Getting Started with Your 401K: Overcoming Obstacles and Finding Reliable Resources with Laura Adams

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Dave [00:00:00]:

All right folks, welcome to Investing for Beginners podcast. Today we are super excited. We have Laura Adams who is the award winning author and host of the top rated Money Girl podcast. She started this back in 2008 and is still going strong. Laura has a special ability to be able to break down complex financial topics like real estate, retirement savings accounts, changes to tax code. Super fun and make it relatable to all of us and full admission. Laura was one of the first people that I listened to when I first started trying to learn about money when I wasn't taught any of it in school. So Laura, thank you very much for joining us today.

Dave [00:00:35]:

We're super excited to talk to you and we appreciate you coming on.

Laura [00:00:38]:

Dave and Andrew, thank you so much. Great to be here. Happy to just provide whatever guidance I can for your audience and it's just a pleasure to connect with you both.

Dave [00:00:48]:

Yeah, that's awesome. So I was reading in your bio you're from South Carolina, so what part of South Carolina did you matriculate from?

Laura [00:00:55]:

Yeah, I was born in Charleston and grew up in the surroundings of Charleston, a little town called Somerville where my mom is still there. But yeah, was there and then went to college in Tennessee. Ended marrying a guy that I met in college who was from Florida. So when we got engaged I moved down to Florida and I'm back here in Florida now, but I've lived in the Bay Area and Austin and have lived in some really cool places.

Dave [00:01:22]:

That's awesome. So how did you get bit by the MoneyBug? How did this all start for you.

Laura [00:01:27]:

Know, it's funny, I have always had just a personal interest in money. I thought everybody was interested in money. People were as curious as I've always been. I was begging my mom when I was in middle school for a checking account. I wanted to manage my own money. I couldn't wait to write checks and just manage my own money. I didn't have any money, but I just thought it would be really fun to manage it. So looking back, I realized I had just an innate interest in the topic.

Laura [00:01:57]:

I ended up studying science in undergraduate and then later got really into business, got into just all kinds of entrepreneurial ventures and real estate. And it wasn't until like my early thirty s that I decided to go back and get an MBA. And I just thought, hey, if there's anything more that I need to know in business, I would like that formal education. So when I got there, I really expected to lean more toward corporate finance. But I quickly figured out that it was more of the personal finance side that really interested me. There were a lot of really smart people in my program. I mean, like multiple master's degrees and they were sea level executives, had way more success than me. Career wise, but I was doing a lot better than them financially.

Laura [00:02:47]:

I noticed that a lot of people were super smart, but that did not translate into their personal finances. It was a light bulb moment that you could be really smart and quite successful in your job and still struggle with your finances. So things like debt, just taxes, investing, all of those things were stuff I had been reading about for literally decades and had maybe a head start than a lot of other people when it came to this financial literacy. So after my MBA, that's when I decided that I really wanted to focus on personal finances and started podcasting and blogging, and it just kind of took off from there.

Andrew [00:03:31]:

That's super cool. How do you wake up people who maybe are, let's say, hypothetically have a brother or a friend who's just graduated college, just started their career and money's, at least long term financial plans, like the farthest thing from their mind? How do you kind of wake them up and be like, hey, why don't you check this out?

Laura [00:03:52]:

Yeah, it's a great question. And I do a lot of speaking to college students, so I'm constantly sort of revising the presentation that I give them because it is such an important point in their life to really start to wake up, as you say, and think about finance. I think giving them really concrete examples of just showing compound growth, the power of saving a little bit over a long period of time. I know for me, when I was young, that hockey stick graph was just really powerful. And so I think visually showing finance in those terms is helpful. They're very curious, and most of them know a little bit. But if I can tell stories about places where I messed up, things I should have done, I think showing kids, hey, we're not perfect. We don't all grow up knowing this stuff.

Laura [00:04:50]:

It's a learning process. And if I can show them a couple of things that I did wrong and be willing to admit that, that helps them maybe not make those same mistakes that I did, hopefully.

Andrew [00:05:01]:

All right, Laura, so you opened the can of worms, so we would love to hear one.

Laura [00:05:05]:

Yeah. For me, I was very hesitant in my early 20s when I started working, was super hesitant to start a 401. And you know why? I didn't understand it. I didn't know that it was portable, that you could take it with you if you left. I just assumed that the company was going to retain at least some portion of the contributions. It was just misinformation. Nobody was coming in to sit down with us to say, hey, this is how this thing works, and here are all the benefits. Nobody was educating us in the workforce.

Laura [00:05:42]:

So it was just, like, assumed that I'm supposed to know about what this 401K thing is. So I did not invest it took me a while. In fact, it really wasn't until I was self employed and earning more money that I was like, hey, I need to open an IRA. And then it was, hey, I need to open a sep IRA. It was just sort of, I think, waiting. I delayed that. Investing. That was a big mistake.

Laura [00:06:10]:

I think, gosh, if I had started a few years sooner, how much more would I have today? But we're not going to cry over spilled milk. We move forward. You take your lumps. If you make mistakes, you have to just say, hey, that was a learning experience, and we're going to just go forward doing the right things, knowing what we know now.

Dave [00:06:29]:

Yeah, that's awesome. So what resources are there out there to help you learn more about a 401K? Quick story, I worked for Wells Fargo for about five years, and when I first started with them, they A, automatically enrolled me in my four hundred and one K, and B, they would tell me literally nothing about it I didn't know, and they wouldn't tell me, what do I invest? What can I buy? How does this work? Should I pick it up? Roth or traditional for my investment? None of those things were explained to me. And when I called HR, they wouldn't tell me. And so I was lucky and had a financial advisor in my branch that was able to guide me through some of that. But what resources, where can people turn when they get that kind of answer from HR? Because they can't really tell them anything.

Laura [00:07:11]:

That's right. The HR folks, and I've been in that position, I've worked as a benefits administrator. You have to be very careful about advising folks. You can advise them you're not licensed to do that, so they should be referring you to a representative of that firm. And they may be doing that pretty well in big companies, but in my experience, small companies, the HR person who may not know that much, they're so stretched for the time they're super busy, and educating those employees is kind of like the last thing on their priority list. So it really does come down to us as the individual investor to figure this out, unfortunately. And so there are representatives that can help you with your brokerage firm. Of course you can pay for that help as well.

Laura [00:08:07]:

But in a lot of cases, what I find is that they're very willing to give you free advice and recommendations that might be great starting out. Of course, as you accumulate more assets, you want to be a little bit more careful about who you're getting advice from. But certainly starting out, if you have no idea what investments to choose, getting some help is better than nothing. Getting a little bit of guidance, that second opinion is so key. So if you're somebody who's in a company, you've got a 401K, but they're doing nothing to educate you. I would ask for it. I would say, hey, can we get somebody to come in maybe at least annually, maybe around open enrollment, give us kind of a 101 401 and that gives you kind of a foot in the door to ask questions to get the contact, figure out who you're supposed to call when you need that advice. So it really is up to you to ask for those resources.

Laura [00:09:02]:

Even if you don't have somebody in house who can point you in the right direction. If you go into your online account, there's probably a phone number there or some kind of chat where you can at least begin a conversation and get pointed in the right direction.

Andrew [00:09:17]:

I guess. In your opinion, let's assume somebody just they all know the difference between a 401k or crypto and both sound like they can make you wealthy. How do you pitch it to somebody like, hey, this is a this is why it's powerful?

Laura [00:09:29]:

Yeah, I try to explain it as a bucket. It is a bucket that you're going to put money into, but it's a special bucket because you're getting tax advantages. If somebody's not that interested in taxes to begin with, that may not resonate with them. But if you can explain maybe the difference between pre tax after tax, just the power of a Roth, that can be, I think, something that can captivate people and really get their curiosity, like, wait a minute, you mean all this growth in the account is never going to be taxed? If I'm paying tax upfront on that Roth, that's a pretty darn good deal. And so if you can explain that to people in a way that is very simple and they understand, I think that can make sense. But I would say, hey, even if you're investing in a brokerage account and not the 401K, good on you. Starting somewhere is better than nothing. But if you can make a priority to max out that tax advantage account at work or on your own as a self employed person, that's really where you're going to get a whole lot more bang for your buck.

Laura [00:10:36]:

And now with all of the Rothification of these accounts coming with Secure 2.0 that some of those are rolling out now, some are going to roll out in a few years, but giving people more opportunities to use Roth accounts is something that I'm personally really excited about. I've got a lot of money in pretax accounts and I'm ready to start moving that stuff over to Roth. As I get closer and closer to retirement, I still have ways to go, but I really like the idea of tax free income in retirement. So I'm starting to think a lot more about Roth and Roth conversions.

Dave [00:11:10]:

So what are your thoughts on the whole match thing and people not taking advantage of that?

Laura [00:11:17]:

Yeah, I think it's nuts. I think it's absolutely crazy. Why wouldn't you take that free money? Free money. We'll take those benefits. We'll take the group health care and maybe some life insurance and all of those. Goodies. The match is the minimum, right, that you've got to do in these accounts. It's like, why wouldn't you want 100% return on your money at a minimum, right? So just getting the match, you're already earning 100%.

Laura [00:11:44]:

Of course you're going to earn a lot more than that. So that's pretty powerful. And I'm just a big proponent of maxing out, if you can. I know a lot of people say, well, just get the max and then go on to other accounts. I love the 401 just due to the automation, the deferral that has to happen from your paycheck. I think that's really powerful. It takes away just that barrier to investing. That's why those accounts are so successful.

Laura [00:12:15]:

They make it super easy. And yes, maybe some people don't really like the idea of being auto enrolled, but studies show that that helps people save more money. Having to opt out instead of having to opt in, I'm for that. I really believe that that's going to help people just at least get started. So I'm all about the match. I think it's fantastic.

Dave [00:12:40]:

Yeah, you're preaching to the choir here. I know that when I was at the bank, I had so many people, when I would talk to them about retirement, investing, the future, it was always the same conversation. At the end of the month, I will take whatever money I have left and put it in the market or invest or save it or whatever. It never, ever happened. And so I think I agree with you. Any way that they can automate that process, make it a bill, make it something that they're paying themselves for. And I think that's definitely preaching to the choir here. I guess the question I have too is as there's a rise in self employed people working from home, that kind of thing, what can those kinds of people do to help set themselves up for retirement?

Laura [00:13:23]:

Yeah, so I have a lot of folks in the money girl community that are becoming self employed, whether they're just doing a little bit on the side, they're doing freelance work or they're in the gig shared economy, and they're asking me, what do I do with this money? And besides saving for taxes, I always say, now you have the opportunity to use some self employed retirement accounts, which is super exciting. It may not be super beneficial until you're earning a little bit. Know if you're right at that kind of just five figure level, the IRA, traditional IRA, or Roth IRA is going to be great. But once you're earning more, those accounts give you so much in terms of annual contribution limits that I love them. So for a lot of people, they do need a lot of education. Like, what are these and what are the differences. But I think just if you know that you have the opportunity to use these special accounts, if you've got any business income, even if it's just a little bit of business income, you can use those accounts. But certainly the traditional IRA and Roth IRA is a great place to start.

Laura [00:14:32]:

Once you start earning your own income as a business owner, those are some.

Andrew [00:14:36]:

Great resources, I guess, besides the obvious mistake of not using them. Are there other mistakes either you or people in your community have made in regards to some of these types of accounts?

Laura [00:14:48]:

Yeah, certainly. I have a lot of questions from folks about mistakes like I've overcontributed or I contributed to the Roth IRA and now I found out at the end of the year I'm getting a bonus and I'm going to earn too much to qualify. And the great thing is, really, nothing is irreversible if you catch it right away, right? So if you go to that account custodian, say, hey, I messed up, let's get this fixed. You might owe a little bit of taxes on some growth in the account over a short period of time, but it's really not the end of the world. So once you know that you've made a mistake, if you can raise your hand, contact the custodian, get it fixed before your tax filing deadline, you're going to be okay. It's folks that kind of put their head in the sand about it and just want to say, I'm just going to pretend that I didn't do that. That's going to catch up with you eventually and you're going to have to pay some ongoing taxes on that. But, yeah, I think people think they're going to mess something up.

Laura [00:15:51]:

And the reality is, it's pretty much fixable if you do break a rule, you just have to get some help with that.

Andrew [00:15:59]:

It's amazing how even today, with all the great resources that are out there, you could Google anything and you just get a wall of information. It's like, oh, how do I even sift through this to get my answers? Sometimes it just feels like that, yeah.

Laura [00:16:12]:

There'S a lot out there and there are a lot of rules. And I think that is one of the reasons why people can be a little hesitant about using these tax advantaged accounts. Right? They come with rules. People are afraid they're going to mess up. Maybe they don't have an accountant, they don't have a tax pro to kind of lean on. So that's something else I always tell folks, just get help from an accountant. It's not like you need to pay them a lot of money. Even just a quick consultation as you start a business and you have business income, having a quick consultation about, should I incorporate? What self employed retirement accounts can I use? Getting that kind of initial setup advice is going to go a long way to saving you some money and probably a lot of stress.

Andrew [00:16:57]:

That's good. So I know you've been doing this a lot longer than Dave and I have. I'm curious if you have an opinion on how involved the typical person should be as far as their own finances and the education part and how much of it should be outsourced.

Laura [00:17:12]:

Yeah, it's funny, I've gone through different phases in my life where I've been super involved in watching different stocks and I even did some day trading for a while, many, many years ago, that did not end up giving me a net win. And so I kind of learned the hard way that for me a more passive approach was really better. I'm not somebody who I enjoy it, but I don't enjoy it enough to do it for a living. And if somebody is not that interested in really digging deep, I think they need to turn it over to a professional or even a robo advisor. It is something that can also keep you awake at night if you're really worried about volatility. And so for me that has made all the difference, just concentrating on the accumulation, concentrating on making deposits in those accounts, knowing that I've got a good allocation, I'm going to let somebody else rebalance that. I'm going to let somebody else kind of make the final decisions based on my risk tolerance. I want to be aware, I want to know, I want to know what I own, I want to be aware of that balance.

Laura [00:18:22]:

But I don't want to be so involved that I'm really stressing out about it or that I'm afraid to invest because, oh no, the market's down or the market's up. I want that dollar cost averaging happening because I know for me that's going to be the most effective in the long run. Now if somebody is super interested and they really want to dig in and get educated, go for it. I don't think there's anything wrong with that, but I don't think for the average person it really is going to benefit them to try to be a stock picker.

Dave [00:18:55]:

Yeah, we agree. And we've talked a lot about that on the show, and I think maybe you could speak to the differences kind of between the different we have thought of it as like three different buckets, like the 401k investor, the person that wants somebody to do that for them and then the person that wants to do that by themselves. And I think sometimes people feel like they just have to pick one and stick to it and they don't understand that they can invest in their four hundred and one K at work. But if they love researching stocks, they can also learn more about Microsoft and Amazon and then decide if they want to buy that as well. So maybe could you speak to that a little bit?

Laura [00:19:30]:

Yeah, absolutely. I love those buckets. That's perfect. You can do all three. Absolutely. You can work with an advisor, somebody that's helping you, and also be researching on your own. So it truly does come down to what interests you, how much time you have as well. People can be really busy, and so carving out enough time to make wise decisions can be tough.

Laura [00:19:56]:

But I like the concept of maybe it's something that's almost like a hobby for you. You just really enjoy investing a small portion of your portfolio and you enjoy learning about companies and looking at financials. Yeah, I think that is a great way. If you are somebody who is saying, I don't want to know, it's kind of like driving a car. You can be somebody that just drives a car, or you can be somebody that changes your oil in the car. You can be somebody who fixes your car. Right. I don't want to do the fixing or the oil changing.

Laura [00:20:30]:

I'm going to leave that to the pros. I just want to know that when I put the key in the car, it's going to run. I just want to be a driver. I just want a vehicle. And I have decided that that's the way I'm going to be with my finances as well. But I truly acknowledge that there are a lot of people that love to work on their cars. And if that's you, if you love the nitty gritty of finance, I would encourage you to dig into it. But I don't think anybody needs to feel compelled to do this.

Laura [00:20:57]:

My mother is an example. She got super interested when she got into retirement into know stock analysis. And so she joined an investing group and was really into it for a few months. And then after a while she said, laura, this is a lot of work. This is taking me a lot of time. I don't know if this is something I want to do for real in retirement, but she got her feet wet. She got into it and figured out what it's about. And so she knew enough to know that, okay, I've learned about all I want to learn, and I'm going to now turn it back over to my professional manager.

Laura [00:21:32]:

And people may go through different phases in life where it's of interest, but don't feel bad if it's not of interest.

Andrew [00:21:38]:

That's great advice. We all have money, so a lot of people have a lot of opinions about money. How does somebody who's just getting into this decide that, hey, this is the pro I'm going to lean on?

Laura [00:21:52]:

Yeah, that's a great question. And I do think you do need to find the person who is compatible for your stage in life. So for the vast majority of folks, we're in the accumulation phase, right. We are trying to grow that portfolio. But if you're somebody who's nearing retirement or in retirement, you need a whole different strategy. You truly need a retirement planner who can help you deccumulate and so spending and figuring out how you're going to make that nest egg last for the rest of your life, that's a totally different advisor, in my opinion. And so you need to figure out which one are you. Are you looking for somebody that is going to help you make decisions? Or are you looking for somebody who's more long term strategy or is it tax planning? That's a whole other part of this puzzle as well.

Laura [00:22:46]:

And people can have very different specialties. So be clear about what you want. Make sure that advisor is an expert in what you want. Ask them about the types of clients that they serve. If they're serving a bunch of retirees. But that's not you. You're in the accumulation phase. You maybe need somebody else.

Laura [00:23:05]:

Don't be afraid to interview people. They want your business. But you also need to be very picky about who you're going to work with. So don't be afraid to interview. Don't be afraid to ask a bunch of questions. This is all the advice I gave my mom when she was nearing retirement. I was looking to work with an advisor, and she found somebody right away. And she's just had such a great relationship with this advisor.

Laura [00:23:31]:

So she came to it very late in life. She had never used an advisor before literally going into retirement. So this is something that, you may be a do it yourselfer for a while, but if you feel like you need help, you need guidance. As we mentioned earlier, with the 401, there's always help there, and it's something that you can try. And if it's not working for you, don't be afraid to make a move, make a switch, find somebody else, because there are a lot of really talented advisors out there. They just need to match with what your goals are.

Dave [00:24:06]:

Yeah, that's right. So a question that comes to mind. So I'm 56. I'm closer to the retirement scale than Andrew is. So I guess if you were talking to me, when would be a time that you would want to consider start working with a retirement advisor as opposed to a financial advisor? At what age, what stage do you think that that needs to start occurring? Because you do have to start making changes, like you said, de escalate your portfolio.

Laura [00:24:32]:

Yeah, I would say if you are thinking about retiring in, let's say, five years into the future, that's probably the time you need to start getting serious, maybe even ten years ahead, depending on your goals. It may also be a little different. Let's say you're looking to retire early. You may need a little bit of guidance even sooner because you've got a lot more considerations if you're looking at an early retirement than somebody who's going to retire, let's say at 65, 67, when they're going to start getting Social Security. So those years, once you are not working, but before you're getting Social Security benefits and before these required minimum distributions. Those are really important years where you've got to do a lot of strategy and particularly tax planning strategy. So getting good advice ahead of that, I would say at least five years ahead is probably a good time frame. But you can always start interviewing people, start talking to advisors, and that would be a good question to ask in a potential advisor.

Laura [00:25:38]:

What age would you recommend I start working with you and see what they say?

Dave [00:25:42]:

That would be interesting. So kind of along those lines, maybe kind of reversing it and thinking about, okay, let's say that somebody's 25 and they've got a great paying job and they start investing. What are your thoughts on the portfolio construction? I know 60 40, 60 stock, 40% bonds or conservative investments was kind of the benchmark, but do you feel like that's changed or does that differ on where you are on the path to retirement?

Laura [00:26:07]:

I do feel like it's changed. I do feel like having much more in stocks is the norm, and I do feel like, especially for somebody in their 20s or 30s, bringing on a little bit more risk into the portfolio, particularly with inflation and everything that we're kind of battling right now. I know that's been the case for me. I have always been a little more comfortable with having a little bit more risky portfolio. I say risky, but it's not super risky. But I do think that 60 40 is not really the norm these days in reality, particularly for those young folks that you're talking about. But again, this is something to talk to your potential advisor or representative about. What I find is that people either tend to be super conservative or super risky.

Laura [00:27:05]:

Like there's this sort of swing that I'm seeing where some people are saying, no, it's just going in the savings account. I'm not even going to get in that volatile market. Or people are like buying stocks and they're really kind of rolling the dice. So I'm here to say you need to be somewhere in the middle, and where you are on that scale can vary considerably. But I would encourage young folks to definitely be a little bit more toward that risky side just so they're going to get enough growth in the portfolio over time to have a comfortable retirement nest egg. If you're too conservative, you may not have enough growth to live the lifestyle that you want in the future, especially if our inflation rate continues.

Andrew [00:27:48]:

It's tough because everybody's different, obviously, and we all have different views on money. But if somebody's more on the conservative type and is fine with 4% interest in a savings account, why is that not an optimal move? Or why is maybe going a little more riskier than a savings account not as risky as people might think?

Laura [00:28:10]:

Yeah, certainly the savings rates have shifted significantly with where we were. Getting less than 1% fraction of a percent of just a few years ago. Now, the savings accounts in CD certainly look a lot more attractive, but again, I do think it comes down to goals. If you've got a long time horizon, you're looking at retirement in 30, 40 years. You've got so much time on your side, so getting a little bit more growth. And it's not to say that having a significant amount of your portfolio in savings isn't okay. I mean, certainly if you're super conservative and you're just not going to sleep well at night unless, let's say, half of your portfolio is in savings, I would never want anybody to take risks that they're not comfortable with. This is about peace of mind.

Laura [00:29:03]:

Having money in places that makes you comfortable and that you understand is important. But we also have to make sure people understand the risks of not investing. In a lot of cases, not giving your portfolio enough risk could be the riskiest move of all, because you may not get the growth that you are going to need to reach your financial objective. So it does depend on what are you aiming for. Are you going to be okay with a million dollars in your account when you're in your 60s? Are you looking for 5 million or beyond? What is your desired lifestyle? And I know that's really hard for somebody in their twenty s to think about, but I do think that knowing that those growth rates are what is truly needed to get the kind of acceleration that you're going to need to beat inflation. I mean, that's really what it comes down to for me, knowing that we've got to outpace inflation in the medium term and the long term, how else are you going to do that except by investing in great businesses? And a lot of people could say, well, what if the stock market crashes? Well, we're going to have a lot more problems than that if a stock market does crash. So looking at historical numbers, historical returns maybe could give people a little bit of peace of mind about no guarantees right, for the future. But what has been historically possible and the norm is very likely to continue.

Dave [00:30:33]:

I mean, markets have crashed. I mean, it's happened in the past, it will happen in the future. It's part of the dance of investing in the stock market. And Warren Buffett was talking the other day about he's seen over 50% drawdowns on Berkshire Hathaway three or four times in the time that he's owned the company and he was still hanging strong.

Laura [00:30:50]:

Absolutely. Yeah, we have to exactly expect that volatility, but be willing to know that the stock market has gone up a lot more than it's gone down. So that's really what we're aiming for in the long term.

Dave [00:31:05]:

So we've talked a lot about investing and some of those things. What do you think are maybe the top three mistakes beginners make when they first start out trying to invest or just set up their own financial wellness program.

Laura [00:31:22]:

Yeah, well, obviously the first is not getting started. That's always number one. Procrastination is the worst mistake. The second thing is maybe getting a little too focused on things like trying to be a stock picker. Really thinking like they've got to have it figured out that they've got to choose the winning stock, the right guess. There is no one right guess. So understanding the concepts of funds and diversification, all of that good stuff. So I think trying to thinking they've got to be really smart.

Laura [00:31:55]:

You don't have to be that smart to be a good investor. You just have to be consistent. That's really what it's about. So maybe trying to get too deep into choosing investments and then trying to time the market thinking okay, I'm going to only invest when things are down, I'm going to sell when things are up. Trying to time the market we know is challenging for the pros in finance, much less the everyday person. So slow and steady when saray, I've seen this over and over. It really does come down to just being consistent. So if you can set aside in your budget some amount and really try to grow that every year, even if it's just a 1% tick up, I'm say I'm investing 1% of my income.

Laura [00:32:44]:

Let's make it 2% next year. Let's grow. Those really small incremental changes can yield massive results over time. So it's not getting started, it's not being consistent. Those are the things that I think are the huge mistakes people are making.

Andrew [00:33:01]:

Those are big ones. Those are big ones and they are definitely not easy to overcome. But if somebody can, they feel like they have a lot of potential. So could you give a couple of resources? Hopefully there's at least one person out there who listened and is fired up about this. What are some good next steps for taking the horse by the reins?

Laura [00:33:22]:

Yeah. So if you are self employed, I would encourage I've got my book here, Money Smart Solopreneur. I wrote this book especially for freelancers solopreneurs small businesses that are getting started and that will walk you through starting the business, how to save for retirement. What are your different retirement account options? Thinking through all of these really important issues that you've got to address as you start earning business income. So that's one thing I would say. Just get a little bit of knowledge under your belt about being a business owner. If you're working for a company, you're in a w two job and you're not enrolled in your 401K, you got to do that pronto. Maybe you work for a small company that doesn't have a 401K.

Laura [00:34:12]:

You might talk to your boss and see if there's a way that maybe you could convince them to do this. You could even initiate just an IRA payroll IRA that the employer is automatically deferring some of your payroll into your IRA. You can do it yourself. But as we've talked about here, that automation is pretty powerful. Kind of what you don't see, you can't spend, right? So if it is automatically being deferred for you, that's a big bonus. So those might be some options. I'm always encouraging people to use whatever automation that they can just to take one more barrier out of this process that can it's an easy process, but as humans, we can get in there and mess it up. We can say, oh gosh, I'm not going to invest this month because I've got an emergency that came up or I want to save for a vacation.

Laura [00:35:10]:

Or all of these things that we do to derail our finances just really come down to not having discipline. It can be just a moment of weakness. And now you haven't invested for a few months, so setting up those barriers, those kind of guardrails to keep you on track can be really important for your success.

Andrew [00:35:32]:

100%. And you also have a podcast. Please tell us about that.

Laura [00:35:36]:

Money Girl is a weekly audio show. We cover everything about money. Really. I don't think there's any topic that we haven't touched on the show. I do a combination of solo shows and interview shows if I find some experts that have something special to add. It is a really great community of folks and we get such amazing questions. I'm sure you guys get great questions too from your audience. They really keep me going, I would say, in terms of keeping energy for the show and figuring out what's on their mind, what do they want to hear about.

Laura [00:36:12]:

So we do a combination of questions from listeners as well as what's going on in the economy today, kind of current events and a lot of things that maybe just are changing with retirement accounts or taxes, sort of just keeping up with what's new and different. And I do that a lot for me, in addition to the audience trying to keep myself up to date, I'm always learning and want to pass that education on to the audience.

Dave [00:36:39]:

That's awesome. So are there any other places that people can find you online?

Laura [00:36:43]:

Yeah. My website is Lauradams.com. They can learn a little bit more about me and my work and books. I've published a lot of different books, but The Money Smart solopreneur is the most recent one and I would know. Come check out the Money Girl podcast. Join the community. There's a lot to learn. There's a lot to, I think, contribute too, as well.

Laura [00:37:05]:

I love getting new questions, like challenging questions that I've never had before. So maybe somebody in the audience has something they can ask that would stump me.

Dave [00:37:15]:

I doubt it, but they could try. Well, Laura, we greatly appreciate you coming and talking to us today and this was a really fun conversation, and I know our listeners are going to get a lot of value out of this. And I applaud you for doing what you do, helping kind of fill that gap that we're not really taught money and we're not really taught how to money until we actually have to do it. And you do a great job of kind of helping fill that gap for our millions of people. As someone who does appreciate what you do, I applaud you for that. We appreciate you coming to talk to us today.

Laura [00:37:45]:

Thank you. It's my pleasure. And I applaud you back for what you're doing to help investors get started on a path to success. It's pretty hiding when you see those accounts growing and you start to think about your future in a whole different way.

Dave [00:38:01]:

Yeah, absolutely. We percent agree. So with that, we will go ahead and sign us off. You guys go out there and invest with a margin of safety. Emphasis on the safety. Have a great week and we'll talk to you all next week. Bye.