Mastering Your Finances: Numbers, Budgeting, and Planning for a Stress-Free Holiday Season

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Dave [00:00:00]:

All right, folks, welcome to Investing for Beginners podcast. Today we have a special show. Today. In anticipation of the upcoming holidays, we thought we would talk about something super fun, budgeting. I know everybody loves budgeting, but we're going to talk about budgeting to prepare to pay for all those fun things you're going to buy for Christmas. And maybe if you're lucky, we might talk about a money mistake or two as well. So we are joined by Chris and Evan. These are two of our favorite guests, and they are coming back to us to talk about this very topic because Andrew and I are not budget experts, so these guys are.

Dave [00:00:34]:

So this should be a fun conversation. So, Chris and Evan, thank you guys for joining us today. King Chris and Squire Evan are here with us. So thank you guys for joining us. And let's start talking budgeting and have some fun.

Chris [00:00:45]:

Oh, yeah, because everybody likes to talk about budgeting, right? That's usually gets everybody amped up and.

Dave [00:00:49]:

Oh, yeah, so excited. I'm like just bouncing off the walls. I'm so mean.

Chris [00:00:54]:

So many people think it's a four letter word, right. They really associate budgeting with just that four letter word. Like it's just something terrible. But actually it's some of the most freeing things you can do is set a budget and stick to a budget. And this time of year, we see everybody stressed out because they didn't plan, and they're usually paying for the mistakes that they make in November and December. Usually in April, because usually you're paying for those mistakes all the way up to Easter. And then guess what? They screw up again. So it's like a cycle that keeps happening over and over.

Dave [00:01:26]:

Yeah, exactly. So how can people start? Where do you start? Okay, I hear what you guys are saying. I think this is probably a good idea. How do I start?

Chris [00:01:37]:

Intentionality, for one, I think you have to know your numbers. Too many people don't know their numbers. So if you know your numbers to start with, you can actually reverse engineer the math and figure out what that looks like. And usually boiler alert, it's probably too late right now if you're planning for this year's, Christmas, so you should probably start backwards engineering it all year. So you're actually planning for the spending. Come December, you know that spending is going to come, so why not break it up so it's not such a big piece of the pie you have to bite off in November. December, when you're planning for the holidays. And usually, too, if you do that throughout the year, you can actually find some better deals and start stockpiling some stuff so that come this time of year, you can actually enjoy it and not be stressed out or anxious.

Chris [00:02:24]:

I know it's possible you can do it, but it takes some time and some planning. But I think just starting with knowing your numbers and actually having that math in front of you can be very freeing.

Evan [00:02:34]:

And the huge part of doing ahead of time is that a big stressor, of course, when you start spending a bunch of money on surprise expenses or unusual expenses like Christmas purchases, is that it'll start eating into your needs. It'll start eating into rent payments, mortgage payments, utility payments, health care payments, whatever it might be. But the further ahead you plan, the more it can just eat into your wants. Even if it has to eat into anything, it'll just eat into your wants. And you can scale back eating out a little bit, scale back gifts throughout the year a little bit to make up for it. You can channel more sustainable saving methods than taking money away from things that you need to survive.

Chris [00:03:09]:

I think one area to think about too, Dave and Andrew, with this is getting very clear on what the areas of spending are going to be for this time of year. And just getting clear, like, so many times with our budget in the past, the things that pops up is, oh, we forgot this person. Oh, we forgot this person, and you end up running to the store, and you spend $20 or $50, and you do that five or six times, and you completely ruin your budget. That's how it happens. So just you have to sit down. Maybe if you're not married or if you are married, sit down with your spouse, and let's get clear, okay, who are we really want to get something for this year, and let's just put a number to it. You don't have to put the gift, but you do need to start assigning some numbers. But then you got to respect that number.

Chris [00:03:49]:

Right. You have to actually stick to that number. And I think that's a big piece to try to eliminate the AHA and the surprises, because if you can eliminate that stuff this time of year, man, you're just going to set yourself up to really be able to enjoy the season for what it's truly about, and it's not just about spending money. So I think trying to get ahead of that can really be very freeing.

Andrew [00:04:11]:

That's awesome. Either one of you Chris or Evan, do you recall any times where you were trying to set your numbers, where maybe you made a rookie mistake or you forgot something or just did it wrong? If somebody's trying to learn their numbers for the first time, what kind of advice would you give to them?

Chris [00:04:31]:

Go ahead, Ed.

Dave [00:04:32]:

Okay.

Evan [00:04:33]:

At least from my point of view, one of the biggest things that people miss when they start trying to budget and set down their numbers, like Chris is talking about, is at least from my point of view, they assume that they don't spend as much on miscellaneous items as they actually do. You feel like you just spend money on rent and the food and you kind of assume that that's where the buck stops. But really, all those little trips that you might be taking, all those little home upgrades, you're doing car upgrades, you're doing new electronics, all those little things can add up significantly to hundreds or thousands of dollars every few months. And it's easy to skip out on those because you assume that if they're not set recurring expenses, they don't need to be included. But when you're budgeting, you need to be including that fudge factor, whatever you want to call it, to include for that miscellaneous, unexpected, non recurring spending.

Chris [00:05:16]:

Yeah, I think one thing you can do if you're new to this, get your number figured out, then go ahead and double it because you're going to screw up. You just are. I think it's going to happen and you're going to find stuff that's just going to pop up there. But if you go ahead and just double that number, it's kind of like when you do a project for the house, right? You have a budget for the contractor, you have a time for how long it's going to take and this is what we're going to spend. And what happens. You never hit that budget because things happen, right? Things happen in life that's the same thing happens this time of year. So just go ahead, do your planning, then go ahead and put that buffer factor on there. Hit a pipe.

Chris [00:05:50]:

Time a factor of two to start with. As you get better, you can probably dial it back. I mean, for us now, I still hit that thing with probably a 0.5 because I know I'm going to miss something. These things are going to happen, so give yourself a little room. But the closer you can dial those numbers in, the better.

Andrew [00:06:06]:

That's good. Are you guys aware of any tools that help with this discovery process?

Chris [00:06:11]:

Yeah, I just use the basic budgeting app, like the Every Dollar app. That's a free one. I know there's a couple of them out there. The main thing is that I primarily work with guys and families and things like that. I try to find apps that work with the whole family so husband and wife, they can all be looking at the same numbers. So we're not trying to figure out your budget and your budget. We can bring all the numbers together. I think some of them tie directly to your bank accounts.

Chris [00:06:38]:

I mean, you can do that if you want to. I think there is value in sitting down and knowing your numbers yourself and doing the math. Not everybody likes that though. I'm kind of weird, I like math, know? So I think just finding something that's easy, that's smartphone friendly, because you need to be able to have it on your smartphone and then from there just find something that you can align with and start working with.

Evan [00:06:59]:

I'd recommend everybody listen to Chris more than me because I was an absolute nerd and went out and created my own automated Excel spreadsheet to import a bunch of crap and categorize it. And it's more work and effort than that, but I took the nerd route for it. So listen to Chris.

Andrew [00:07:12]:

All right, so we got the numbers kind of started to get that dialed in. Now it's time to resist the urge, actually follow those numbers. I know it's not easy, especially if it's not something you've ever done before. What are some I hate to say hacks, but are there any hacks that people can use to stay on course?

Evan [00:07:34]:

My favorite word in finance is automating. Just any saving or investing that you're trying to do where you want money to move away from being easily accessible to spend is just to automate that movement of funds. So instead of keeping all your Christmas savings in a checking account, keep it in your savings account. Even if you wanted, you could keep it in a separate savings account. That's not going to hurt you in any way. Even keep in the high yield savings. So it's earning a little bit interest over time throughout the year. Give you even more money to spend on gifts and presents and food at the end of the year, but automatically moving the fund somewhere else and not relying on your willpower throughout the year to continue.

Evan [00:08:10]:

That saving process is going to take away a massive amount of headache and stress each month and probably give you more savings at the end of the year than you would have otherwise.

Chris [00:08:19]:

Good point. One thing you can start doing as you start thinking through the spending this time of year is really just being intentional about keeping up with where that spending is because it can get so out of hand. You go to pickup in particular with the way Amazon and all the different ways you buy. Now you may go a 30 day billing period before you actually look at your statement and you blew it in the first five days. So you really need to know some way to understand to call it out. So maybe this time of year just be more intentional about checking in. So you only check in once a month. Maybe you need to check in every seven days and just see where you are in that spending and just recognize if I need to adjust it, I need to adjust it.

Chris [00:09:00]:

Maybe some things need to be returned. It's easier to return them before you give them. So go ahead and think about that as well. But I just think trying to understand that math a little more intentionally this time of year would definitely help save some heartache in the long run.

Evan [00:09:14]:

So piggyback on checking your credit cards more often. I love that idea because I also love the idea of paying off your credit cards more often. Not only it'll help you lower your credit utilization, we can have a whole other credit score conversation another time, but it'll help keep your budget intact over time, because like you said, you're not going to have some huge 30 day lump sum payment out of nowhere that you weren't expecting. The more often you pay it off, you're paying it every three, four gifts. You're getting a better, more accurate, precise gauge of how much you're spending over time instead of suddenly having $3,000 out of nowhere to pay off.

Dave [00:09:49]:

So I guess the question that kind of springs to mind then why go through this? How does this help somebody in their finances? By trying to budget for the holidays, for example? What is the downside to not doing that?

Chris [00:10:04]:

When you look at this time of year, it can be the most stressful, anxious, and depressing time of year for so many people. And so much of that's tied back to finances. When you're sitting around a Christmas tree and you can't afford anything under the tree that doesn't add any value to your holiday season, right? I mean, you get this time off from work. A lot of people get time off this time of year. This is definitely a bigger meaning for the season than what we celebrate it as anyway. But when you're sitting there and you're stressed out about the money, there's no peace there. So if you want to actually have some peace and be able to enjoy the time with family, even if it's the in laws, you can enjoy time with in laws, right? It's okay if you can do that. But if you're stressed about the money, the financial standpoint, you're just not going to have that.

Chris [00:10:48]:

And I just think we see that. That's why we see if you look at the stats depression, you look at suicide this time of year, everything spikes up because people, they overextend. If you overextend, next thing you know, you're in a very tough situation, and people are literally climbing out of Christmas debt, sometimes for an entire year just to get back into it. So it's a cycle and you can stop it. You can really enjoy this time of year, enjoy the activities, the festivities. And that's another thing. I'm glad that just came to me. Plan for the events.

Chris [00:11:19]:

Like, we plan a lot of time for the presents, but then we go out caroling, or you go to maybe you go to movies or you go out to eat with three or four different friends, and next thing you know, all those expense categories just do what they just keep growing and growing and growing. So you need to think about all the different types of things, like the Christmas parties for work, and next thing you know, oh, we got to buy this guy something because we're playing Secret Santa. All these things. I know their listeners like, man, Doggone, I wish you'd stop bringing up all these ideas. But I'm telling you, these are areas that just trip us all up, and if we really sit down and think about it, you can get ahead of a lot of it. If you plan ahead and then that way you go in on Christmas morning and you can actually enjoy the morning.

Andrew [00:12:00]:

That's really good. Before we drop this topic and get into grilling, putting you guys into the fire a little bit, do you have any thoughts on Black Friday that can be? A lot of stuff can be on sale, so why not? Splurge. What's your thoughts on Black Friday?

Evan [00:12:16]:

If you track prices throughout the rest of the year, so much of it just wouldn't be deals. I don't know what the actual percentage of that is, but I have personally never seen something on Black Friday that's been much more of a sale than maybe 5% or 10% off because they'll just inflate the quote unquote original price from what it actually was throughout the year. So I would say ignore Black Friday for the most part and instead focus on what Chris mentioned earlier, which was buying gifts earlier on through the year when the prices are actually normalized, or when there's some other random sale or clearance, whatever it might be, and take advantage of those opportunities throughout the year instead of the one time of year when the retailers are going to be absolutely incentivized to keep prices as high as possible. Because they know that people are going to go out and buy things regardless of whether it's a real sale or not, whereas throughout the rest of the year they actually have to convince you that the price is good and worthwhile. So I would advise to stay away from it for the most part and not fall in with the rest of the crowd because the retailers are just going to be there to exploit it.

Chris [00:13:14]:

That's a good point. The only thing I would add to that is look for apps. There's an app that I use called goes right on your browser. Then I can truly see, are you giving me a deal or are you just trying to make me feel good? So things like that are really great ways like Evan's talking about, just to cross check it, because some companies do. I have been able to catch some deals on some stuff, but you got to make sure you know where the starting point is. What's the true starting point versus what's this made up Black Friday starting point that many of them inflate?

Dave [00:13:49]:

Yeah, that's great. Those are both, I think, fantastic advices, and I think if people think through those, that could be very helpful, especially around the holidays. All right, so maybe we can start talking a little bit about some of our favorite thing money mistakes. So, Evan, I'm going to pick on you first. So youth before beauty. So let's talk about can you relate one big money mistake that you have made that you're looking back, you're like, duh. And maybe what people could learn from something like that, and it could be related to the holiday budgeting, or it could be related to credit, whatever kind of, I guess, pops to your mind.

Evan [00:14:31]:

So the biggest money mistake, I'm going to cheat a tiny bit and say it's my mistake that I almost made in the way that I got 95% of the way of making this decision, which was straight out of college, I got a solid paying engineering job. I was very happy. I was excited, and within only about six months being there, I was like, hey, I could afford a Tesla for sure now. And I still am obsessed with Tesla, and I will get one eventually. But at the time, I hadn't built up much savings whatsoever. I hadn't increased my income. I hadn't built up an investment portfolio or anything like that. At that time, I didn't even know about investing.

Evan [00:15:05]:

I didn't care about it. I just had a that was it. So I was very far down the road looking at loans, looking at interest rates, looking at pricing, looking at everything. And I can't even imagine, I don't even want to think about how different my finances would be at this point if I had actually gone through with that. Not because the Tesla was the worst price car in the world, but because it was a horrible time for me to do that. I would have taken away pretty much all of my savings, the majority of my savings, just to cover the down payment and then the monthly payment, because I wouldn't have been able to do it. A very large down payment would have taken up a larger chunk of my monthly income than I would want it to. I'd want it to be less than 10%, and it would have been easily closer to 30%.

Evan [00:15:49]:

And that would have crippled not only my finances at the time, but it would have crippled my future finances. Saving for retirement, how much I can invest over time, how much is going to be compounding over time. Now that I'm a nerd and I know about all that stuff, it would have screwed me over in many, many ways, and I'm very glad that I didn't go through with it. So my big advice from that and what I learned from that is when a significant change happens in your life, like a significant raise in income or a surprise bonus, surprise gain share at work, whatever, it might be a side hustle that's really popping off. Give it some time, give it some padding before you make any significant changes in your life. Not only to flesh out whether it's a sustainable source of income, if we're talking about a side hustle, for example, or to build up savings, if you didn't have much before, like in my situation coming out of college, I didn't have that much saved up. And it's easy to see high income out of nowhere and assume that this means you've unlocked a new level in life and you can just go ahead and start making these high level decisions. And I'm really glad I didn't.

Evan [00:16:47]:

But it's a very easy mistake to fall into.

Dave [00:16:49]:

What kept you from pulling the trigger?

Evan [00:16:51]:

What kept me pulling from the trigger, which I was absolutely peed off about at the time but I'm extremely happy about now, is the prices were raising at the time just due to demand. It was during COVID so there were supply chain issues and so the price had gone up. I think it was 6000 from the original price and that just pushed it too far where I was like okay, I can't do this anymore. I have to wait and thank Jesus that happened the way it did. I'm extremely happy even though I was more mad than you can believe at the time.

Dave [00:17:23]:

I think that's a pretty good one. So how could people it's normal to feel that I guess that urge to splurge especially when you get a new job or as you were talking about, unexpected source of income changes and now you have this temptation to kind of go under the lifestyle creep or you make more, but then you start spending more. And so the gap that you can use to do all those things that you guys are talking about doesn't really exist. And so how can somebody that's just graduated from college and gets a great gig and is making more money than they've ever made and how can they resist that urge?

Evan [00:18:10]:

So this is a word I said earlier and this is a word I say a lot, which is automation. It's like my magic elixir for everything is a huge point to me for anybody at any age. But also especially important when you're just graduating college, just graduating high school and going to a job, whatever it might be, to figure out your numbers, what you want to save. Good beginner numbers are 50, 30, 20, 50% towards your needs, 30% towards your wants and 20% towards saving, investing wherever you want to put your savings into. Set up those numbers with your current income and automate the saving part of that automate bill, paying automate, all that stuff so that you don't see this huge amount of money available at once. Because at the time I wasn't very financially educated. Like I mentioned, I wasn't very financially literate. And so it was easy for me to see this huge sum of money just building up in my checking account and saying I have to spend this.

Evan [00:19:00]:

I mean, it's a waste to leave it here, right?

Chris [00:19:02]:

I have to.

Evan [00:19:03]:

I have to. It's a duty. But if I had automated everything from the beginning regardless of what your income is, high or low, it doesn't matter. Adjust the numbers as necessary. If it has to be more for needs, less for needs, whatever. Set those numbers. Automate as much of it as humanly possible. And that won't tempt you as much because you're only going to see, for example, 3000 in your checking account indefinitely no matter how much you make.

Evan [00:19:26]:

Just because you're increasing your savings as you make more money, you're automating it all. So it's out of your hands. You don't need the willpower every single month to do it. Like we talked about earlier with budgeting. And that makes it much, much easier to only see a certain amount of money available to you that will cover expenses, a short term emergency, whatever instead of seeing some huge amount of cash piling up.

Dave [00:19:47]:

Okay, so I want to double click on something. You've talked about automation a couple of times. So for somebody that's sitting here listening to us talk, what does that look like? I don't understand. Okay, automation. Great. Sounds great. How do I do it?

Evan [00:20:00]:

What do I do? That's a very fair point. This does not involve some I'm not talking about paying for some software or anything like that by automation. If we're talking about saving, for example, putting money into a savings account, I'm talking about either direct deposit from your employer so go to your employer's website, whatever payroll website they use. Set up direct deposit so there's a certain amount of money or a certain percent of your paycheck goes straight into a savings account. Or you can also set it up kind of the back end that's pushing money to the savings account. You can also pull it so you could go into your savings account, whatever that might be, and set it up so that it pulls a set amount of money every single month, every week, every two weeks into the savings account. When it comes for investing, you can set up automated investments that's going to differ a little bit. The term might differ.

Evan [00:20:45]:

Recurring investments, automatic investments might differ by brokerage. But the general idea is every single set time period it'll pull money out of whatever account you give it, which I would recommend would be your checking account. And then it'll automatically invest into a stock and buy a set amount of shares with a set amount of money and everything and all of that. Automation is my general umbrella of automation will move money to different places, to different accounts without you having to take any ongoing action.

Dave [00:21:12]:

Perfect. Thank you. Good answer. All right, Chris, your turn. Hot seat, baby.

Chris [00:21:17]:

All right, let's go. So money mistake? I haven't made one yet. I'm just kidding. I'm just trying to think through the novel of the size of Moby Dick that I had of money mistakes. So I'm thinking of right now, I'm kind of like I went to vehicles because that was my thing, man. I like trucks. I like cars. I like nice rides.

Chris [00:21:41]:

And I never even thought about the idea of negative equity. It never crossed my mind about what that was. I remember talking to my wife, and we were actually dating. I just bought a brand new Toyota Highlander. And then all of a sudden, I was in my early thirty s, and I'm riding around because I bought it for work, and I had two kids. Every time we ever went, I saw these moms driving this Toyota Highlander. I'm like, I don't want to be a mom driving a Toyota Highlander. This is not me.

Chris [00:22:10]:

So I was talking to I had this thing for, like, two months, right? It was literally, like, less than a half a year. I don't remember exact time. I'd only made a couple of payments. So my wife called me, and she won't know where I was. I was like, well, I'm at the Jeep dealership. She's like, what are you doing at Jeep dealership? I'm like, I'm getting ready to buy a Jeep. She's like, you just bought a Toyota. I'm like, I'm trading it.

Chris [00:22:32]:

She's like, how is that possible? I don't know. We made the math work, and I'm thinking like, I'm a real good negotiator. Which I'm not bad, but I'm not that good. And so he remembers that story of like, I literally owned that thing for, like, two months, and I rolled that negative equity right into the Jeep, and then I rolled the Jeep negative equity right into a brand new F 150. And then we finally stopped. We said, all right, this is stupid. What are we doing? This is absolutely ludicrous, the way that we're playing cars here. And so we had to make that decision, okay, at this point, I'm not making any more car payments.

Chris [00:23:11]:

What do I have to do to stop making car payments? Because I actually want to start paying myself and start paying for the future and planning that way. And it started with me to actually have a lot of self talk and reflection. I'm not going to lie. When that truck left the driveway, when I sold it, you did not want to talk to me for about 24 hours. I was in a bad mood. I mean, that was tough to see that truck league. I mean, that was hard. I still missed that truck.

Chris [00:23:40]:

I'm going to get teary eyed talking about this day. But anyway, I was able to move past it and but I did realize one thing. Once we had a vehicle in our driveway that I actually held the title to. I never experienced that before where I could hold the title to something. I just thought you just paid notes. I didn't think you ever actually owned anything. And then now we have two cars, but they ain't new. But you know what? They're two cars that get us where we need to go.

Chris [00:24:09]:

Do they break? Yes. And we fix them, and they get to the point where we can't fix them again. We'll get. Some other ones, but it's mindset shift know, trying to keep up with the Joneses. And once I finally figured out, you know, what, the Joneses are broke. Hey, I don't want to be that said, let's just move it away. So that was just a big one, man, to where everyone tells you, well, you got to have it. It's a status symbol, right? What you drive is a status symbol.

Chris [00:24:34]:

You deserve it. I've literally heard people say, well, I got a promotion, so I should go get a new car. How much is your promotion? Well, I'm making an extra $5,000 a year. Oh, that's great. How much does a car cost? What are you talking about here? This math doesn't work out here. So it's crazy when you start breaking it down and thinking of it like that, but I just think that negative equity and just trying to play the numbers games when it comes to cars. I did it wrong for so long and I see so many people doing that and it's just robbing you. Because cars, until recently, I know sometimes they're not depreciating assets the way that they used to be, but it's still a car.

Chris [00:25:13]:

It's still going to be depreciating. At some point, you need to make sure that you're investing in things that appreciate instead of depreciating. I think that's just a good rule of thumb.

Dave [00:25:22]:

Yeah, I would agree with that. So for those not familiar with herm when we refer to negative equity, what does that mean?

Chris [00:25:29]:

Yeah, you owe more than the car is worth. Very simple. I'm a so basically, I had a vehicle that maybe it was worth $20,000, but guess what? Your boy owed 25. So I'm $5,000 in the hole right there. Well, don't worry. Car dealerships, they'll take care of you, because all they want to know is, what number do we need to get to to make you happy today? And they'll figure that stuff out, and what they're doing is they're just adding months or they're trying to look at different types of pay rates or different types of loans, but that negative equity doesn't go away. It's not going to disappear magically. Like a fairy dust is going to poof.

Chris [00:26:07]:

That negative equity is gone. No, you're going to pay for it. You just pay for more over a longer period of time. So that's what that is.

Dave [00:26:14]:

Okay, that makes a lot of sense. So I guess a question kind of for both of you, then. So you're both kind of talking about these purchases that they're bigger dollar amounts, for sure, but they're kind of more, I guess you could say, wants than needs. So there's a train of thought in the personal finance space that you either need to deny yourself or figure out a way to reward yourself and make it both work. So what are your thoughts on that? The standard you got to stop drinking Starbucks coffee and drink the stuff at work kind of thing instead of enjoying your life. So I guess how do you kind of balance these ideas of avoiding these money mistakes but then also still enjoying your life and having things that you do enjoy?

Evan [00:27:03]:

I think setting your numbers ahead of time is incredibly important, which we talked about some before, having a framework ahead of time of how much you need to get by. That's the most obvious one. Add up your rent, food, health care, all those recurring expenses. Maybe add a fudge factor of 10%. On top of that, see what percentage of that income that takes up. And then I would say the next step to focus on would be the saving and investing percentage of your income. Figure out when do you want to retire and how much do you think you could feasibly put away at your current income. That'll be conservative because hopefully your income will increase over time.

Evan [00:27:38]:

But you can kind of use a retirement calculator, for example, to try and figure out, okay, if I'm putting away this much, at what point will I be able to reach a threshold that I could comfortably retire? We could talk for hours about where that exact point is. But for you, just get a rough ballpark and then that'll give you an idea of, okay, I need to put, say, 15, 20%, 30% of my income away every single month for 30 years to be able to afford the kind of retirement that I want to live. And now you have an amount left that you can spend on wants and from there you can subtract out whatever wants you generally spend on. If you want to do a vacation every month, those wants. But the car is going to have to take up something. Something is going to have to give. And I would say that having car payments is not the end of the world for everybody. At least I personally don't think that it's the devil that some people do think it is, but I think that it is the devil when it's being shoved into your financial numbers, your financial expense ratios without you figuring it out ahead of time.

Evan [00:28:39]:

Because if you do the math ahead of time and understand, okay, we're going to have to trim back a vacation every year. Maybe we did two or three vacations. Now we only do one or two vacations, and then we can afford the car. We can afford those monthly payments, then that's okay. As long as you make that compensation and check your numbers ahead of time. And make sure especially that it's not eating into needs, which for me personally would have been a huge issue at the time, is it would have started eating into the bills that I needed to pay every single month because I didn't know my numbers. I didn't know what percent of my income this would take up. I didn't know what percent of my income, I was already taking up with other expenses.

Evan [00:29:12]:

But if you figure out those numbers ahead of time, it makes it a lot easier to gauge, okay, I could afford this amount of down payment. I could afford this monthly payment every month, and it's not going to be eating into anything because I planned ahead for it.

Dave [00:29:24]:

Makes sense. Chris King.

Chris [00:29:25]:

Chris for me, it's a little different. For me, it's really more of a mindset shift where I start thinking about finance and knowing your numbers and things like that. It comes down to stewardship. And stewardship for me from where I am with the worldview and the things that from my faith element of my life is very freeing once you understand that stewardship means you're just managing someone else's money. I think for me, that stewardship is ties to my Christian values. But even if you're not a Christian, if you just can somehow decouple who you are as a person to your personal finance, I think that will definitely set a lot of things in place for you from a freedom standpoint. Because there's this little thing in life called contentment that for some reason we've missed in this country, because we're always chasing the next thing, the next thing and next thing. We never are content with being where our feet are and just being happy of, okay, here's our current circumstances.

Chris [00:30:24]:

Are they the best? No, but I can be content in this. And so I just think that something around stewardship and just being a good manager of finances goes a long way. And if you can do that and then reach this level of contentment, it's going to be some peace that I think a lot of people are looking for.

Andrew [00:30:42]:

So I really appreciate you guys coming on and laying out some of your personal experiences and the things that you've learned if someone was wanting to, I don't know, crazy idea, give a gift of helping somebody along a path of financial freedom. We've all made a product together trying to help do that. It's called financial. Birds and bees. Would either of you like to explain what that is and how people can get involved with that?

Evan [00:31:10]:

So Financial Birds and Bees is an overall product bundle, that its overall goal is to try and help young adults. For example, talking about people who are graduating high school, graduating college, getting their first job, first access to a 401K, trying to help those people set up systems and knowledge and a foundation of knowledge for investing in finance as a whole, and specifically a 401, to start preparing as soon as possible for their financial future. We're talking as far out as retirement. Sometimes it sounds silly, especially to people of that age, to think of a timeline that far out. So our goal of our product is to distill down all of that complicated knowledge and all those complicated ideas that seem far out and ethereal and you don't quite grasp it. And there's all this conflicting knowledge all over the place. Distill all that down to something simple and understandable and something that can be referenced for years to come, including an ebook that gives you a lot of the in depth knowledge that you'll probably be referencing back the most in the future because it has much more in depth topics and subjects. And then also a twelve day series that helps you distill that, apply that, and give some accountability while you're preparing and setting up retirement accounts, optimizing them, maintaining them, avoiding common mistakes as well as some live Q A with these beautiful gentlemen right here, Dave and Andrew, to answer any burning finance questions you have as you go through that process.

Chris [00:32:31]:

Yeah, for me, I think if you're listening out there and you want something to kind of help you get ahead of the mistakes or maybe help the ones that you love the most get ahead of making those mistakes, it's a great way to do it. You could gift this to a son, a daughter, a niece, a nephew. Maybe they're in high school, maybe they're in college, maybe they just graduated college and they're early in their career. Anywhere in that path, there's stuff in this ebook that's going to speak to them. Stuff that's going to speak to anyone, but specifically to them because it's going to help them see, okay, here's what this means. Oh, this is what this financial term means. This is how I can actually apply it. They're not being taught that unless they go through a finance program at a university, they're not getting exposure here.

Chris [00:33:18]:

So what we want to do is just create some exposure opportunities. So it's a great way you give it to them once they get the ebook, they get the drip, they get those all sorts of ways to learn from us, but then they get to talk to two guys who do this for a living. I mean, what a great opportunity just to get them exposed. And you never know the connections that they can make through going through a process like this. What that could do for them, maybe not this year, but 510 years down the road. Just the small decisions that they make based off of what we're trying to teach them with financial birds and bees could really be life changing. So it could be a gift that really reaps tons in the future because you're sowing a lot of good things right now.

Evan [00:33:59]:

I know that if I had had this product, this whole bundle when I was going through college or graduating college and getting access to that decently, high paying job with a would have had so much more knowledge of what to prioritize and what's important that I wouldn't have gone down the rabbit hole of trying to find a new car yet. I would have been prioritizing things and understanding the more I save now and earlier I save now, the more comfortable I can be in the future, being able to buy that car that I want now. And you can find that. You can just Google Financialbirds and bees, or you can also go to Financialbirdsbees.com.

Chris [00:34:30]:

Yeah, I wouldn't even be on this podcast if I had this when I graduated college. I'd be on an island somewhere.

Dave [00:34:39]:

Any particular, Chris?

Chris [00:34:41]:

No, no. Just so long as it's by itself, I'm good. Not connecting any other ones. I'm good.

Dave [00:34:50]:

Well, guys, we greatly appreciate you both taking time to come talk to us today and help educate our listeners. Again, the idea behind the product was to help educate people. I guess the status of our country right now, there just isn't much education for finances. And we're all different age ranges here, and we've all experienced roughly the same kind of idea, where you graduate from college, you graduate from high school, you go out into the working world, and you're basically thrown to the wolves, and you just have to kind of figure it out on your own sink or swim. And I think this whole idea to help people not have to sink or swim, but they can swim right out of the gate is so crucial, and I think it could help a lot of people. And if we could just help one person at a time, that's really why we're doing this. And it could be a life changing event for a lot of people, and I think that's something to be applauded, and I'm excited to see how people will react to this.

Evan [00:35:48]:

Absolutely.

Dave [00:35:49]:

All right, should I go ahead and wrap her up, then? Anything else anybody else would like to comment? Say. Okay, Evan, you're thinking? Okay, I think I'm good.

Chris [00:35:59]:

Okay.

Dave [00:35:59]:

All right, then I'll go ahead and wrap her up. All right, so I'll go ahead and count us out. I have a one and a two and a three. All right, folks. Well, with that, we will go ahead and wrap up our show for today. I wanted to thank Chris and Evan for both taking time out of their busy days to come talk to us and help educate our listeners. This is a very important topic, as we talked about, and we can all learn. There's never a time that you can't learn, and you can't learn something new.

Dave [00:36:24]:

Even old dogs like me can learn new tricks. So 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.