits, or if she buys things because she is unhappy. Sometimes, after a particularly bad fight, she will take you shopping and call it "therapy." The other day, you saw an open bill on the counter and discovered your parents owe several thousand dollars to the credit card company.

Recently, your dad was laid off from his job. Before it was already a struggle to make ends meet, but now without a job it's impossible. A few weeks ago, your dad stayed up all night going through receipts and bills. You heard him say that he couldn't afford to put food on the table and pay car insurance. So, he chose to feed your family and let her car insurance lapse until he can find a new job. You can tell that he feels guilty about this and avoids driving as much as possible. Whenever he does drive, you hope he doesn't get pulled over or into an accident.

In their childhood, both of your parents had very little, as their families struggled financially. This was something that your parents were ashamed of and they worked hard to better their position. Today, your parents are proud that they now earn a comfortable living and are determined to give your family the very best. You live in a big house, your parents drive nice cars, and are always willing to buy you the latest clothing on trend. When the Joneses next door got the newest iPhones, the next day your parents came home with the same for everyone in your family. The problem is that with all this spending, your parents do not have much in savings. Last week, the front axle broke on your parent's car. Your parents seemed worried, as they didn't have any money saved up to fix it.

The adults in your home are staunch savers. Your father in particular prides himself on being especially frugal. He speaks with you daily on the importance of saving, spending wisely, maintaining a budget, and more. Since you were a small child, he had you do chores around the house to earn money for a savings account. You now have a few thousand dollars in this account that you are budgeting for your first car. You have been anxiously awaiting the personal finance unit in your economics class, hoping to use the information you learn about interest and insurance to convince your dad that you are ready to buy a vehicle.

You never talk about money with family. Your family always has the basics that you need. Most of the time that's enough, but every once in a while, you wonder why your friends have the latest phones and sneakers and you don't. When you ask if they will buy these things for you, they always say no with a pained look on their faces. Once, when your parents thought you were asleep, you overheard them having a hushed conversation about money. You think they might be struggling but they have never really told you.

You have had a somewhat complicated relationship with money. Your mom is a great saver- always setting money aside in what she calls an “emergency fund” just in case. Your dad on the other hand is a different story. He spends money as soon as it is earned, if not before. Your parents are divorced and can barely hold a civil conversation. Money in particular seems to get them fired up for an argument. You are nervous about the upcoming personal finance unit in your economics class, worried that if you talk about what you are learning at home it may trigger more fighting between your parents.

Your family is rather well-do-to when it comes to money. You live in an expensive home, your parents drive nice cars, and cater to your every whim. In fact, you have a \$500,000 trust fund in your name you get full access to the day you turn 25. You have never had to budget or go without. You can't understand why people struggle so much with money.

You are currently experiencing homelessness. Your mom has mental health issues and lost her job after an incident at work. There is a medication that can manage her symptoms, but she can't afford it (apparently, she also can't afford *not* to have it). After she lost her job, she quickly fell behind on rent and was evicted by the landlord. You, your mom, and younger sister spent about a week living on the street but are now together in a homeless shelter. You are relieved to have somewhere to go but you don't feel safe there. Often, you find yourself staying up at night, keeping an eye out while your sister and mom sleep. You're so tired during the day that you find yourself sleeping through all your classes. Your teachers have asked if anything is wrong, but you reassure them that everything is fine- too ashamed to tell the truth.