

How I Bought The GYFG Family Electric Bikes With Free Money (\$3,797.95 Worth)

My favorite price in the whole world is **FREE**. I remember in college my Economics professor tried convincing the class that there was no such thing as a free lunch and he even gave us an acronym to remember it – TINSTAAFL. I don't remember that professor's name but I remember his lesson clearly. Today, I officially call bull\$hit on this. In theory, this may make sense but in reality – where we all live – this couldn't be further from the truth.

I've personally enjoyed hundreds of free lunches over the years. Economic theory tells us you can't get something for nothing. Lies!!! During my first five years out of college, I worked for an oil company and they would bring food in for the monthly executive meetings, offering the leftovers to us worker bees. I had an "in" with the CEO's executive assistant, so she always made sure I had first dibs. Let's just say I have always had a healthy appetite and it was known. This same company used to have quarterly luncheons for us worker bees – another free lunch! And, my boss would take me out from time to time for lunch and guess who didn't have to pay? Me!

This is just a small taste (you see what I did there?) of the many free lunches I have experienced over the years. This embodies what I struggled with most in college: my professors could never get past theory. Most of my professors were lifetime academics and had no experience in the real business world. When I asked how things actually worked in reality they couldn't tell me. But let's not get sidetracked. This is a post about getting FREE stuff.

Yes, I have enjoyed thousands of dollars worth of free lunches in my time but it's time to move past free lunches and onto bigger things. Over the last ten years, **I have received tens of thousands of dollars...for FREE!**

My Recent \$3,797.95 Purchase That Didn't Cost Me a Dime

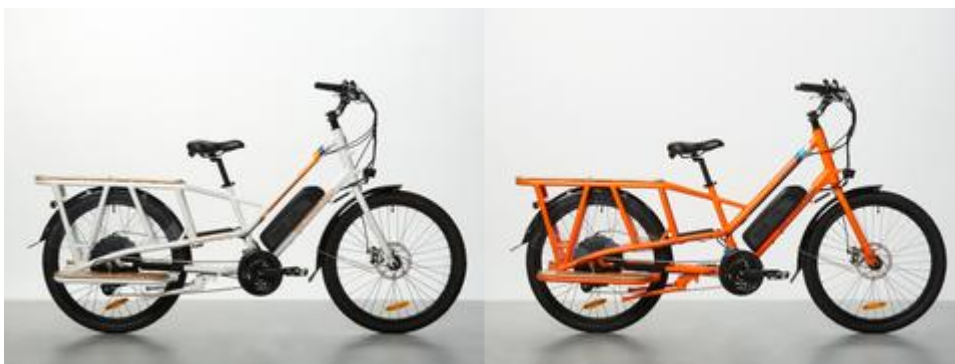
One of my favorite things to do is to figure out how to get the things I want for free

just to prove my economics professor wrong. The contrarian in me needs a way to express himself. Okay, I don't do this *only* to prove anyone wrong; I do it because it is so damned easy (and fun). It's like shooting fish in a barrel.



Mrs. GYFG and I have been talking about getting electric powered bikes since we moved into our house almost five years ago. Why electric bikes, you may ask? Well, there are a lot of hills in our part of town and these would make those a breeze. We have restaurants, grocery stores, and parks nearby. But we were also thinking about longer bike rides to work (for me) and at the beach as a family.

So, we set our sights on these beauties from [Rad Power Bikes](#):



I first came across this company when trying to find an alternative transportation

method for my younger brother. He didn't have a driver's license or the money to buy a car so I bought him an electric bike (the commuter version). He was living with us at the time, so of course I test rode the bike. It was amazingly effortless to ride it when you engaged the motor. But it also rode like a regular pedal bike when you weren't feeling lazy - LOL!

I thought this would be the perfect Christmas gift to the GYFG family. Since I figured there would be a sale of some sort on either Black Friday or Cyber Monday, I would wait eight months before pulling the trigger. This would solve two things: (1) I would buy these bikes at a discount; and (2) I could figure out how to pay for the rest of the purchase with free money.

With respect to #1 above, my philosophy is that the price you see is rarely the price you have to pay. There is almost always a cheaper price if you're willing to have patience. It pays to be a two-marshmallow kid.

How It All Went Down

As expected, there was a Cyber Monday sale on the bikes. The bikes we wanted were discounted by \$400 each, plus if you bought two or more bikes you received another \$200 off your purchase with a special code (2xEbikeCombo). The gross price before these discounts was \$3,797.95, so this \$1,000 in savings represented ~26% right off the top. I like! I like a lot!!!

I recently posted that I was [a sucker for 0% interest](#) deals and so when I was presented with an offer of 0% financing over 12 months, I jumped on it. At this point, I have saved \$1,000 and I didn't have to pay any money up front. You can see from the screenshot below that my first payment of \$233.16 isn't due until a month after I made the purchase (on Cyber Monday).



STEP 3 OF 4

You're approved for \$2,797.95!

Carefully review the details of your loan below.

\$233.16/mo for 12 months

| | |
|----------------------------|------------|
| TOTAL INTEREST (0.00% APR) | \$0.00 |
| TOTAL OF PAYMENTS | \$2,797.95 |

Your payments will be due each month starting on or after **Dec 26, 2018**.

But I didn't want to pay for *any* of this out of my own pocket. I wanted it to be *free*. So, over eight months, I have churned credit cards with the purpose of racking up reward points that could be converted to cash. Here are the cards and amounts of cash I have generated:

(1) Citi Prestige - They offered me a \$750 sign up bonus (75,000 points) if I spent \$7,000 in the first three months. It did come with an annual fee of \$450, but I was able to offset that with the annual \$250 travel credit. In addition to the sign-up bonus, I also used the card to book a few business trips above and beyond the minimum spend. The additional 15,000 points were worth \$150. **Net Reward Value = \$700**

(2) Barclays Arrival - This card offered me the ability to earn \$750 after spending \$25,000 on the card (essentially giving you 75,000 points). It has a \$150 annual fee but was waived for the first year. **Net Reward Value = \$750**

(3) Navy Federal Credit Union (More Rewards American Express) - At the time I

signed up for this card the bonus offer was 35,000 points or \$350. Again, I earned an additional 3,800 points. **Net Reward Value = \$388**

(4) Chase Reserve - This is a card that I had previously churned - you may recall [a post I shared in 2017](#) on how I earned \$15,305 per hour churning this card. This has really been our go-to card when we aren't working to hit a minimum on new cards to get the bonus. We had about \$1,000 or 100,000 points waiting with bated breath to be redeemed. At 3X points for every dollar spent in the travel and dining categories (pretty much the majority of what we charged to the card) this represents about \$33K worth of spending. **Net Reward Value = \$1,000**

Based on the Affirm screenshot above I needed to generate \$2,797.95 to get this purchase FREE and if you add up the rewards I cashed in above I actually hit \$2,838. **Mission accomplished!**

Most people have hobbies that cost them money; my hobby is figuring out how to pay for things with FREE money.

Here are a few other things I got for free through my churning activity (in the past 12 months):

- **Two night stay at Ritz Carlton.** We had a wedding to attend in Dana Point and decided to make a weekend getaway out of the event. We had always wanted to stay at the Ritz Carlton but weren't willing to pay the exorbitant room rates. So, I signed up for the Ritz Carlton credit card that offered two free nights after you hit the minimum \$4,000 spend. Now it did come with a \$450 annual fee but I was able to offset \$300 by taking advantage of the annual travel credit. This was the first card I churned that made it inconvenient to redeem the travel credit. Normally, this happens automatically, but I had to reach out to customer service and specify the charges that qualified for the credit. It also wasn't as inclusive as many of the other cards that offer an annual travel credit (I had to use it on seat upgrades for a few flights because the flight itself didn't qualify; I always upgrade my seat anyway). The weekend we planned to stay in Dana Point the Ritz had room rates at \$1,000/night. There was a fee of \$150/night to book the rooms that weekend, but when all was said and done we stayed at the Ritz for about \$600 vs. \$2,000+. This was comparable to the price for a block of rooms the wedding party had offered at a different hotel (I look at it as a free upgrade to a much nicer hotel).

- **Four night stay at the Hilton Waterfront Beach Resort (in Huntington Beach).** I signed up for a Hilton credit card that offered 100,000 bonus points as a reward after spending only \$1,000 (I think). I already had a Hilton rewards account because I try to stay at Hiltons anytime I travel for work to build up points for personal use. After the bonus, I had accumulated almost 300,000 points. At 75,000 points a night we had our first two night stay in March of 2018 and another two nights right before Christmas (2018) - our first family trip with baby GYFG.

On top of churning credit cards to get the things I want for free, I have another hack to get even more from the credit cards you accumulate if you take up this awesome hobby. Stay tuned for another post where I explain how I earn \$3,188/hour selling authorized user spots on all these cards I have churned over the past few years. In 2018, I earned \$6,000 from this activity and I spend no more than 15 minutes a month on it.

Your turn! Do you churn credit cards? What is your favorite card? Do you have any pro tips for us all?

- Gen Y Finance Guy



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](#)