

Article Tools



## First Person: Our bottom line's down

But we're looking up

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By **Joyce Eisenberg**

When the moon is full, you'll find my husband and me planted on our front lawn, gazing skyward. We are not indulging our inner werewolves. We are working a little moon mojo.

With our wallets opened wide and pointed toward the light, we chant this verse in unison. Twice.

*Fill me up, fill me up, fill me up moon.*

*Fill me up with blessings and money real soon.*

We used to ask for money first and blessings second, but we reversed the order so as not to seem greedy, since greed is currently the deadliest of the seven deadly sins.

We heard about this ritual two years ago, and have been doing it ever since. In recent months, as our investments decreased, we invested more in the ritual. We now chant not only at the full moon but also on the nights before and after.

We bend the "rules" sometimes. If it's too cold outside, we do it through the bedroom window. When his wallet isn't handy, my husband simply holds up his driver's license. We don't miss a full moon.

Since the last full moon, our mail carrier brought us:

- A rebate check for \$35, making me only \$105 in the hole for a tiny tube of acne gel.
- A letter from our mortgage company. Yes, we could refinance -- but not yet. They were so inundated with requests it would take a few more months.

Mixed blessings. But maybe that's not a surprise, since this ritual comes from Haiti, the poorest country in the Western hemisphere. Still, in this economy, where everybody's looking for something, we think of it like chicken soup. It might not help, but it can't hurt, can it, to reach beyond the globe during a global financial crisis?

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I don't usually go in for these types of things. I'm concrete and logical. I write dictionaries. And I am doing concrete and logical things -- dining out less, selling old things on eBay, vacationing closer to home. But if this economic crisis doesn't make any sense, does my moon ritual have to?

For me, this monthly ritual is like a reminder to balance the checkbook. Instead of throwing the statements in the drawer unread, I've been paying more attention to what's coming in and what's going out. Also, I've noticed that when I ask for blessings each month, I'm prompted to count the blessings I already have.

I'm not alone in this money business. My Web designer has his own little chant: "Pay to the order of ..." (He fills in his name.) "I say it like I'm at church on Sunday in the South," he explains. "It instinctively makes me think of a check coming to me." He occasionally posts that same message on his Facebook wall. "That means everyone reading my status is instinctively thinking of me getting a check. How could the universe not comply?"

I have Catholic friends who bury a statue of St. Joseph in their yards when they want to sell their homes. They've told me that there are patron saints of money managers and misfortune, of bankers and beggars -- over 10,000 saints in all. For a Jewish girl, this is too confusing.

I've discovered that my no-money-down moon ritual is a bargain compared to some things you can purchase online, such as the \$10 Star Anise Financial Increase Kit or the \$60 Asian money tree with braided trunk and bright green leaves. A friend of mine placed it in her bay window. Does it work? The verdict isn't in.

A Web site offering "free ritual voodoo magic spells" lists the ingredients needed for its money charm: "African mysterious black soap, an African mysterious white candle, a white egg and a currency note in the denomination of the money you wish to have." The price? \$250, egg not included.

This is a bargain compared with the \$1,000 annual fee to join their "millionaires secret cult." To join, mail your check, along with your bloodstain on a white cloth, to a Dr. Philips in the Gambia. Did I find the Gambian Bernie Madoff?

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Whether you commune with the moon, bury a saint's statue or cast a magic money spell, a ritual is an "exclamation mark of your intention -- and intention is half the battle," according to one of my friends. The "make your check payable to" guy calls these rituals a "visualization thing."

My son, Ben, knows about visualization. While I was chanting at the moon and opening my mail containing a coupon for \$50 off at a high-end men's store (if I spent \$500), he was buying a 10 trillion dollar Zimbabwean banknote -- on eBay. That's 10,000,000,000,000. In that deteriorating African nation, it buys only a bag of groceries, but in Ben's wallet it looks like the full moon, the Asian money tree and the Star Anise Financial Increase Kit have all paid off at once.

The next full moon is Tuesday.

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