

FINANCE as NARRATIVE

BUDGETING YOUR VALUES, SEEDING YOUR REVOLUTION

MOMENTS THAT POPPED

VALUE YOUR LABOR AND TIME. PERIOD.

Know how much your time is worth!
(Hint: it's what it costs to sustain you)
Put it in your budget!

Talking about money and raising funds can feel sticky and complicated and frustrating.

Your budget is a tool to help you get where you want to go, do what you want to do, and live your values.

What do you need to change in your budget to meet your mission and values?

Where is the money coming from, and how does that meet your values?

One way to keep growing intentionally is to create line items for areas you want your budget to support before you are able to fund them, so that you can grow into those spaces.

SALES! As artists, we often have overlooked assets to sell!

Your bathtub needs more than one trickle of water to fill it: AKA we need different funding streams!

COLLABORATIVE ASK:
When you ask for something, remember that you are always ALSO offering something in return.
Build a relationship!

Think creatively: Who **ALREADY** has the resources you need, and how can you share them?

SPACE is expensive to **OWN**, plus it can be **PROBLEMATIC** for your budget and values.

We are building a world where we are free to ask for what we need, and understand that "No" is an acceptable answer.

PROACTIVE NOT REACTIVE

Maybe we don't all need to own our own space / land / property to do the work...

DAY ONE: KNOWING WHAT YOU HAVE

We considered the budget (chart of accounts, incomes, expenses) of a fictional organization. We noticed how they were choosing to allocate their funds and what that might say about their values. We then brought in personal questions from our own organizations. We asked "To accomplish my mission and live my values, really embody them, how do I need to change my budget?". After building sizable "wish lists", we discussed diversifying funding streams, the true value of time and labor, and how to grow proactively and intentionally towards a big goal. For homework, participants were asked to brainstorm a list of NEW funding streams, from licensing to bake sales, with vision in mind. And being as specific as possible, bring in three fleshed out ideas they could pitch the board tomorrow.

DAY TWO: WORKING WITH WHAT YOU HAVE

After sharing our homework, Scattergories style, we discovered a huge pile of new ideas to work with. Then, we prioritized, strategized, and made a plan. After participants chose their favorite new stream, we asked "What is the first step you need to take to move towards this goal? How about a second step? And a third?". Within three minutes, each participant had a weeks worth of action items to move towards their goal, and more importantly, a tactic with which to break down any big goal into manageable pieces.

A NOTE FROM CHIE

When talking about money, we must first acknowledge that talking about finances will bring up all kinds of doubt, mean voices, scarcity narratives, generational trauma, anger, and fear. We have been systemically taught to feel this way: that money is inherently "hard to talk about" and that our worth is connected to our wealth. We can look to everything from doctrines to Tony Award winning musicals that have enshrined the Starving Artist. This is a narrative. On their own, without humans to give them meaning and value, dollars are just paper. A tool to be used, just like a hammer.

Because we live in late stage capitalism and in a very industry driven society, the story of your values is written into the way you spend and save. This means that building a budget can be a radical tool for revolution. So, today, let's challenge the narratives we have been given and claim the bits that are real. If you take THREE thing away from today, let it be these things:

- ONE: An impulse for PROACTIVE work over REACTIVE work.
- TWO: Budgets are a plan. A promise. A commitment. But they are not foolproof. They MUST be cared for, emergent, and spry. They must learn from our past and project forward with educated estimates. They have to be PROACTIVE. They must COME FROM somewhere real, and point at something you want to MAKE REAL.
- THREE, we are MAKERS. We build. We make up languages, people, the future, and whole worlds. There is no reason we cannot apply this incredible skillset to crafting a budget. "I do not have a business degree", will not fly here. You have all the skills you need to create compassionate budget items, dramaturgically sound financial legacies for your organizations, and an impactful tool for revolution.

Please follow-up with me out in the world! I love talking about budgets and new systems.

You can email me at chie@forgenyc.org, claim [a free 30 minute consultation](#) with FORGE, or [RSVP to join our community](#) at a Fast Fuel Pop-Up Co-Working day on Zoom. Finally, here is [my budget template](#) complete with the class example. It's constantly evolving to help make our industry a safer, brighter, more values-forward space. I hope you will find it useful as you budget your values, and seed your revolution.