Conquering self-doubt about money

While there are reasons to feel optimistic about the stock market and where it’s going, it should be cautious optimism. Many people are still feeling the strong effects of the Recession, and some potential indicators of an improved future may not be enough to create confidence in the economy overnight. Feelings of self-doubt about making financial decisions are to be expected, but also to be overcome, if each of us is to move ahead and become empowered when it comes to money.

Self-doubt
Self-doubt is a classic deterrent to forward progress — a barrier to those things we most need or want to do. Self-doubt creates self-imposed limitations. It stifles the spark of hope and steals the confidence to set goals and take action. Self-doubt is particularly harmful when it comes to money. Money influences us on many levels — peace of mind, feelings of safety and stress, personal and financial well-being. If left unchecked, self-doubt stops us in our tracks. We avoid necessary decisions and important steps toward improving our financial situation.

Money attitudes promote self-doubt
Money is a powerful force. Its influence is perceived in very personal ways. For you, money may simply get you what you need, while for others, money (or what it buys) defines an internal sense of personal value, worthiness or even entitlement. Often we elevate money to superstar status, while we strangely devalue our own capabilities and resources. To become financially empowered — both in dollars and feelings — we must overcome our undermining self-doubt.

When empowered people think about money, they feel an internal sense of financial confidence. They have a strong belief in their ability to earn, invest and manage money, regardless of circumstances. Honestly, even for these people, money issues are not easy, since economic hardship can touch all of us. However, past experiences and self-doubt about our ability to move through these times can be overcome, by becoming increasingly self-aware.

Taking action
1. Allow yourself to acknowledge your self-doubt. Know it is here to teach you more about yourself. Dig deep!
2. Identify how your self-doubt expresses itself. Are the things you say to yourself defeating, degrading or self-limiting? Are you stressed or anxious? Do you put off making decisions or taking action?
3. Identify what fuels your self-doubt. Is it other’s opinions? Fear of making a mistake? Inability to appreciate your capabilities?

Self-awareness — putting the brakes on self-doubt
We all have moments of self-doubt, as well as moments of pure knowing. Somewhere in between, we exercise self-awareness. When it comes to money, self-awareness is the ability to challenge thoughts, identify emotions and change our attitudes about our relationship with money. Information (facts and figures) is not enough when it comes to moving beyond our self-doubt. Building a bank of emotional resources, such as confidence and trust, is done by actively challenging self-doubt through personal awareness. We know we’re moving beyond self-doubt when we feel empowered to choose what we want and have the internal courage and trust to act upon those choices.

For further information on financial planning
We invite you to visit mybmoretirement.com or call the My BMO Retirement Line at 1-800-858-3829.