

Collaborate with Others to Solve Your Financial Difficulty in Canada

Thousands of people all across Canada are facing the grim reality of financial difficulties over which they are losing control. The thought of declaring personal bankruptcy as the only way out leads to many a sleepless night and days filled with fear. Perhaps the toughest burden of all is that far too many people in trouble feel they must confront their troubles completely on their own.

The truth is, you are not alone. All of us have networks of people around us that are not only there when times are good; they are there in tough times as well. It takes a special kind of intelligence to recognize these potential supporters – collaborative intelligence.

This is a concept first introduced by a professor at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology Sloan School of Business, William Isaacs, in his book *Dialogue and the Art of Thinking Together*. He defined collaborative intelligence as the ability to create, contribute to, and harness the power within networks of people.

Some Canadians view financial well-being as the ultimate measure of success. The more money you make and the more possessions you own, the more successful you are. For such individuals, seeking the support of the networks of people surrounding them may be out of the question. Assumptions guide behavior and if you assume you alone must face your troubles, it is not likely you will tap into your network.

The folly of this reasoning is simple. As you become more burdened under the strain of your financial trouble, your network will be affected. Spouses who do not share financial

details with each other are unable to support one and other. Parents who fail to be truthful with their children about the reality of what is going on are denying them the opportunity to grow together as a family unit.

Getting out of financial difficulty boils down to either generating more income, or cutting expenses, or a combination of both. While you may have no contacts that might lead to a part time or second job, your trusted friends and relatives – all part of your personal network of people – may be able to help.

Cutting expenses has less of a negative impact on family life when the entire family knows what is going on. Indeed, shared sacrifice can promote family cohesiveness.

Finally, do not overlook the opportunity to expand your network to include professional debt consultants. Licensed bankruptcy trustees and approved non-profit credit counselors can provide valuable assistance in preparing personal budgets that can get you back on your financial feet.

It Takes A Village


There is an old proverb of African origin that says it takes a village to raise a child. Should we not apply the same proverb to the increasingly crucial issue of eldercare?

In actual practice, it appears the opposite is true in all too many cases. After a lifetime of togetherness, the often painful task of caring for aging parents is delegated to a single sibling. The criteria for anointing the sibling caregiver range from proximity to compatibility. In the end, some families are more than willing to leave that single

sibling alone, hanging in the wind.

And even those overburdened single siblings who are responsible for providing eldercare forget a basic fact of human existence. We are social animals and we develop networks of people with whom we interact.

Children who have been gone from the nest for decades forget the fact their parents have continued to develop networks of people around them.

They have young neighbors with whom they interact. There are neighborhood children who might stop to say hello to an elderly parent rocking on the front porch. There are community centers for seniors  .

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Much of what we do is governed by the assumptions we make. If you start with the assumption that old age obliterates the network of people formerly surrounding your elders, you will never see the opportunities around you.

Try thinking of eldercare as a collaborative process amongst a network of people concerned about the well being of your aging loved ones. Collaboration also implies incorporating your parents into the process of determining their own care.

If your parents are determined to remain in their own homes as long as possible, what is the point of showing up with a briefcase full of brochures from assisted living retirement centers? In contrast, why not tap into their network of people to make it happen? [“Senior -Proofing”](#) a home requires

research on methods and resources, a task ideally suited for distant siblings. Spending extended time in your parents' home to get to know their neighbors and friends opens up a world of volunteers. People are more than willing to help. Often, all they need is to be asked.