Wi$e Up Teleconference Call  
March 31, 2008  
“What Do I Do Now? Facing Financial Challenges in an Uncertain Economic Environment”  
Speaker 1 – Kelvin Boston

Jane Walstedt: Now I’d like to ask Cynthia Dawkins, a member of the Wi$e Up team here in the Women’s Bureau national office who helps plan these teleconference calls, to introduce our first speaker. Cynthia—

Cynthia Dawkins: Thank you, Jane. Kelvin Boston is a respected financial journalist, public speaker and best-selling author, whom The New York Times has referred to as an outspoken voice for economic empowerment.

He is president of Boston Media Incorporated, Executive Producer and host of Moneywise, which is considered the longest running multi-cultural financial affairs television series on PBS.

Mr. Boston is the best-selling author of Smart Money Moves for African Americans, Who’s Afraid to Be a Millionaire? and The Confident Millionaire audio book.

He is also the recipient of many awards, including the National Community Reinvestment Coalition’s annual award for promoting economic justice, the “Communicator of the Year” award from the National Association of Market Developers, and he was appointed to the FDIC’s Advisory Committee on Economic Inclusion.

In 2007 Kelvin Boston’s first one-hour public television special entitled “Who’s Afraid to be a Millionaire?” premiered on public television stations nationwide, and the Moneywise Community Outreach Program provided financial seminars to 10,000 African Americans and military members in the United States and Japan.
In 2008, the Moneywise Community Outreach Program is planning to reach 25,000 African Americans and military members in the United States and in Europe.

Kelvin Boston is a graduate of Lincoln University and a former regional financial planning manager for American Express Financial Advisors. Welcome, Mr. Boston.

Kelvin Boston: And thank you, Cynthia, and I’m going to let my mother know that you read that introduction exactly the way that she wrote it. So she certainly will appreciate that.

I just want to let you know how happy I am to be here. This is an important discussion and one that all Americans should be having right now because indeed we are facing some uncertain economic times.

And it’s important that we don’t lose sight of a financial opportunity that we can take advantage of during these tough economic times.

So what I want to just do is take a few minutes to talk about taking the financial journey--the emotional journey actually--today from financial fear to financial freedom.

Taking the emotional journey from financial fear to financial freedom. Right now the most important thing we have to deal with is financial fear. It’s everywhere. We read it in the newspaper. You heard the statistics that Jane shared with you at the beginning of this discussion.
And it’s those types of headlines that we see every day that make us more fearful, along with the fact that indeed we are facing a tough economy, people are losing their home to foreclosure.

These are real issues, but what we have to do in the face of these difficult times is to stay strong, to keep the faith and to plan, and that’s what I want to talk to you about.

The most important thing that you have to understand is that financial fear is what keeps people from succeeding in good times and in bad times. So what you want to do is face your financial fears.

So later on, after this call, when you get a few moments, take some time and make a list of everything that causes you any type of financial anxiety. Maybe you’re concerned about the economy, or where you work, or your investment return, or even your home, or paying for your credit cards.

Make a list, and then after you make this list, look at it very, very carefully. If there’s something on that list that you can do something about, then take action. If there’s something on that list that you need help with, like maybe it’s time to refinance your home, then go get help.

If there’s something on that list that you can’t do anything about, then just pray on it and move on. But the most important thing is that you would have taken the first step, begun to face those financial anxieties that are really causing you a lot of grief.

What we’re finding is that because of fear and inertia, many people aren’t doing anything. For instance, we find that 50% of the people who are walking away from their mortgage, they haven’t even contacted anybody.
And so you can’t let inertia or fear keep you from getting the help that you need. So face your fears, then you can move on. We realize that if you use knowledge it will help you understand what’s going on.

It will help you understand your fears and also your opportunities, and that’s why this call is so important. So you want to use knowledge to understand your fears, you want to take actions that are going to help you reduce your fears.

You have to take action.

And then the third thing is you have to have faith. Faith will help you replace your fear—faith in yourself, faith in your government and faith in the American free enterprise system.

Because reality is that this is going to… this too will pass in time. But while we’re going through these hard times, the most important thing you have to do is face your fears.

Now I’m going to give you a few specific suggestions that will help you move on. The first is, this is a time in which everybody needs to have a written financial plan.

Everybody needs to have a written financial plan. You need to find a financial advisor that you trust to help you go through these tough economic times. Don’t try to do it by yourself. I suggest that you interview three financial planners. Find somebody that you and your spouse feel comfortable with.

Have a written financial plan that looks at everything. Look at your short-term goals, your long-term goals. Look at where you’re invested, look at how
you… look at your mortgage and how you can maybe change the mortgage that you have, and look at your credit situation. Do that with a trusted advisor.

The other thing I want to suggest is you have to begin to save. One of the problems that most Americans have is that we do not have any emergency money, and that’s why when we have these types of uncertain times in our economy, it makes it so hard for us.

We know that many Americans and many of the people that are on this call will get a tax refund. Now I know the President has told you to go spend that money, but let me suggest that you save it.

If you have to, take 10% and buy something, but save the other 90%. It’s important that you have emergency savings, especially in this uncertain economy that we’re living in.

The other thing I want to suggest is that you do - if you do own your own home--go look at what type of mortgage you have, and make sure you understand that you can afford the mortgage no matter what happens in the next year or two years you’re planning on staying in the house.

Now I think my ten minutes might be up. I have to come back and wait for your questions, but I just want to let you know how important it is for you right now to just begin to understand that this too will pass.

And if you face your fears, you can take the journey from fear to financial freedom. Thank you.

Jane Walstedt: Thank you so much, Kelvin, and I’m sure going to, after the call, sit down and think about what my greatest financial fear is.