

[Guest Post] Freedom Fighter Interview #22 - Tawcan

Today we have Tawcan as our guest for Freedom Fighter Interview #22. He is also our second Canadian to be featured on the blog. Can you believe he doesn't own a TV and has been TV free for 5 years now? He is a photographer and avid dividend investor and is working to reach Financial Independence sometime in his 40's.

Take it away Tawcan...



Who are you and what do you do? What is your story? How are you fighting for your Freedom? Where did you start, where in the journey are you, and where do you ultimately want to end up?

My name is Tawcan. I live in Vancouver BC Canada with a beautiful and supportive wife that I refer to her as Mrs. T on the blog and an energetic toddler that I refer to

as Baby T. We are working hard to achieve financial freedom by our 40's. I have only started blogging about a year ago but we have been [fighting for our financial freedom](#) for a few years now. Thanks to great advices from my parents, I've always lived below my means and saved money for the future. Now in our 30's, we are in early stage of our financial freedom journey so we're saving money to build our investing portfolio. We invest mostly in [dividend stocks](#). Our goal is to have our dividend income exceeding our expenses. When that happens, we can say that we have achieved financial freedom.

Once we achieve financial freedom, we would love to travel around the world, live in different cities for an extended period of time, and learn about the different cultures and different types of food. The idea of calling my own schedule sounds pretty good to me. Reaching FI would also allow me to spend more time with Mrs. T, Baby T, and any future kid(s). I would love to pursue in my interests and turn them into side income opportunities that are non-location dependent. For example, I could be a destination wedding photographer, a financial advisor to help people get their finances straight, and/or write about traveling around the world. Being financially independent doesn't mean I'm chilling on the beach all day. Financially independent simply means having more options and freedom for me and my family.

What is your favorite Quote or Mantra that you live by?

Live below your means. I believe this is the only way to ahead financially.

Where in the world are you from?

We live in Vancouver BC Canada but neither Mrs. T nor I are originally from Canada. I was born in Taiwan and moved to Canada when I was a teen. Mrs. T is born in Denmark and now live in Canada because of me.

What is the worst financial decision you have ever made?

What do you mean? I have never made any financial mistakes in my life. ☹️ :p

Kidding of course. The worst financial decision I have ever made is probably investing in [high MER mutual funds](#) after talking to a "financial advisor" at my local bank branch and thinking that he was there to help me. Thanks to the high MER, I was paying fees when the funds were making money and paying fees when the funds were losing money. I couldn't win either way.

What is the best financial decision you have ever made?

My best financial decision I have ever made is to pay myself first ever since I start working. Each pay cheque I put a certain amount of money aside for saving or investing. I've started doing that since I got my first job when I was in my teen. Thanks to this practice I've been able to save quite a bit of money in my life so far.

Are you a morning or a night person? What time do you wake up and go to sleep?

I used to be a night person when I was in university, staying up till 2 or 3 AM to study. Now I can be both a morning and a night person, depending on what needs to be done. If given the choice I usually go to bed around 11 PM and wake up about 7 AM but that doesn't always happen.

What is your definition of Financial Freedom? And what is your FREEDOM number?

Financial freedom means our passive income exceeds our expenses. At this point we no longer need the income from a regular 9-5 job to cover our expenses. We would have the freedom and options to decide what we want to do. For me, if I decide to quit my job I would be able to pursue my [ideal early retiree schedule](#). I don't have a freedom number down precisely but according to the financial independence/early retirement [spreadsheet calculator that we created](#), we are on track to reach financial freedom in 8 - 15 years. To put that in perspective, some time when we're in our 40's. We're not too hung up on the exact year when we reach financial freedom. We know we'll get there one day.

What is your favorite Asset Class to invest in (i.e Real Estate, Stocks, Bonds, Peer to Peer lending, etc)? Why? And what platforms do you use (i.e [TD Ameritrade](#) for stocks, [Realty Shares](#) for Real Estate, [Prosper](#) for Peer to Peer lending, etc.).

It would definitely be stocks. We focus mostly on dividend growth stocks and have a sizable [dividend portfolio](#) that pays out about \$800 per month currently. Since we're still in the accumulation phase, we are re-investing dividends to purchase more stocks. We're in Canada so we use Questrade and TD Canada Trust for trading platforms.

What is your favorite online financial resource, paid or free (i.e. [Mint](#), [Personal Capital](#), blogs, podcasts, [Tasty Trade](#), etc.)?

I like reading finance and investing blogs. There are lots of great blogs out there. Another great website I read regularly is [Seeking Alpha](#) which allows me to get up-to-date news on stocks that we own.

When it comes to building wealth, do you spend more time figuring out how to cut expenses or increase income? Why?

This really depends where you're at on your building wealth path. Initially I think the easiest way is to cut expenses by eliminating expenses that are not essential. But after you trim the fat out, you can't do much further unless you start deprive yourself from some life necessities. This is when you can start look into increasing your income. Having said that, you can try cutting your expenses and increasing your income at the same time.

How many hours a week do you watch TV? What's your favorite show?

Funny you ask this question. We don't own a TV and have been TV free for almost 5 years now. We don't miss it. In fact, because we don't have a TV, [my parents actually called me and Mrs. T boring.](#)

If you had to recommend 1 book, what would it be? And why?

I would highly recommend reading [How to Influence People and Make Friends](#)^x by Dale Carnegie. This is a great book to read if you want to be a better people's person. A lot of rock-solid, time-tested advice are given in this book and after putting these advice into practice I've seen a tremendous success in both my work and personal life.

What is the best piece of advice you have ever received or what advice would you give to the readers?

I wrote about the [best piece of financial advice](#) that I received from my dad. It's about the most effective way to use a credit card so you don't ever get into the credit card debt nightmare.

What does living life by design look like to you? A typical day, week, month, year, or whatever?

For me living life by design looks like living on my own schedule. A typical day would be filled with a lot of projects that would allow me to continue improve as a human being. I would also spend quite a bit of time each week on staying active. I would also volunteer my time to help out my community.

What is holding you back from living life by design?

The biggest thing is probably income. Right now we need the income from the 9-5 job so we can put aside sufficient amount of money into our investment portfolio. We can probably living life by design part time right now by doing this on the weekends but it would be wonderful to be able to do this full time once we achieve financial independence.

Where can we find you online? If you're a blogger, this is the perfect plug to talk about your blog and why it's great

You can find me on my blog <http://www.tawcan.com>. This is where I write topics on investing, personal finance, travel, life, and other topics that I have on my mind that I want to share with my readers. You can also find me on [Twitter](#) tweeting various topics.



Gen Y Finance Guy

Hey, I'm Dom - the man behind the cartoon. You'll notice that I sign off as "Gen Y Finance Guy" on all my posts, due to the fact that I write this blog anonymously (at least for now). I like to think of myself as the *Chief Freedom Officer* here of my little corner of the internet. In the real world, I'm a 30-something former C-Suite executive turned entrepreneur turned capital allocator. I am trying to humanize finance by sharing my own journey to Financial Freedom. I believe in total *honesty* and *transparency*. That is why before I ever started blogging, I decided that I would share all of my own [financial stats](#). I do this not to brag, but instead to inspire motivate, and also to hold myself accountable. My goal is to be a

beacon of hope, motivation, and inspiration for *you*, the reader, by living life by example and sharing it **all** here on the blog. My sincere hope is that you will be able to learn from me - both from my successes and my failures! [Read More](#)