

2025 Financial Review

Description

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If you asked me what Iâ??d remember 2025 as, itâ??ll be the year that I lived my dreams.

Most of my friends have known for a long time that my childhood aspiration was to become an author. To be published by a big publishing house, and see my book on the bookshelves and in the librariesâ?¦that was a life I could only dream of as a child. I shelved that dream when my (traditionally Asian) parents told me that to be an author was to be broke; the realities of growing up in a family where not having enough money meant that every decision had to be carefully calculated in dollars and sense as we scrimped and saved, and that was a life I told myself I no longer wanted for myself or my kids when I grew up.

But 2025 was the year when I ticked that off my bucket list.

My book: Take Back Control of Your Money

In July, Penguin officially released my book, **Take Back Control of Your Money**. I wrote this as a guide to help people understand how money (and investing) works in the real world, the kind of stuff that schools (still) donâ??t teach.

Never in my wildest dreams did I expect that it would not only hit #1 Bestseller on Amazonâ??s New Releases list, but also go on to become #1 across the entire Books category in Singapore. I vividly remember my jaw dropping when I received the news.



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To every single reader who bought the book and supported its distribution by contributing a review, I thank you from the bottom of my heart. My book is now available across Singapore, Malaysia, India, Australia, the US and the UK. It is currently sold out in the US as we speak, and was sold out thrice (!!) in Singapore during its 6-month run so far.

12-year-old me would have been proud. I finally gave her what she wanted her whole life.

Financial Recaps

As 2025 comes to an end, this is my annual review of my finances to check where we are now and ensure that weâ??re not falling too far off from our goals. This yearly review is where I typically examine my income growth, expenses, savings, insurance coverage, and investment performance â?? which helps me to better strategize for the new year.

Before I go into this yearâ??s review, hereâ??s a quick recap of my previous years:

- 2014: Saved $20,000
- 2015: Saved $30,000 and grew income
- 2016: Saved $40,000 and grew income, hit $100k in net worth at age 26 including CPF
- 2017: Saved $45,000 and doubled my net worth in a year
- 2018: Saved $50,000
- 2019: Saved $35,000 (didnâ??t realise I completely missed out on a round-up post, but hereâ??s our child-related expenses instead)
- 2020: Saved $30,000 and achieved crazy (abnormal) investment returns
- 2021: Saved $40,000, grew income but saw reduced investment returns
- 2022: Saved $45,000 and battled a bearish investment climate
- 2023: Saved $60,000 and investments turned the corner
- 2024: Officially became a millionaire investor

Savings & Income

Hereâ??s my cumulative savings total since I started tracking on this blog:

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2014 $20,000
2015 $30,000
2016 $40,000
2017 $45,000
2018 $50,000
2019 $35,000
2020 $30,000
2021 $40,000
2022 $45,000
2023 $60,000
2024 $200,000
2025 $150,000

My yearly savings for the past 11 years. The bulk of these savings have consistently been put to work in the stock and cryptocurrency markets, and I reinvest almost all of my dividends.

I try to challenge myself to save more with each year, but this yearâ??s savings took a slight dip as I consciously chose to step back from full-time work.

Iâ??ve been incredibly lucky that my forward-thinking bosses were supportive, and believe in measuring output by KPIs and results rather than obsessing over how many hours has been clocked in at work. As a result, I was able to convert my role into a consultant for the company â?? this meant ensuring that my teamâ??s work remained as BAU, but redefining my involvement and areas where I could truly be of value in. Trading a lower income for more time flexibility allowed me to dedicate more time to my side hustles â?? including taking on more work as a podcast host for Wise & Shine, growing my social media and attending more SGX-related events, as well as stepping up on my deep-dive

research and teaching efforts.

I was able to teach more people for free, while designing more advanced courses for paid students who wanted a higher level of skills development and support. In 2025, I ran several free classes, including **a â??basics of investingâ?• course that taught over 3,000 students for free** for an entire month, and then taught **over 700 Singaporeans on how they could invest their CPF** as well as what options were available to them.

Hereâ??s the final score card of my multiple income streams in 2025 compared to the year before:

- Corporate income: decreased
- Social media & coaching income: increased
- E-commerce income: decreased
- Dividends income: increased

Expenses

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Our expenses increased this year â?? by choice. In 2025, my husband and I decided that we would retire my father-in-law; instead of him going back to his job as a security guard on night shift, we decided that we would give him a salary to work for us and do easier tasks instead. At the same time, we signed the kids up for martial arts classes, so our monthly household expenses is now hovering closer to $9,000 a month.

Insurance

The biggest change this year would be us downgrading our hospitalisation insurance given that the rise in our premiums has been too much in recent years. Other than that, we made no other moves here.

Investments

Crossing into 2025 with a million dollars in my investment portfolio presented different challenges as any movement in the markets could now see my portfolio easily drop by 5 to 6 digits in a short span of a few days. This happened in April, when Trumpâ??s tariffs announcement spooked the markets and sent my portfolio spiralling down. I recall the fear and panic during that week. My inbox was flooded by DMs, and I tried to reply everyone to reassure them while concurrently rushing to make moves for stocks in my watchlist before the markets turned. In a short span of 3 days, I promptly deployed over $100,000 into both the US and Singapore markets, adding to both existing positions while opening new ones. Was it scary? Yes. But why did I do it anyway? Because there was no doubt that the drop made these stocks and ETFs undervalued. When the numbers speak, I listen and take action.

While the S&P 500 has done exceedingly well for the last few years, the truth is that simply dollar-cost averaging into the S&P 500 also means that the investor will always underperform the market (due to fees), or at best get market-matching returns. In 2025, dollar-cost averaging on the first trading day of each month would have similarly returned you less than the S&P 500â??s returns of 16.65% this year:

$10,000 invested monthly via DCA		
Month	S&P Price on 1st trading day	Units acquired
Jan-25	5,979.52	1.67
Feb-25	6,038.69	1.66
Mar-25	5,683.98	1.76
Apr-25	5,369.50	1.86
May-25	5,810.92	1.72
Jun-25	6,029.95	1.66
Jul-25	6,296.50	1.59
Aug-25	6,408.95	1.56
Sep-25	6,584.02	1.52
Oct-25	6,735.69	1.48
Nov-25	6,740.89	1.48
Dec-25	6,837.21	1.46
Total units accumulated		**19.43**
Average price		**6176.85**
Closing price (Dec 2025)		6900.00

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Throughout the 2010s and 2020s, people kept saying that it would be impossible to beat the market. While that was true in the first few years of my investing journey, as they say, knowledge and skills compound. As we entered the 2020s, again and again, my portfolio outperformed. The same happened in 2025:

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2025 was also when I experienced not one, but two of my positions grow into multi-baggers within less than a year. These were AMD and CSE Global, which I entered fairly recently during January and June respectively. I also bought more AMD in April after it dropped more than 25% when I first bought it in January, a move that turned out well as it pushed up my gains till date on AMD from 86% to 105%.

The best thing about investing that having multi-baggers in a portfolio can easily more than make up for any losses on any other positions due to their outsized impact over time. Here are some of the ones that have really lifted up my portfolio lately:

Multi-bagger stocks	Gains
Palantir	2329%
C*** (secret)	421%
iFast	850%
DBS	300%
Shopify	300%
Tencent	218%
Meta	208%
CSE Global	109%
AMD	105%
Alibaba	103%

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I strive to be a better investor and level up my skills every single year, and 2025 was the year when I (finally!) incorporated artificial intelligence into my research and analysis process. ChatGPT is not the only tool I use; I subscribe to several (paid) data and AI tools that have since helped me to process more information faster and more meaningful before I invest in the stock.

Investment skills and performance review aside, the biggest highlight of my investing journey also took place this year when we finally made it to Omaha to attend the Berkshire Hathaway AGM in person. Having missed it in 2023 due to my youngest sonâ??s operation, I told my husband that we had to go this year no matter what because Warren Buffett was getting older and I didnâ??t think heâ??d have much time left as Berkshireâ??s CEO. As a value investor, I wanted to make the pilgrimage and see the Great Sage of Omaha in person before it was too late (like how I missed seeing Charlie Munger in 2023).

Little did I expect my concerns to be spot on. Buffett announced his retirement, and the atmosphere in that grand hall was indescribable as everyone present gave him a standing ovation. To have lived and experienced that moment in person was truly an unexpected gift, and it has become a core memory that Iâ??m sure Iâ??ll remember for life.

Reflections: the hate one gets from being a â??finfluencerâ?•

Iâ??ve no idea why, but 2024 â?? 2025 has seen a lot more hate against finfluencers emerge. Budget Babe has unfortunately, not been spared.

Although I prefer not to dwell on what haters say about me and stay away from drama, it is worth writing down that this year was especially bad when a faceless finfluencer account decided to spend consecutive days and created more than 40 IG Stories bent on bringing me down. On Reddit, threads dedicated to dragging my name through the mud have also sprung up, and Iâ??d be lying if I said this hasnâ??t affected my emotions and work.

A student who signed up for my Investing 101 class, for instance, wanted out because she read one of the Reddit threads and said she didnâ??t want to give her name and email (a pre-requisite for the online class) anymore. Another client decided to terminate a sponsored gig because they thought I had indeed been warned by MAS as several anonymous Redditors claimed. It didnâ??t matter to them that these people provided no proof for the claims they made, nor did they clarify with MAS to find out what the truth was (i.e. no, I was not among the 5 content creators who had crossed the lines and were warned for giving â??financial adviceâ?•).

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Some have said I should correct the untruths these keyboard warriors spread about me. But Iâ??ve not responded to any of these posts on Reddit, because I realised itâ??ll probably be futile to try and change a haterâ??s opinion. It wonâ??t be worth my time and energy either, so Iâ??m choosing to walk away from drama and protect my inner peace instead.

Conclusion

I wrote in my 2024 review that my focus for 2025 would be to get back my health by committing to workouts and the gym more frequently. I managed to stick to that this year, thanks in part to my LabX workouts and committing to a paid gym membership. For Budget Babe, committing to pay means having to show up in order not to â??waste moneyâ?•! ð???

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If last yearâ??s investment scorecard was defined by crossing the $1 million milestone, this year would definitely be how I reacted as an investor during the April market crash. That period was a real test of my emotional management to stay calm despite the market panic, especially amidst floods of worried DMs telling me that â??it could get worse from here! I think a recession is coming!â?• We reap the fruits of our actions, and almost all of my investments in April have since yielded me double-digit returns (with the exception of AMD, which came in at >100%).

My trip to Omaha was also extremely fruitful and gave me a lot to think about, especially as I got to meet and exchange insights with many like-minded investors, all of whom were similarly inspired by Buffett and had since grown to develop their own investing style and approach. My favourite conversations were those where we discussed whether the S&P 500â??s outperformance in recent years meant that value-investing and active stock-picking was now dead â?? you can read them in this post where I wrote down my biggest takeaways.

It has been 11 years since I started to **Take Back Control of My Money** and started documenting my journey on this blog, and I hope Iâ??ll still be doing this for another decade. Other than unlocking financial freedom for myself, I truly hope that sharing my journey will be able to inspire tens of thousands, if not a million people that it really is possible. My initial goal (set in 2014 when this blog was born) of retiring by 45 now looks extremely achievable, and if things keep up, thereâ??s a good chance I might get there even earlier.

But until then, Iâ??m still reading and learning from the different people I cross paths with, and I donâ??t believe Iâ??ll ever stop learning

Investing, after all, is a lifelong journey of growth and progress.

With love,
Budget Babe

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