

# The Rich Life with Discipline

Over the past decade, the GYFG family has been on an incredible journey to Financial Freedom. The speed and success of our most ambitious goals came down to the right combination of intentionality, hard work, self-awareness, and—yes—luck.

We didn't just [set a BHAG \(Big Hairy Audacious Goal\) of building a \\$10M net worth](#). We also had a lifestyle we wanted that net worth to underwrite, with a wide margin of safety. We gave ourselves 20 years when we set the goal in 2015, expecting to slowly realize our desired lifestyle over time.

From the start, we committed to the [Law of 50/50](#): save 50% of our after-tax income and spend the other 50% guilt-free. That gave us permission to inflate our lifestyle in alignment with our goals, without second-guessing every decision. (see: [Relative Frugality](#))

We layered in risk mitigation that wasn't always optimal from a financial return perspective, but gave us peace of mind. For example, we paid off our 30-year mortgage in just four years. That may not have been the highest-ROI move, but it eliminated a major fixed cost and boosted our sense of security.

## We Wanted to Get Rich Fast - But Responsibly

We worked aggressively to earn promotions and increase our income because we understood that [a high income is the fastest, surest path to a high net worth](#). We weren't looking to "get rich quick" through risky bets. We focused on making more money, not chasing investment returns we couldn't control.

Our income growth from 2015 through 2019 (including ~\$240K in 2019 from the business I started) allowed us to:

- Hit our first \$1M in net worth by age 30
- Pay off our house by age 32

- Stacked \$700K in cash by the time I left corporate life in February 2020

That cash was equal to 5+ years of runway based on our burn rate then, plus Mrs. GYFG was still working and earning enough to fully support our lifestyle.

We were [getting rich working for others](#), but our real goal was **autonomy**, so entrepreneurship was the next natural step.

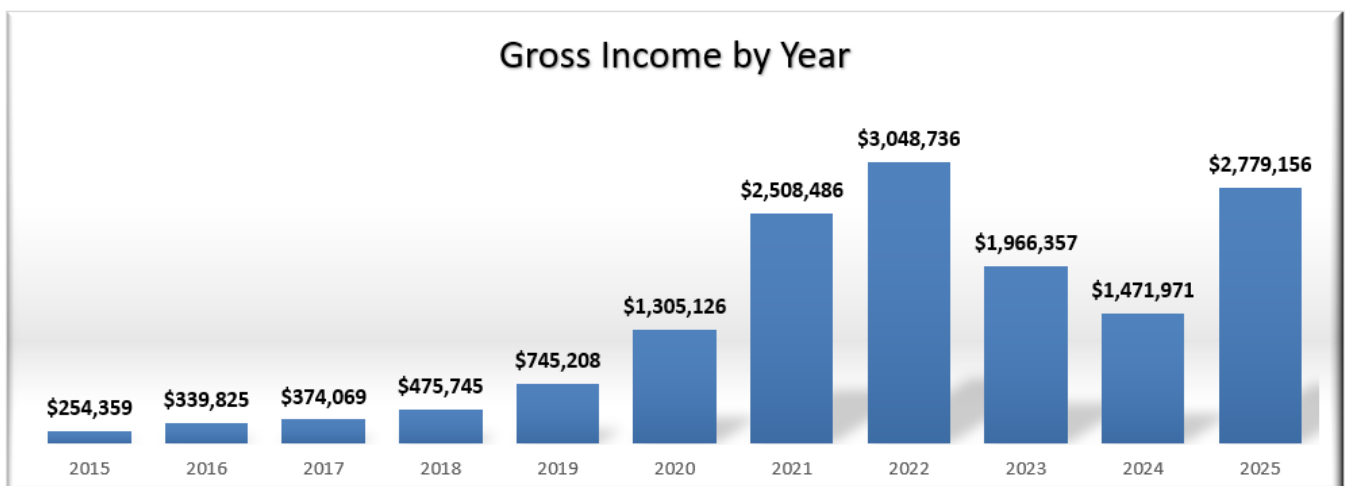
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## Enter Entrepreneurship: A Leap into the Unknown

I started my business in February 2019 but didn't leave my corporate job until February 2020. Around the same time, my wife (who had been a top revenue generator in a third-generation family business) found herself facing a turning point.

In early 2021, we bought her family's business when her mom was diagnosed with cancer. The family had been trying to sell for 18 months, but life had other plans. We stepped in to take over the business so her parents could focus on treatment. Her mom sadly passed, but we made sure her dad was taken care of. My wife ultimately sold and exited the business by the end of 2024.

## Our Income & Net Worth Journey (2015-2025)



As I've said before, our income wasn't accidental. It was the result of *planning, hard*

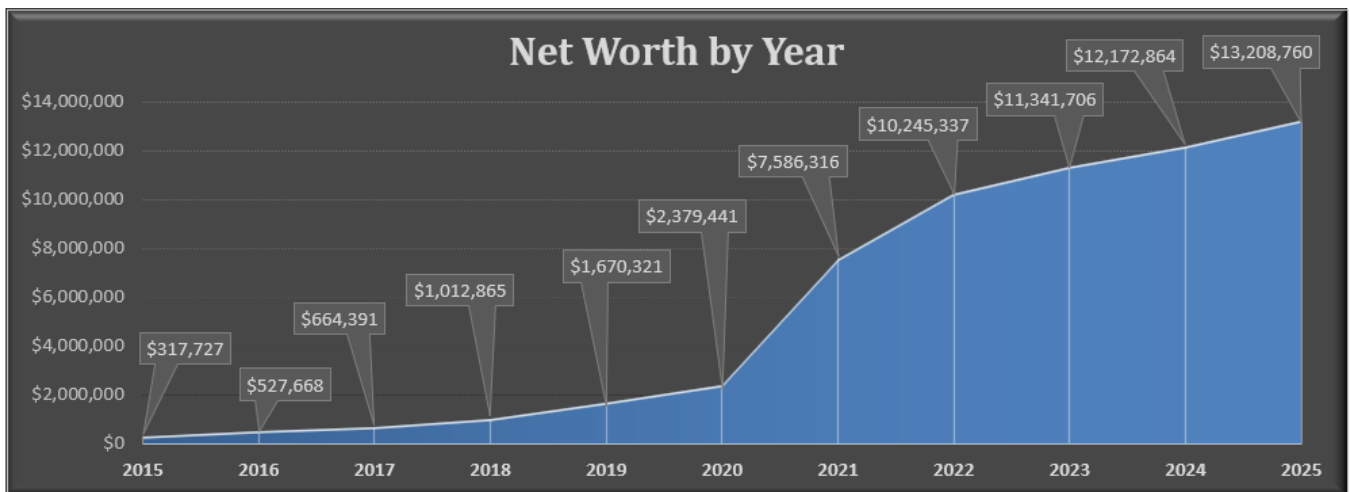
*work, self-awareness, and luck.*

We launched a business and beat the odds: most businesses fail within the first year. Not only did we survive, we were profitable from day one and sold that business 33 months later. (see: [Built to Sell](#))

The net worth and income charts make the ride look smooth, but reality was a bit different. My business was just turning a year old when the pandemic broke out and brought with it lots of uncertainty. It was scary for about six weeks after the first lockdowns were imposed before things improved. Another year in, we decided to take on the risk (and reward) of another business when we bought my wife's family business (in real estate, specifically escrow).

The pandemic turned out to be a **massive accelerator** in both real estate and the kind of software we were selling.

We got *lucky*, yes. But we were also **prepared** to capitalize on opportunity.



In 10 years, we've earned \$15.3M in gross income. After taxes and spending, we've amassed a net worth of \$13.2M, up from \$181,364 in 2015. **That's a compound annual growth rate of 92.62%!**

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## Lessons from Money Left on the Table

Even with incredible results, I remind myself of choices we made when we *could*

have done better:

1. Paid off our mortgage early instead of investing.
2. Held too much cash or cash equivalents.
3. Chose complex, illiquid, underperforming investments that made tax season a pain.

That said, we *intentionally* optimized for peace of mind with #1 and #2. And for #3, illiquidity was once a feature, not a bug. It actually kept us focused on growing the business and came with tax advantages.

**Hindsight is 20/20.** That said, it's never a bad idea to humble yourself in light of incredible outcomes lest you let it go to your head, creating a feeling of invincibility that might lead you to make potentially fatal mistakes that could undo it all.

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## **Building a Rich Life—By Design**

When we set our net worth goal, we pegged our ideal lifestyle cost at \$200K–\$300K per year. And we still believe that number is right – *and sustainable*. But it took time and discipline to validate that.

Here's what we've spent over the past 5 years:

- **2020** – \$236,000 (includes \$40K home improvement)
- **2021** – \$300,000 (includes \$85K home improvement + \$50K nanny)
- **2022** – \$437,000 (includes \$211K home improvement + \$60K nanny)

- **2023** - \$508,000 (includes \$258K home improvement)
- **2024** - \$471,872 (includes \$200K home improvement)
- **2025 (Budget)** - \$371,000 (includes \$83K home improvement)

That's **\$877K** in home improvements over five years. Every penny was cash-flowed. We also paid **\$800K cash** for the property itself. All in, we've invested about **\$1.7M** into our forever home.

We made a long list of deferred maintenance to attend to and upgrades to accomplish when we bought our home in 2020. As of this year (2025), we're wrapping up the final two projects. For the first time in years, this year **we now get to just enjoy it.**

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## **Minimal Fixed Costs = Maximum Flexibility**

What's not visible in the numbers above is our discipline to **avoid fixed expenses like the plague.** No mortgages, no car payments, no boats with debt to service. Our goal: spend mostly on **discretionary** items we can dial up or down.

Starting in 2026 (see preliminary budget below), we will have significant savings without additional home improvements.

2026 Budget			
Expenses	Base	Discretionary	Total
Baby Sitter - Weekly Date Night	\$ -	\$ 4,800	\$ 4,800
Private School	\$ -	\$ 22,000	\$ 22,000
<b>Childcare / Schooling</b>	<b>\$ -</b>	<b>\$ 26,800</b>	<b>\$ 26,800</b>
House Cleaning	\$ -	\$ 9,360	\$ 9,360
Landscaping	\$ -	\$ 12,480	\$ 12,480
Weekly Pool Service	\$ -	\$ 2,160	\$ 2,160
Property Taxes & Insurance	\$ 24,053	\$ -	\$ 24,053
Groceries	\$ 18,000	\$ 5,016	\$ 23,016
Wine Club Memberships	\$ -	\$ 2,400	\$ 2,400
Waste Management	\$ 2,388	\$ -	\$ 2,388
Other Misc. Home Services	\$ -	\$ 1,440	\$ 1,440
Petco Dog food & Chicken Feed	\$ 2,400	\$ -	\$ 2,400
Propane	\$ 3,000	\$ -	\$ 3,000
HOA	\$ 520	\$ -	\$ 520
Internet	\$ 1,440	\$ -	\$ 1,440
Water	\$ 3,000	\$ -	\$ 3,000
Electricity	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
<b>Household</b>	<b>\$ 54,801</b>	<b>\$ 32,856</b>	<b>\$ 87,657</b>
Fuel	\$ 7,200	\$ -	\$ 7,200
DMV Registration	\$ 950	\$ -	\$ 950
Maintenance (oil, tires, etc)	\$ 2,400	\$ -	\$ 2,400
Car Insurance	\$ 4,800	\$ -	\$ 4,800
<b>Auto</b>	<b>\$ 15,350</b>	<b>\$ -</b>	<b>\$ 15,350</b>
Dining Out	\$ -	\$ 18,000	\$ 18,000
Personal Care	\$ -	\$ 10,000	\$ 10,000
Insurance (Life, Health, Umbrella)	\$ 18,000	\$ 2,323	\$ 20,323
<b>Tax Related Expenses</b>	<b>\$ 8,127</b>	<b>\$ 720</b>	<b>\$ 8,847</b>
Cell Phone	\$ 840	\$ -	\$ 840
Shopping, Entertainment & Other	\$ -	\$ 24,000	\$ 24,000
Travel & Hotel*	\$ -	\$ 70,000	\$ 70,000
<b>Total Spending</b>	<b>\$ 97,118</b>	<b>\$ 184,699</b>	<b>\$ 281,817</b>

We technically budget \$100K per year for “memory making,” but we have yet to need to use the whole amount, which is why just \$70K is budgeted on the travel and hotels line item.

If needed, we could cut back to **\$97,118 per year**, or ~35% of our current spend. That’s our **base spend**, the amount required to maintain our lifestyle at a bare

minimum. The remaining **65% is discretionary**.

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## **A Lifestyle That's Built to Last**

It might look like we've spent a lot – and we have – but it's been done **intentionally**, in alignment with our income.

From 2020 to 2025, we've spent ~\$2.3M, while earning \$15.3M. That's only 15% of gross income (or about 20% after taxes), which is *well below* [our 50/50 rule](#).

We also built a fortress:

- 5,000 square feet of living space
- 500 square feet gym
- Resort-style pool, sauna, cold plunge, hot tub
- Outdoor kitchen with BBQ, cook top, full range, fridges, and a pizza oven
- Chef's kitchen inside
- 3,000 square feet shop
- A guest house for my father-in-law to have three generations living on the property at the same time
- Chickens, 175 avocado trees, citrus and apple trees, vines (and two empty acres to play with)

- Solar + Tesla batteries = full off-grid capability

This isn't just a house; it's our **dream resort home**. If the world goes sideways, we still have paradise.

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## Looking Ahead: Post Active Income Discipline

[I submitted my two-year notice recently](#). Come March 31, 2027, we'll no longer rely on active income (Mrs. GYFG sold her business and stepped away at the end of 2024).

The plan: live only off passive income for the first 2-5 years.

If needed, we have backup options. If for some reason we find ourselves short either due to timing or a shortfall from passive income, we can deploy:

1. Short-term treasuries (currently 22.7% of NW, reducing at \$30K/month)
2. Borrow against brokerage (SOFR + 110 bps, or 5.36%)
3. Borrow against permanent life insurance

Plus, if this did develop, I don't see it as a huge problem because the remaining portion of my equity will be payable at a change of control or a maximum of five years from my last day of service. That value today is ~\$3.5M and I anticipate it will be \$6M+ when it gets converted to a note on my exit.

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## The Bottom Line

Don't get too used to being rich, especially if it's still new. Don't forget the values and strategies that got you here.

This isn't about being frugal. It's about ensuring that the lifestyle we set out to underwrite is sustainable. Someday, we may underwrite a bigger lifestyle. But for now, we're aiming for **stability, peace of mind, and flexibility**.

We'll be 40 when we fully transition to living off of our passive income and assets. If all goes well, we're underwriting a **60+ year horizon**.

You *can* live a rich life—**with discipline**.

Gen Y Finance Guy

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## 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](#)