

Singapore and millennials  
face the same problem

shook.

We're in  
the same  
boat fam.

COMIC BY THE WOKE SALARYMAN



I'm willing to bet that many  
of y'all are in this situation:

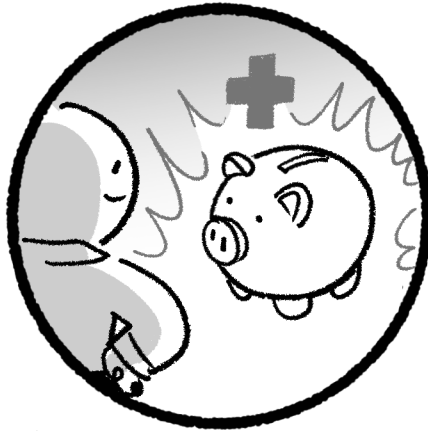
You're a millennial and you've  
been working for a few years.



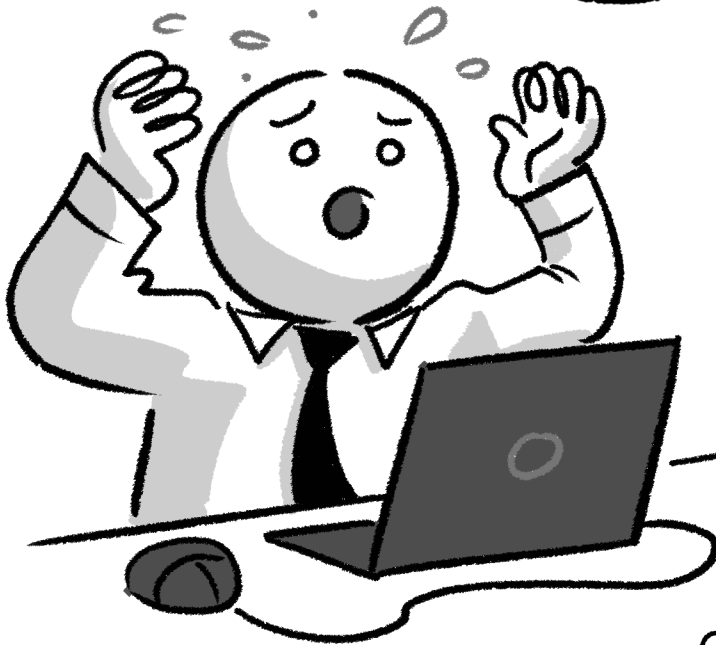
You've  
been prudent.



Your savings  
are decent.



You invest  
regularly.



But you're **STILL**  
not financially free.

And your needs  
and expenses  
continue to grow.

## Your parents?

They may have some savings, but you still need to help them out. And think about their caregiving in the future.

## Your kids?

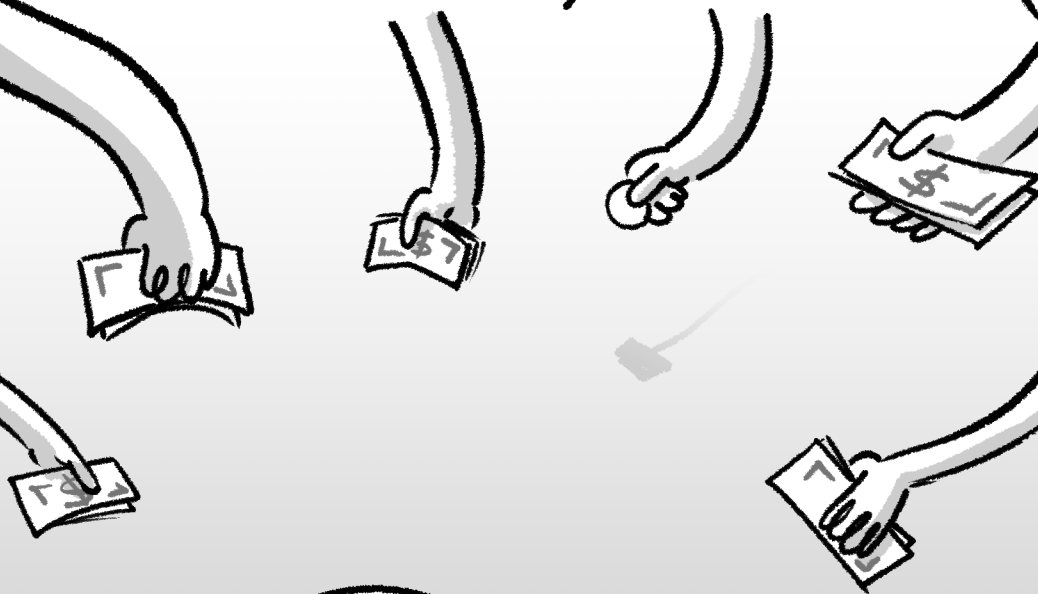
You are worried about the costs of raising them. Or they simply don't exist yet.




## And yourself?

You don't have as much as you'd like.

It's hard to save money.  
It's hard to give everybody  
the life they want.



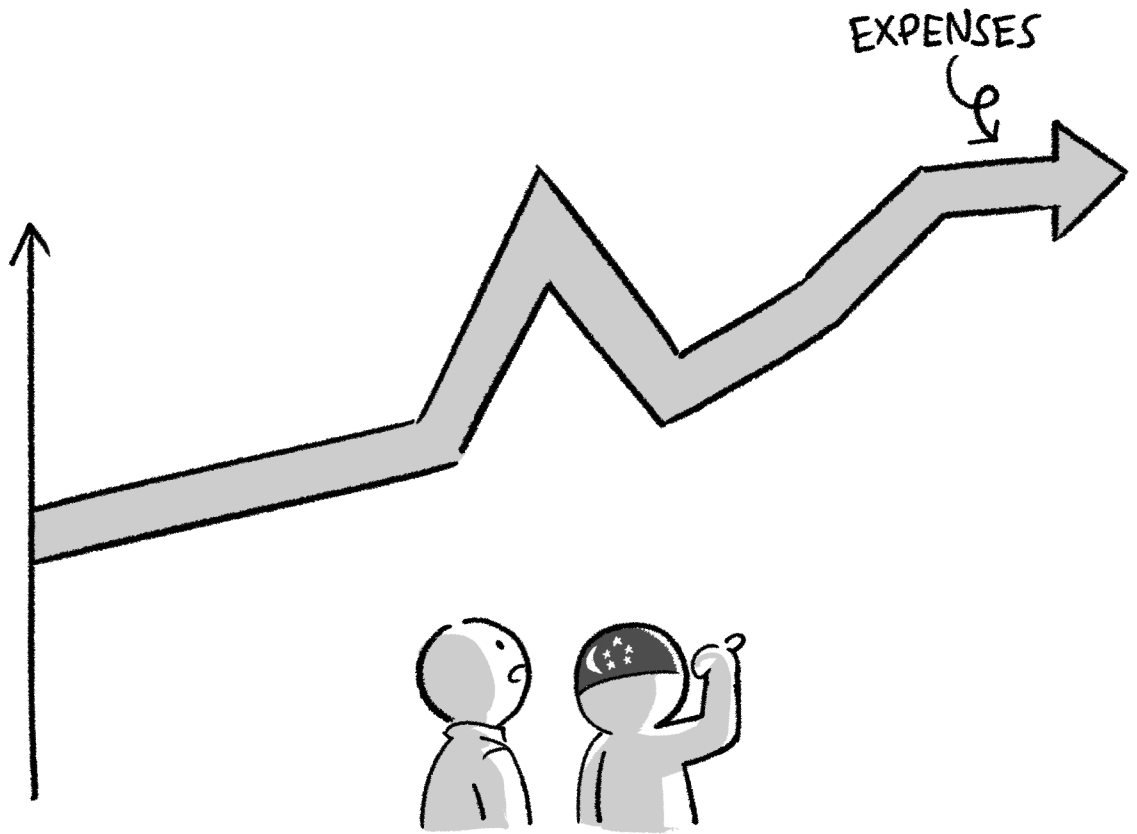
And it feels almost impossible.

A black and white cartoon illustration. At the top, several long, thin arms with open hands reach down towards the center. In the center, a person wearing a cap with the Singaporean flag (a crescent and five stars) stands behind another person who is lying on the ground. The person on the ground is wearing a white shirt and dark pants, and has a distressed expression with sweat drops on their forehead. A speech bubble from the person standing says "I FEEL YOU. FAM." The text "Turns out, your situation is very much like Singapore's." is written in the upper middle of the image.

Turns out, your  
situation is very  
much like Singapore's.

I FEEL  
YOU.  
FAM.

As of 2024, Singapore's expenses are rising rapidly due to increasing healthcare costs from an ageing population.



At the same time, she needs to spend a lot of money on current and future needs.

Like you, Singapore has returns from investments, which cover 20% of her total expenses\*.

But she's still a very long way from FIRE\*\*.



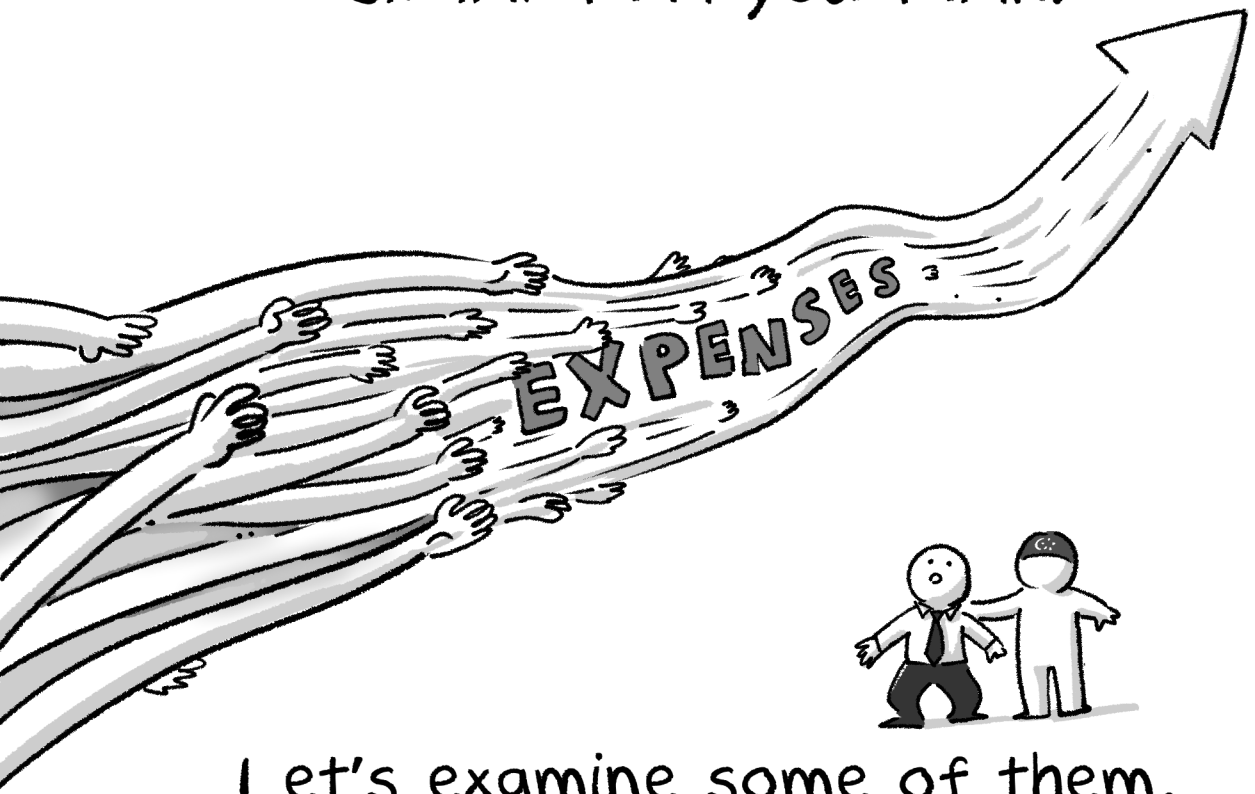
Singapore also has to continue 'working' to cover the rest; through taxes etc.

\*after reinvesting 50% of our returns, more on that later

\*\*Financial Independence, Retire Early

Admittedly, countries  
and individuals have vastly  
different circumstances.

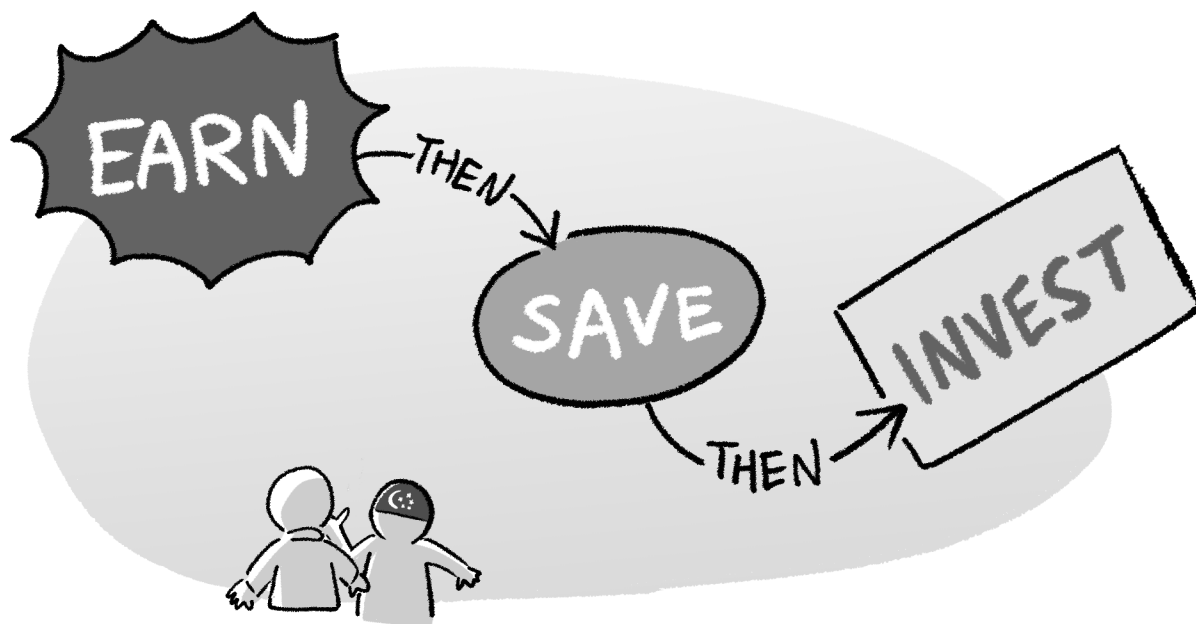
But the strategies both you  
and Singapore can take to improve  
your situation might be more  
similar than you think.



Let's examine some of them.

## #1: Improve your earning ability

In every conversation about personal finance, we always talk about earning ability first.



Because if you cannot earn, then you cannot spend, save, invest, and all that financial stuff.

If you're the main breadwinner, this means boosting your income.

You can do this by:

- + improving your skills
- + building a strong professional network
- + using technology to be more efficient
- + starting a business (if you can)

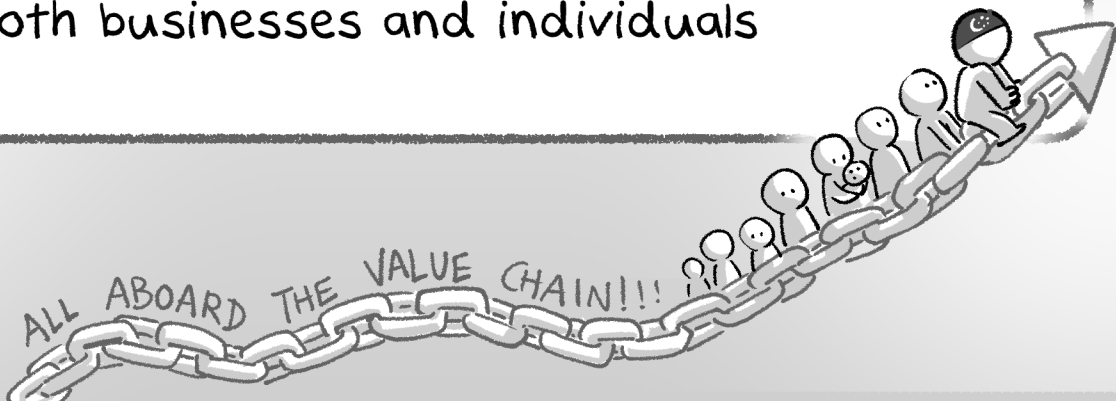


In Singapore's position, the logic is the same; we need to stay **competitive** compared to other cities and countries worldwide.

This means:

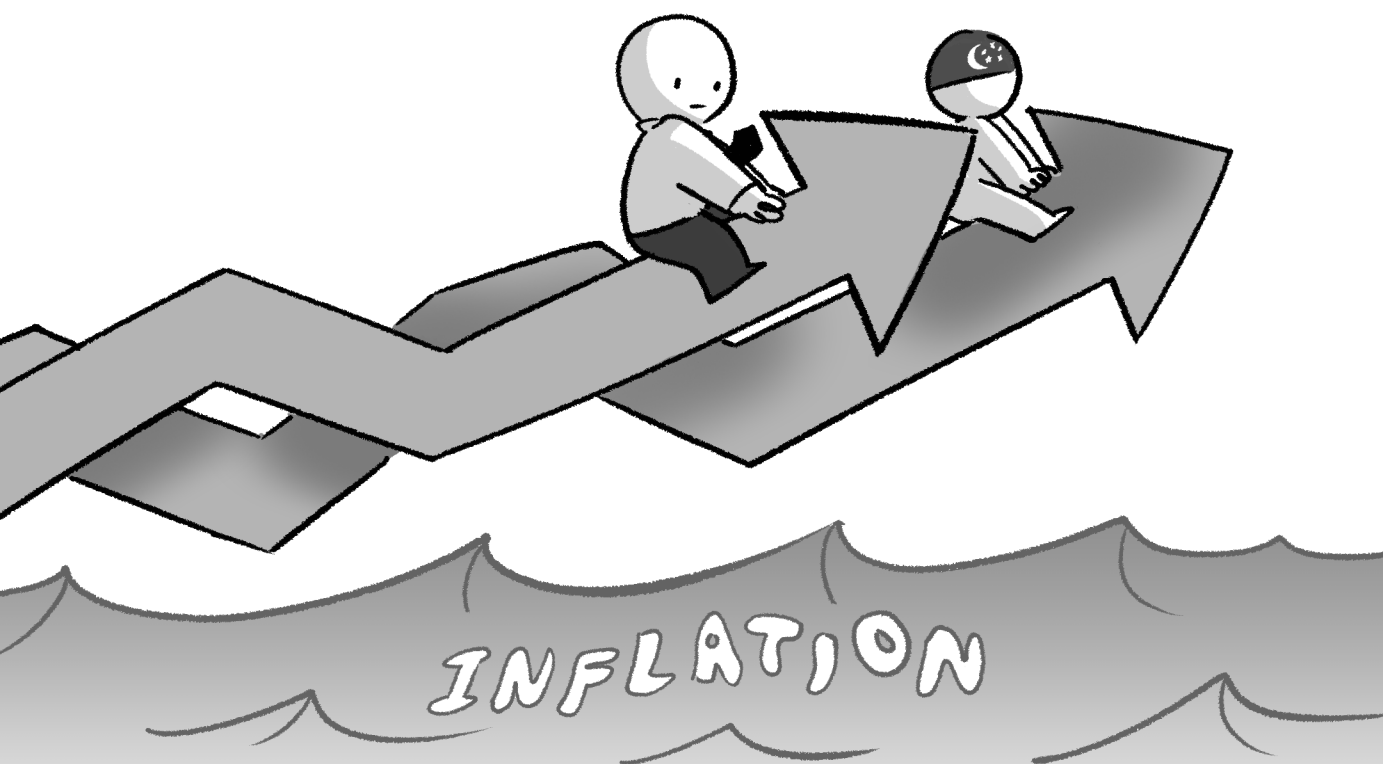
- + Developing a skilled workforce
- + Attracting foreign investments and companies to bring in jobs
- + Developing our own homegrown businesses, and supporting them in going global
- + Creating infrastructure that makes Singapore attractive to live, work and play
- + Ensuring taxes remain competitive for both businesses and individuals

COMPETITIVENESS  
↑



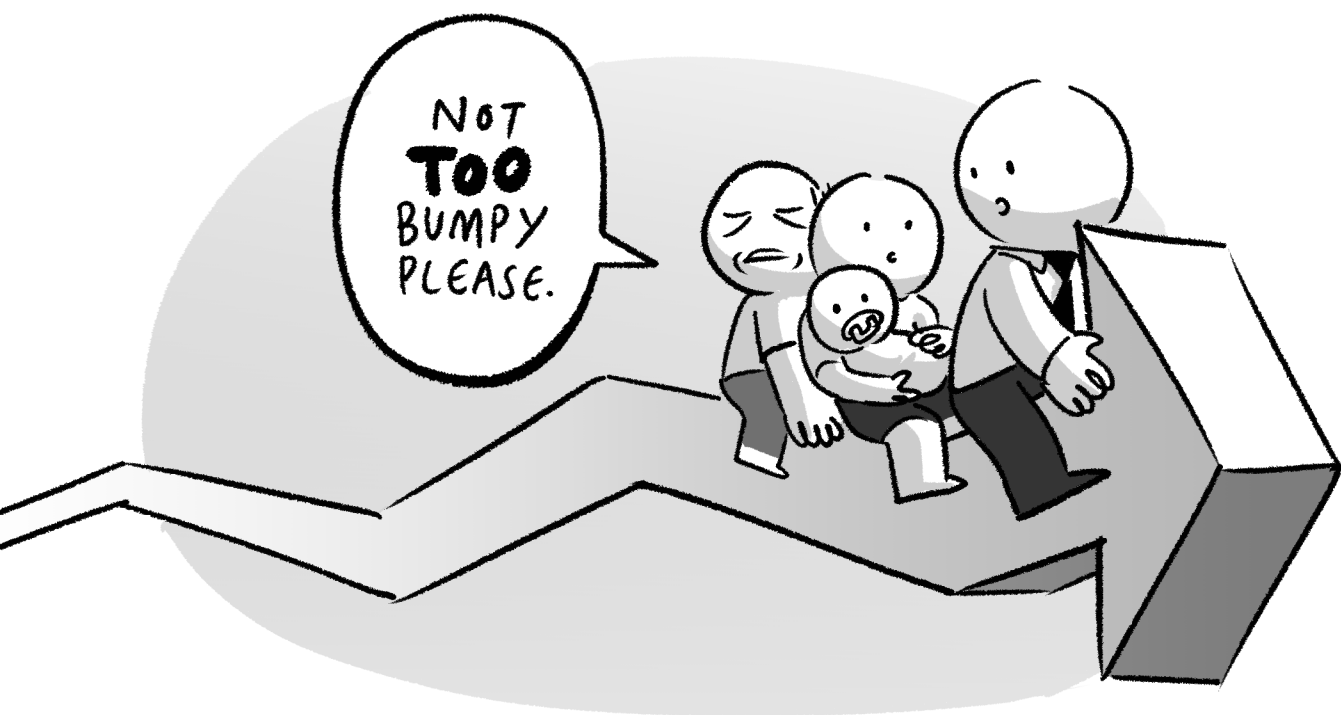
## #2: Invest safely and consistently

Investing can be difficult when you're already stretched financially.



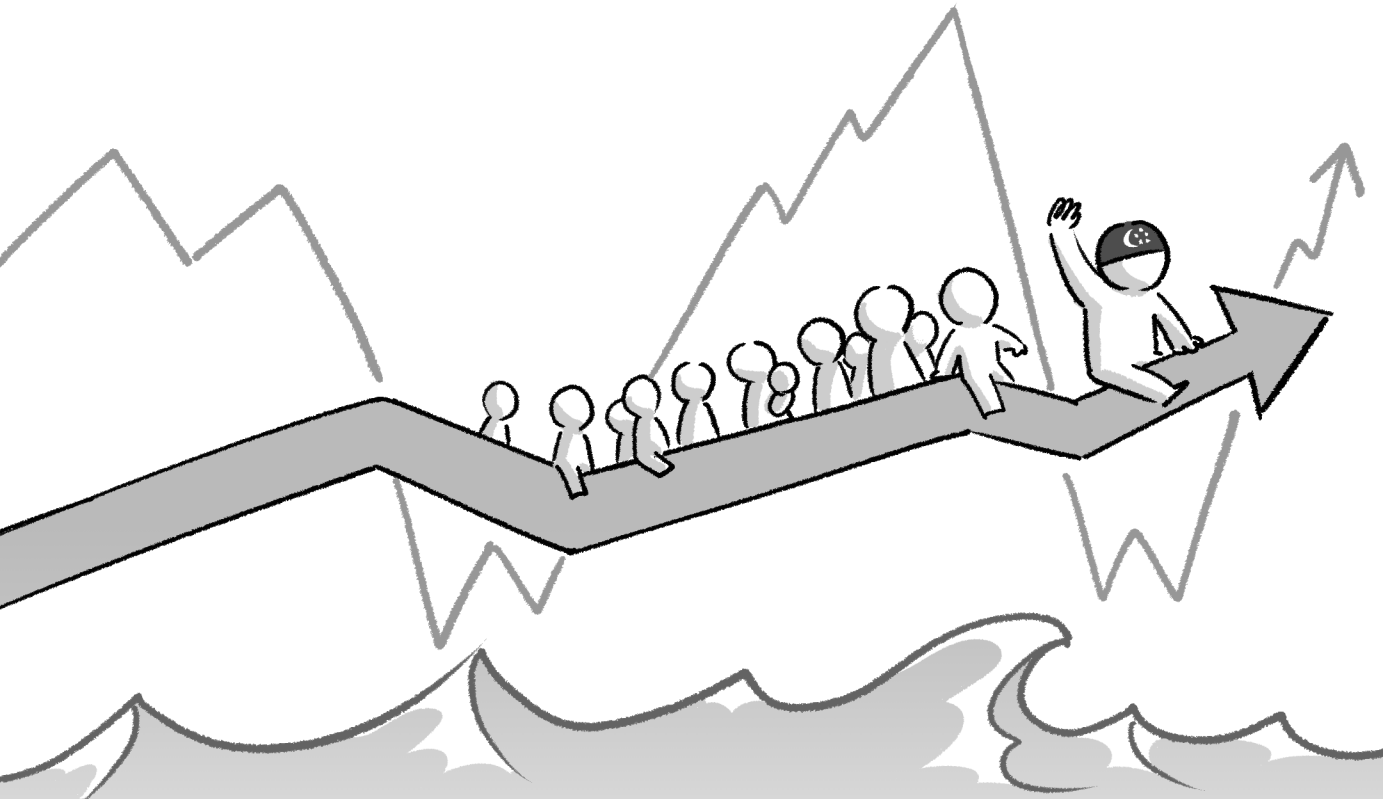
But if you don't invest, your savings will be eroded by inflation over time.

It may be tempting to take big risks to grow your money quickly - but big risks are also more vulnerable to big losses.



Compared to others with fewer responsibilities, you will need to be more mindful of your risk tolerance because more people are depending on you.

Similarly, Singapore  
is responsible for  
A LOT of people.

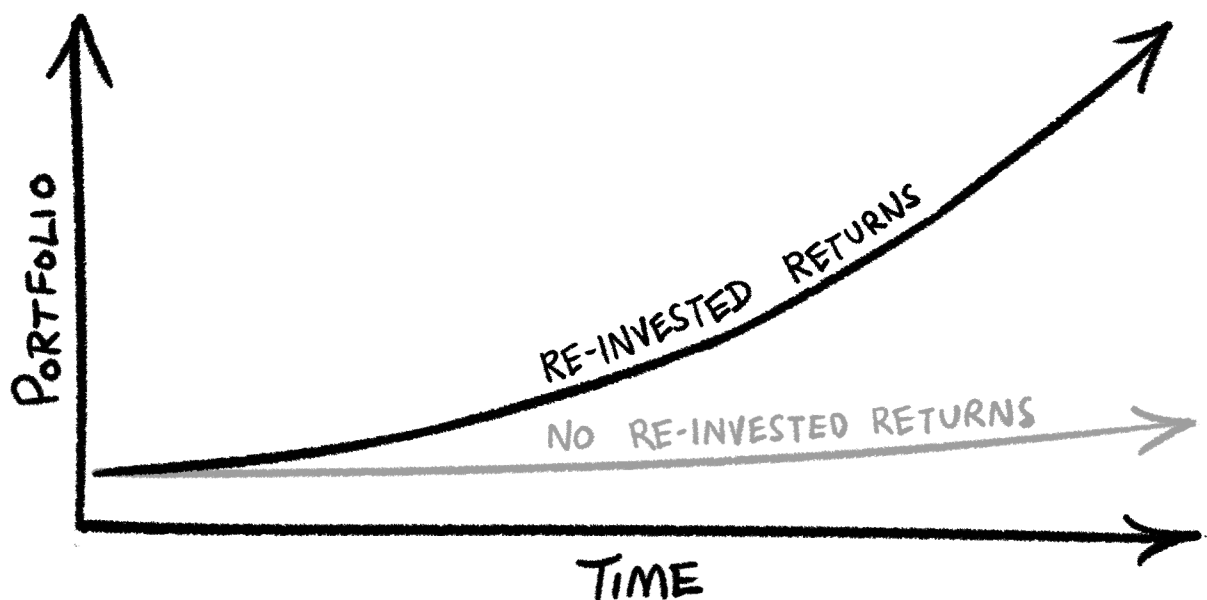


Singapore too has to invest for  
the long term in a way that is  
sustainable, and not just for  
maximum gains and growth.

### #3: Reinvest your dividends

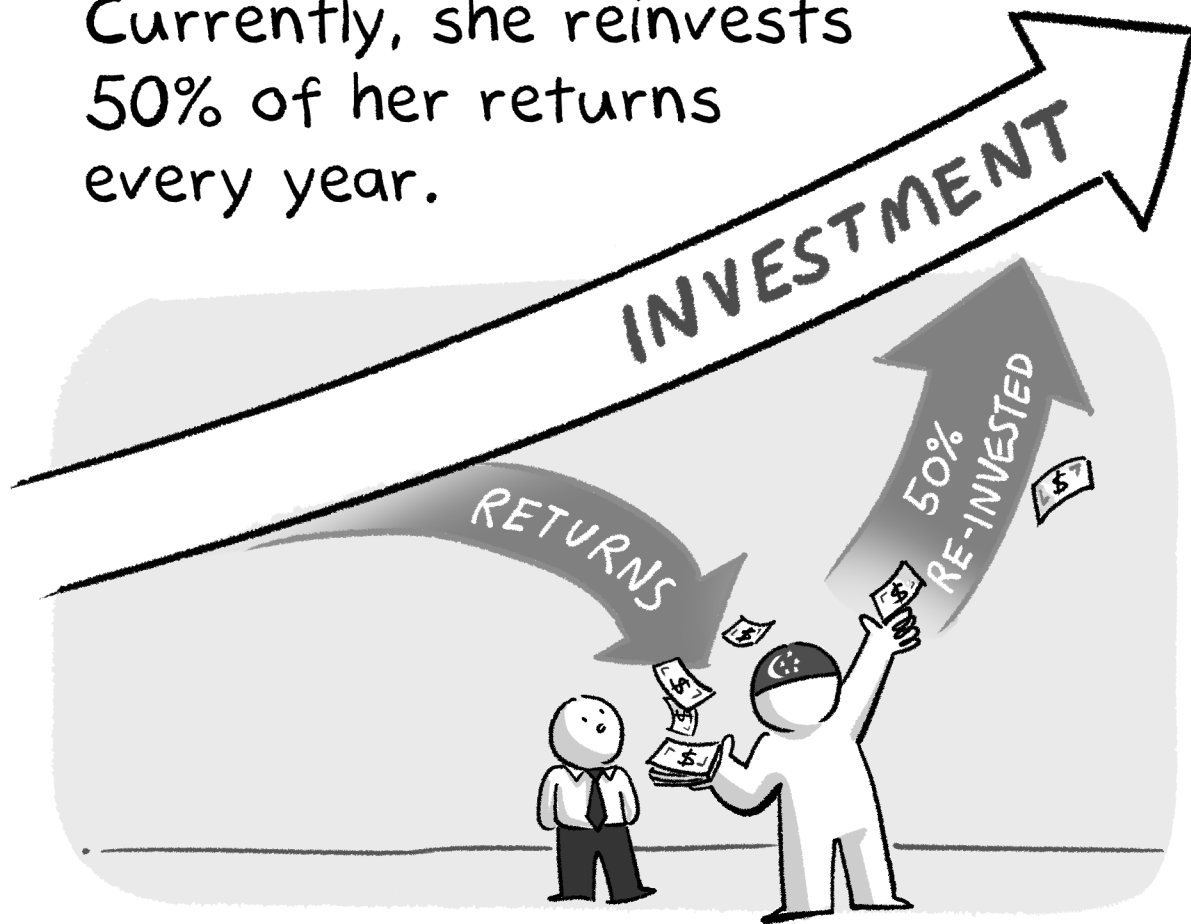
If you have existing investments making returns for you, try to reinvest your dividends as much as possible.

Why? Doing so allows your dividends to compound quickly - as compared to spending them.



Singapore also has the same idea.

Currently, she reinvests  
50% of her returns  
every year.



This ensures that we will have the  
funds\* for our future needs, and  
to tide us through any crises.

\*And these funds needed are only expected to increase.

But why only 50%?

Well, in Singapore's case, she's a country with high, growing expenses and financial responsibilities.



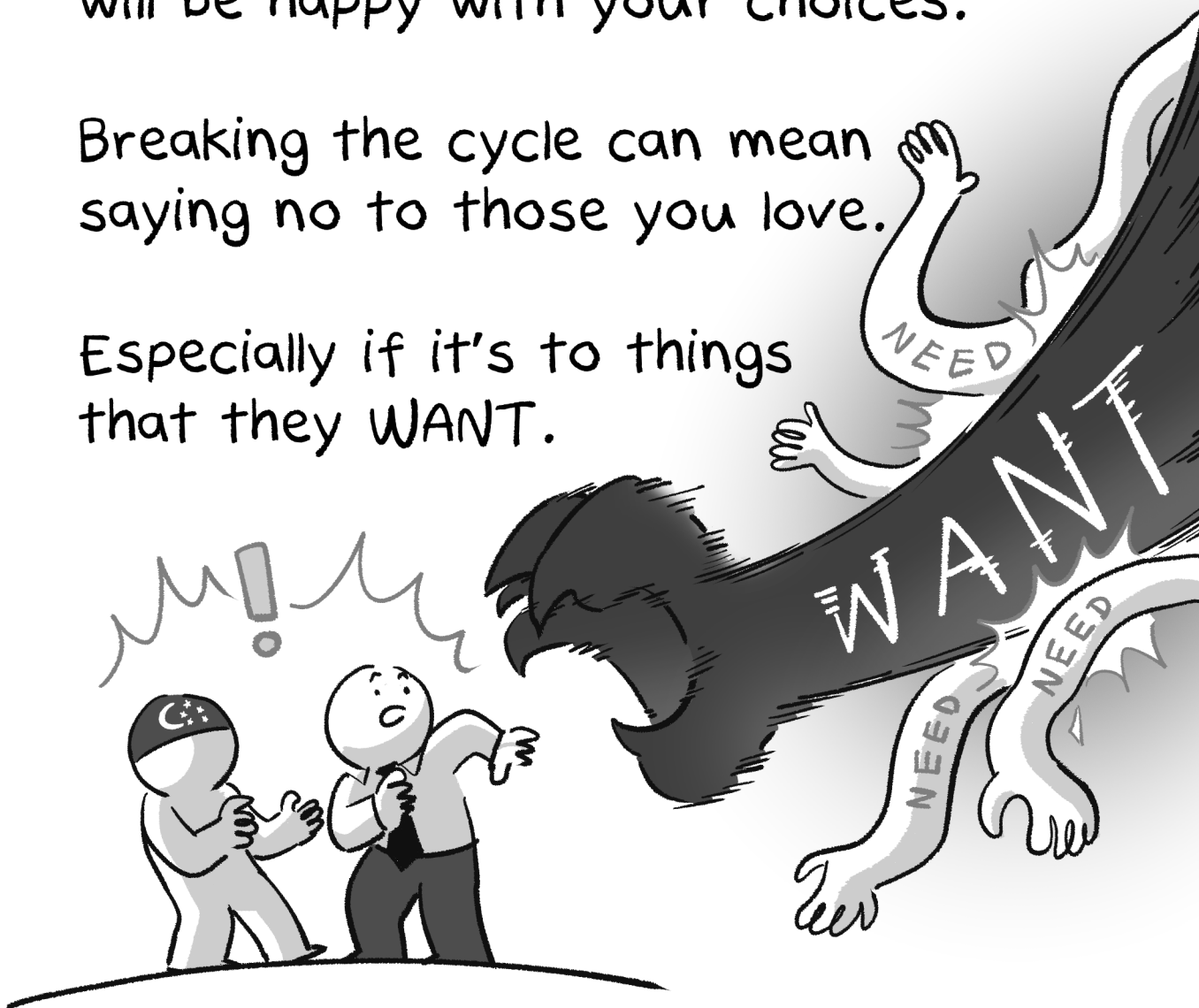
She needs to look after the current population, covering expenses like healthcare, education, etc.

## #4: Be disciplined and prudent

When we make prudent financial decisions in life, not everyone will be happy with your choices.

Breaking the cycle can mean saying no to those you love.

Especially if it's to things that they WANT.



Think about it:

If your dad wants a new car,  
do you just give it to him  
if you can't afford it?

If your child wants the latest  
gadgets, would you do the same?



If you overdo it, your savings and investments will take a hit. Over time, your money will not be able to generate as much returns or dividends.





Saying no sometimes, is important and necessary; even if it's difficult.

Because planning for the long term often requires some short term discomfort.

In Singapore's case, it can be tempting to spend large amounts of money on our immediate challenges.



However, we also need to save for future challenges in an increasingly uncertain world.

Last but not least, we need to acknowledge that overcoming this situation requires a multi-generational effort.

You might feel a lot of pressure. But remember that you shouldn't bear this alone.



Your parents and (future, if any) children all have a part to play.

This is no different for Singapore.

Collectively, Singaporeans young and old need to understand the challenges faced by one another.



And the sacrifices we might need to make to reach a compromise.

I know this isn't what  
you might want to hear.



You didn't choose the  
circumstances you were born into.

Singapore did not choose to be  
a tiny-nation, with no natural  
resources, either.

You may not have chosen the  
cards you were dealt with...

But you can choose how  
you play the hand.



Stay woke, salaryman.

## A message from our sponsor: Ministry of Finance

As a country, Singapore has to take care of the needs of many — both the young and old, and the generations to come.

And to do so sustainably, having strong reserves is crucial in ensuring we can continue to fund public programmes and schemes today and for the long term.

Find out more about how the investment returns from our reserves are supporting the needs of our nation at:

[go.gov.sg/sgreserves](https://go.gov.sg/sgreserves)

