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How to spend \$10,000 on YOU

Okay, so everyone is talking about how to spend 10K on yourself, for me it means how do you spend 10K practically during these tough times and make money?

Well, let's examine your options:

- You could keep \$10,000 (10K) in your savings or checking account now and get maybe 1 1/2 – 2 percent interest before having to pay taxes on that interest.
- You could put 10K in a money market account and maybe get a little more interest.
- You could shop for a certificate of deposit, put away 10K for a few years at 2 to 3 percent interest.
- You could buy a mutual fund, which is a basketful of stocks in which you own pieces. But then you have to figure out what size fund – small, medium or large – and what sector – healthcare, finance, utilities, services, technology or telecommunications – all the while you examine 10,000 plus mutual funds that exist.
- You could buy a stock which is ownership in a company and examine one of 2,800 companies listed on the NYSE or 4,000 plus companies listed on the NASDAQ Exchange.
- You could buy a bond, either government in the form of a Treasury, Fannie Mae, or a corporate bond in which you loan money to that company or agency for a fixed rate with returns on a position that could go out for five to 30 years.
- You could buy an antique of some kind as well as a piece of vintage jewelry and hope that it maintains its value, or better still it appreciates in value.
- You could buy a collectible, for example a Barbie doll or an autographed photo, and hope that in a few years it would be worth more than you paid.
- You could buy an old car, have it restored and hope to sell it to some handsome guy for twice as much as you paid. Or, you may even get lucky at the same time.
- You could purchase art or crystal or oriental rugs and take it to Antique Road Show and hope that it's even more valuable.
- You could use 10K as a down payment on a house to live in or better yet, one to rent out for income.
- You could pre-pay your funeral expenses relieving everyone else of that burden.
- You could put it in a 529 plan for your child to use towards college costs.

Are you starting to get a picture here? Do you think that just maybe trying to spend 10K and make some money is more challenging than you thought, simply because of the variety of choices you have?

Well, unless you plan to hide it in a mattress and stick your head in the sand until the winds come along to change something, your best bet is to sit down with a good financial advisor and life planner to help you figure it out. Each smart woman's set of life circumstances is very unique and what may be okay for you couldn't work for me, but somehow together you can figure out where the money should go or how it's to be spent so that it ultimately fits into your life plan.

So, now do the homework. Take some personal time away from the phone, away from the kids away. Take a piece of paper and start jotting notes or drawing a picture. Ask yourself, "If I had a crystal ball and could predict the future, what would my life look like?" Starting with your visions, acknowledge your priorities and obligations, and make a candid assessment of tolerance for risk. Now you're ready to share your information with a trusted, experienced life planner, so you can work together to figure out where the money should go or how it's to be "spent" – all intended to fit your financial decisions into your life plan.

It seems to me that it was your money to begin with and still is your money to decide on, so just get good advice and happy spending! SW

Regina Forte, founder of LifeSteps for Women, is a life planner with years of experience in financial planning and investments. She gives frequent seminars and workshops around the country to women young and old who want to understand the true concept of financial independence and how to get there. She can be reached at regina@lifestepsforwomen.com.