

DON'T BREAK THE BANK



Technologies truly worth the investment and other advice for wise spending.

If someone were to ask my close friends and family members to choose one word to describe me, I would bet money that many of them would say *determined*. Sure, maybe some of them (perhaps my husband) would select that word as a nice way to communicate that I am *stubborn*. But others would mean it lovingly, in that they have watched me set my mind to something and then go out and do it.

One example was the purchase of my first house, which I bought on my own when I was just 24 years old. I had been under the impression that, in order to buy a house, one needed to put 20% down. At that time, having been employed full-time for less than 2 years, I did not have that much saved up (read: I was still living paycheck to paycheck, with a little help from my parents). But, once I heard from a close friend that it was possible to buy a house with 0% down, I was determined to find a place within my very little budget, considering my entry-level job. I also wanted a place that had at least one spare bedroom and that was in close proximity to work. Sure enough, I found a starter home in the outskirts of Philadelphia that met all of my needs. Yes, I was still living paycheck to paycheck, but now I owned property.

Little did I know what a great investment that first house was. Two short years later, I put the house up for sale when my now-husband Tim and I decided to move in together, in the house that he owned. Not only did my house sell quickly, but the return on my investment was more than 22%. I added that money to my stagnant savings account, and, because Tim and I were able to share expenses, for the first time in my life I was able to start putting money away each month. Boy, did that feel good.

Over the years, I have been able to invest in other things, but nothing more important than my family. Today my two daughters, Cadence (3 years) and Scarlett (10 months) are my greatest assets, and any financial decisions I make are with them and their futures in mind.

I am sure this parallels many of our readers' thinking, including Associate Chief Medical Editor Arthur B. Cummings, MB ChB, FCS(SA), MMed(Ophth), FRCS(Edin), who, in this month's cover focus, shares his smartest investments in both his personal life and in his practice. Arthur is just one of the many contributors in this issue on technologies worth the investment. I hope you find your colleagues' tips for wise spending helpful in your pursuit of personal and professional excellence. ■

—Laura Straub, Editor-in-Chief