

What a 'Spending Fast' Taught One Woman About Defeating Debt

# Not Buying It

by Angele McQuade

After Anna Newell Jones finally admitted to herself that she had no clear strategy to pay off her combined credit card and student loan debt of \$24,000, she got to work. Not work as in an extra job — although that did come later — but working out a plan for paying off her debt completely and also staying debt-free going forward.

That plan — and the year-long commitment it inspired — is detailed in her first book, *The Spender's Guide to Debt-Free Living: How a Spending Fast Helped Me Get From Broke to Badass in Record Time*.

Based on the popular blog — And Then We Saved — that Newell Jones posted to as a way of giving herself public accountability, the book takes us step by step through her 15-month path from debt-burdened to debt-free.

Along the way, we get a thorough explanation of how what began as a personal challenge to go an entire year spending only on necessities — no luxuries or impulse buys allowed — turned into an unexpected journey of radical self-discovery and personal reinvention.

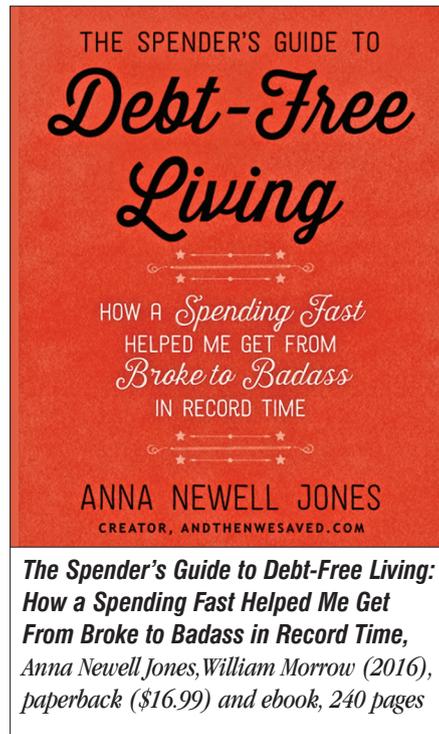
**What I liked:** The very idea of a spending fast. Whether you want to take on a year-long challenge like the author or just try it out for a week, the book provides easy-to-understand (if not follow) instructions for starting a spending fast of your own. From showing you how to document what you're really spending to creating your own list of needs versus wants, Newell Jones details all the steps you'll need to take to give yourself the best chance at success.

**What I loved:** How personal the author keeps her story. Her voice is both charming and authentic, making it easy to imagine ourselves following her example, especially in finding others to support our efforts. "While the shame I felt about getting into a big financial mess didn't instantly disappear," Newell Jones says of her decision to be honest about her spending fast with her friends, family, co-workers and even strangers, "I quickly learned I wasn't the only

one struggling to find a way to get out of debt that would actually work."

**What delighted me:** That Newell Jones ends her book with what feels like a witty parting gift to her readers: a comprehensive (and often hilarious) list of "151 Things to Do Instead of Spending Money." Anyone else feel like catching fireflies or polishing your shoes?

**Read *The Spender's Guide to Debt-Free Living* if:** You're already overwhelmed by your own credit card balances or starting to worry you'll never reach a zero balance. And if you're looking for a thoughtful gift for recent college grads or newlyweds, this is definitely one book worth considering. **R**



#### Websites of Interest

**And Then We Saved**

[AndThenWeSaved.com](http://AndThenWeSaved.com)

**Facebook/And Then We Saved**

[www.facebook.com/andthenwesaved](http://www.facebook.com/andthenwesaved)

**Twitter/And Then We Saved**

[@AndThenWeSaved](https://twitter.com/AndThenWeSaved)

#### A Note From Angele

Please join me at the BetterInvesting National Convention in Virginia, where I'll lead a discussion of Tren Griffin's *Charlie Munger: The Complete Investor* during the free public session on Saturday, May 21. You can find more information about BINC on pages 44 and 45 and at:

[www.betterinvesting.org/biconvention](http://www.betterinvesting.org/biconvention)

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Angele McQuade ([www.angelemcquade.com](http://www.angelemcquade.com)) is the author of two books, including *Investment Clubs for Dummies*. She lives in Arlington, Va., where she also writes novels for children and teens.