

(Submitted by L.&L. - Pennsylvania)

Reference: Amway

To Whom It May Concern:

We were shown the Amway plan in 1991 and signed up. We were very faithful to the business and followed the advice of the leaders of the organization. We attended all the seminars and training sessions that we qualified for. We continued with the business until 1999. Through this time we were told over and over that if we followed the system we would be financially free in a very short time. At the functions (especially the large ones) we were shown videos and heard people talk about how rich they were and how glamorous their lifestyle was because they followed the system and bought books and tapes and went to all the meetings. We were told to do this ourselves at every meeting and it was not just one tape a week, it was numerous tapes a week to stay as they called it "motivated." They even had a room one-year at one of the big seminars filled with fur coats for the people to try on and do what they called "dream building." We were encouraged to go through expensive houses and try on expensive jewelry because they said this would motivate us to build our business so that we too could join them and become financially free and retire from our jobs. We believed these people and did as they said.

We were told we could have what they called the "American Dream" if once again we followed the system. The system was very costly and for nine years we bought into the system even when we did not have the money to do it, we did. We got into some credit card debt, which we never had before. Our expenses for the nine years was about \$40,000. That is a yearly income for us. The sad thing about this dollar amount is that it does not include the products that we were heavily encouraged to buy for ourselves. We were told that we had to be a 100 percent self use and the slogan was that if you were 99 percent self use, you were 100 percent disloyal to your business and to your upline. It was mentioned numerous times that you never knew when someone would be in your house and look into your cupboards. They even had stickers that they had mentioned they put on your what were called "negative products." These products were not cheap to purchase, either. They were cheaper in the stores so you were spending more money on the products, which was everything from toothpaste to food, to clothes, to vitamins. We have kept all our records of everything that we purchased from Amway and would be willing to get the totals, if needed.

There are a lot of expenses that are not included with the \$40,000, one of them being baby-sitting fees for our children. That was a huge expense, especially when we went away for the weekend for a large seminar.

There are a lot of people that we, ourselves got into the business and they, too, have lost money. It is not just the money, though. It is also the emotional stress that was put upon you and your family. We felt inadequate and like failures a lot of the time, because we were not making the money we were told we would. We cannot even begin to say how we felt through all this. It was, at times, very stressful. No person should be made to feel that if you do not follow the system, you are wasting your upline's time. Or, that you are not a "man" if you do not build the business and stand up to your wife when she questions why you are buying all these tapes and books and extra seminar tickets that you know you are going to get stuck with. Instead of being the pursuit of our dreams, it was to say the least, a nightmare.

Sincerely,

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