



# *SHEpreneur:* *How to be a*

BARBARA STEWART CFA,  
FINANCIAL COMMENTATOR  
ON HAVING IT ALL

BY PRIYA KUMAR

**I**n the second installment of my interview with Barbara Stewart CFA, we look at the often-trending topic of women having it all. How can a woman be an entrepreneur and raise a family at the same time? This includes keeping her own business afloat throughout

maternity leave and prior to her child(ren) going off to school. I speak to Barbara Stewart, CFA to find out.

Stewart has spent the past seven years speaking with 450 subjects in the arena of women and finance. She says that savvy women have one thing in common the world over: “great respect for independence. But they have also realized that you can’t be an independent woman without being a

financially independent woman: the two things go hand in hand.”

Unlike being offered a standard maternity leave policy most if not all companies are required to provide to employees, those who work for themselves know that time is quite literally money. And then what about teaching your own children (should you choose to have any) about managing their finances? Stewart breaks down all of these pressing topics here:

**When it comes to taking leave to have children and raise a family, what advice do you have for women about how they can prepare themselves financially?**

I actually haven't done any work on that question so I'll draw on the expertise of one of the smart women I interviewed last year. She was talking about transitioning from a salary job to her own business but I think the message will be helpful to those women that are planning to take extended mat leave and raise a family.

Melek Pulatkonak is the Founder of TurkishWIN - the Turkish Women's International Network that connects women across all ages and stages with other women who share similar values. Melek said: "I tell other female entrepreneurs to assume that they won't make any money for two

years. You need to be comfortable with the idea that your savings will support your life during that timeframe. If you are feeling concerned all the time and you have financial stress, you and your family will not be able to make cool, calm decisions. The ups and downs can wear you down so it is critical to plan your finances carefully."

From my own research, I do think that a lot of women need to plan differently for retirement. Women have a life expectancy of 83.3 years while men average 78.8 years, according to the latest figures from Statistics Canada. And this has major financial consequences for them: given that the average retiree spends \$2,400 per month, the extra 54 months of life expectancy translates to about \$130,000 more that the average Canadian woman is going to need.

Add in the pay gap, and that's a pretty steep hill to climb.

**How do you recommend women teach their children about their finances?**

In 2012 I spoke with 50 accomplished women around the world about the messages they received when they were growing up about money. The interviews included many great recollections of pivotal conversations in their childhoods - often with parents or grandparents. I published this research in a white paper entitled "Rich Thinking: A Guide to Building Financial Confidence in Girls & Women."

Drawing on this research, I will share five of the best ideas about how to talk to your kids about money:

1.

**Talk about lifestyle.** Rather than asking the proverbial question "what do you want to be when you grow up?" move beyond that and have a much broader discussion. Link the questions to lifestyle. Ask "where do you think you will want to live?", "how much money do you think you will need to live there?", "what type of job will enable you to earn that much money?" and "what type of people do you want to work with - bright, sick, old or young?" This conversation helps kids to focus on a future that appeals to them.

2.

**Talk about planning.** Let your kids in on family planning discussions - the sooner the better. It is necessary for everyone to understand that what we want costs money. If kids can make this link they are far more likely to find the path to earning their own money so that they can go on and live the life that they want. Talk to them and find out what they are interested in achieving. Make it fun...set goals and reward them each step of the way.

3.

**Tell them they are smart.** Interestingly, many successful people never questioned their own ability to handle money because they were told early on that they were capable and smart. If you feel respected for your intellect at a young age you quickly understand that you can do whatever you decide to do. Offer your kids the opportunity to read international newspapers or ask for their advice on your business decisions. This subtle approach can have a large impact on a child's confidence level.

4.

**Talk about the importance of having faith in yourself.** A massive bank account is great but it doesn't mean much if you don't feel good about yourself. It is critical for younger people to develop a feeling about who they are and understand what it is that they value. Ask them "who or what do you admire?" This isn't about money or budgets or business plans but it does allow them to think about what is meaningful to them and align their decisions with their values. From there they can make financial choices that make sense.

5.

**Have them deal directly with money.** Give your children some cash so they can 'feel' it and go out and buy things with it. It is important to get a feel for money early on. It is best for them not to be given too much information. See how they deal with it - they will learn by making their own mistakes. Travelling is an ideal time to try out the concept of handling money. This way you can expose them to various situations where they can manage their own money and have their own small experiences.

These tried and true messages about money shaped the lives of some amazingly accomplished women around the world. Why argue with success?

For more information on Barbara Stewart, visit [www.barbarastewart.ca](http://www.barbarastewart.ca).