

## Diversifying

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Your Money Questions Answered



Speakers

Delyanne Barros, Melissa, Ben, Laurie, EJ, Peyton Bristol, Alex, Lauren, Alejandro Ortiz

00:00:00

**Caller 1**

Hi, Delyanne.

00:00:01

**Caller 2**

Hi, Delyanne.

00:00:03

**Caller 3**

Hi, I'm Laurie. I am 33 years old, and I'm from North Carolina.

00:00:08

**Caller 4**

Hey, Delyanne. My name is Ben. I'm 31 and living in Philadelphia.

00:00:14

**Delyanne Barros**

Can I tell you guys how much I love hearing from you on our voicemail? I record this podcast alone in my office with my producers on the phone and my dog Oliver at my feet. When you call, it's such a nice reminder that it's not just me and the microphone. We're actually talking to each other. It's always my goal to talk about things you'll actually find useful when you're thinking about your money and planning for your future. But you know yourself best. So today we're taking your questions.

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**Caller 5**

My question for you is, do you have any pointers on how to manage the student loans?

00:00:49

**Caller 6**

I'm calling in to ask about money as it relates to relationships. Specifically, I'm getting married next year.

00:00:58

**Caller 7**

I had a question about convincing yourself you deserve to be rich.

00:01:03

**Delyanne Barros**

These scenarios are all personal, but I think you'll find them relatable too. They were all great questions. So let's dive in. I'm Delyanne Barros and this is Diversifying. First up, we're hearing from Melissa who sent in a question I see pretty frequently in my DM's.

00:01:28

**Melissa**

Hi, my name's Melissa. I'm 29 and I'm from Fort Wayne, Indiana. I loved your first episode, but I also find myself sitting here wondering how in the world do I start investing when I can't even keep my head above water? Like, what do I need to push to the side in order to invest, even though like few dollars that are in my bank account right now? Where do I start?

00:01:54

**Delyanne Barros**

Melissa, thank you so much for calling in with that voicemail. And I'm so glad you brought this up because a lot of people are struggling, living paycheck to paycheck and thinking, how am I supposed to start investing, living this way? And the first thing I want to tell you is that your priority should be on bulking up that emergency fund that is in your savings account. I don't want you jumping straight into investing and throwing the little money that you have into the stock market. So the first thing I want to make sure is that you have a solid safety net. 2 to 3 months of expenses saved in a savings account that you're not going to invest once that is set aside. Then you can start your investing journey. And really, I want you to focus on education, learning about investing, learning the terminology, the vocabulary. That all takes time and you don't have to dove in right away. And then we're going to decide, okay, do I need to look at my budget? Do I need to cut expenses or do I need to increase my income? Maybe you need to do both. Maybe it's not an either or thing, right? So I want you to think about not just cutting expenses, because that is no way to live. I don't want people to be miserable cutting expenses and then not enjoying their life. That's not the point of investing. I want you to also be thinking of creative ways to increase your income. So do you need to negotiate your pay at work? Do you need to ask for promotion? Do you need to change jobs? Start a side hustle. Start thinking of creative ways to increase that income because that is how you're really going to make investing work for you instead of having to cut out every single dollar from your budget. And again, making your life miserable and not making this a sustainable process over the long term. The next question is on a hot topic right now, student loans.

00:03:43

**Ben**

Hey, Delyanne. My name is Ben. I'm 31, living in Philadelphia, and I'm about to go back to school for nursing. My question for you will be, do you have any tips on how to manage those student loans? Thanks in advance.

00:03:58

**Delyanne Barros**

Hey, Ben, thank you so much for calling in. Student loans is definitely one of those issues that people are always thinking about, especially if they're about to return to school, so I feel that. I want to first refer you to the first two episodes that we recorded. It's all about student loans, so I highly recommend you go back and listen to those. And I know that forgiveness is on everybody's mind and that's the big topic, but it sounds like you're about to take out more loans. So I want to highlight for you the fact that you should be trying to take out as little as possible, right? You really only want to take out as much as you need. So really focus on that. Also, look into nursing loan forgiveness programs. Once you are down the line and you've taken out those loans, there are a lot of programs out there for that field. I want you to look into scholarships. I want you to look into grants. Anything that's going to lessen the burden of taking out loans. Right. So really look into that, understand what those options are and avoid them, if at all possible, because they can really cause your interest rate to stack up over time. Those years really matter and I don't want compound interest to work against you. This next question comes from Laurie in North Carolina.

00:05:12

**Laurie**

Hi, I'm Laurie. I am 33 years old, currently living in Raleigh. And right now I'm really struggling with medical bills. A year ago, I had to have shoulder surgery because I injured my shoulder. And now 11 months later, I get a bill for another \$500 for another piece of the surgery that I thought I was done with. I hit my deductible by the 15th of January this year. And for every time I turn around, I can't make any progress on savings or paying down credit cards or loans because there's always a medical bill and how am I ever going to get ahead? I've looked into financial assistance with the hospital that I work with and I'm poor, but I'm just a few thousand dollars a year, not poor enough to get assistance. And so, like, where do I go? I am struggling to make it to day to day and I, I just don't know how to get these bills reduced or at least know what the bill is so that I can make a plan to pay on it. Right. Because every time I turn around, there's a new one and I just don't know how to keep it together. And because I don't have enough income and I'm working so many jobs that I just work or sleep or eat, there is not a whole lot of other things and I'm still short on income. I also appreciate your podcast and your advice and I look forward to hearing more.

00:06:41

**Delyanne Barros**

Hey Laurie, thank you so much for calling in with that. I hear the frustration in your voice. I can feel the stress that you're feeling. And this is the big issue that a lot of people are facing right now, like our health care system is just not providing the safety nets that we need in order for us to get the care that we need. And it's so frustrating and I feel like whatever answer I give you is going to be painfully inadequate because this is such a massive problem, you know, nationwide. But to try to give you some actionable tips here, the first thing you need to do is get some clarity around these bills, because it sounds like they're giving you a bit of the runaround, sending you these unexpected bills from time to time. And like you said, you never know how much you owe. And when is another bill going to be coming in the mail? So the first thing you need to do is contact these hospitals wherever it is that you went for health care and get a clear response from them. How much do I owe? How much is left? I keep getting these bills in the mail and I don't know where they're coming from. The second thing you need to do is understand that all of these bills are negotiable. So even though the bill says you owe \$500, you don't necessarily need to pay the full amount. So you need to call them and negotiate those amounts. So if you want to offer \$200 and tell them, hey, I don't have \$500, but I can send you 200 right now if you will wipe the slate clean here. And if they agree to it, you get that in writing before you send over the money and then you do that. So a lot of people don't realize how negotiable those bills can be. All right. There's also a lot of errors in medical billing. So you're going to have to play detective a little bit and do some digging into your bills, like, did you really have this test? And sometimes they just throw things in there and it's inaccurate. I know that's crazy to believe, but it happens all the time. So you're going to have to go down the medical list and say, what are these things? And did I really have these tests? So last but not least, you want to work with them on a payment plan. I hope that you're not having to put these things on credit cards because that's going to get you into real big trouble if you do that. Instead, you should be working on a payment plan with the hospital, with the doctors, so that you can find something that works for you and you're not constantly drowning. And also consider, you know, any money that you may have, like in a flexible savings account or a health savings account to help you cover some of these bills. I hope that helps. And I hope you find a solution that can finally get you out of this situation. This one comes from E.J., who has a question about his mindset around money.

00:09:25

**EJ**

Hi Delyanne, I had a question about convincing yourself you deserve to be rich. I'm not from a wealthy or rich family, and at a certain point, I had to convince myself that I deserved to have money because I felt like telling myself that I was bad with money or money comes and goes was a way to cope with poverty and cope with my current situation. And until I convinced myself that I actually deserved to be rich. I could then do other habits and different things like that. And I was wondering if you went through the same thing at all on your path to become a millionaire. Thank you.

00:10:07

**Delyanne Barros**

E.J. I absolutely love this question because it's definitely something that I struggled with. And I think it's something that's super common in communities of color especially. We tend to think like, I don't need money. You know, money doesn't make me happy. And I feel like that is a defense mechanism because we're struggling so much, we have to accept the reality that we're in. And so we shine money as if we're above it. But we all know the reality of the world we live in. We need money to not only survive, but also for us to live comfortable lives. But I want us to go even beyond that, right? I don't want us to just survive and be quote unquote comfortable. We can also thrive and share money. That is why I think it's so important to get more money into the hands of everyday people like you or me, because money gets funneled back out into our communities, whether it's through donations, whether it's through helping a neighbor. There is a lot of power in that. Right. There's also no shame in spending money on luxurious things. You know, I've recently started flying first class for the first time in my life, and at first I felt so guilty about it. But then I'm like, Wait, why don't I deserve this? What? Like, only billionaires deserve this kind of lifestyle. There's no reason why I don't deserve it just as much as everybody else. I deserve nice things, too. And so that's really what I want you to take away from this is, you know, to have a personal mantra where you tell yourself, Hey, I deserve luxurious things just as much as anyone else. I deserve an abundant life, just as much as anyone else. There's no reason why you need to accept struggle as your default. Thanks so much for sending in that question. I absolutely loved it. We'll be right back.

00:12:09

**Delyanne Barros**

We're back answering your money questions. The next one comes from Peyton, who needs some guidance on navigating money within her relationship.

00:12:18

**Peyton Bristol**

Hey there. My name is Peyton Bristol. I am 29 and I live in Brooklyn. I'm calling in to ask about money as it relates to relationships. Specifically, I'm getting married next year. My partner and I live together. We've been together for about six years now and we are starting to talk about how and when we should combine our finances. So we combine all of them. Should we keep some parts for ourselves and what that's going to look like and where even to begin? He makes a good deal more than I do, but we still try to contribute to everything pretty evenly. So any help that you could give us or any advice, we would really appreciate it. I just don't know where to start. Thank you so much.

00:13:10

**Delyanne Barros**

Hi, Peyton. Thank you so much for calling. And congratulations on your upcoming wedding. I want to encourage you to listen to episode five and six of the podcast where we talk all about relationships and money. I think you're going to find a lot of helpful tips in there, but I will also add a few thoughts here. The first one is, have you had this conversation with your fiancée? It's so important that you have this conversation and be completely transparent about what your needs and your wants are and what your goals are so you guys can start getting on the same page. It doesn't mean it has to be identical. You don't have to agree on every single thing, but you should have some common goals that you're working towards. The other thing that I noticed in your question was the disparity in pay. You said your fiancée makes a lot more and yet you guys are splitting everything 5050. I suggest having a conversation around that. Is there some flexibility there? Does it make sense for you to have a more proportional split instead of 5050 because his income is much higher? I think that that's a fair question to ask, and I think you should bring that up at the end of the day. There is no one right way to manage your household finances. A lot of people will try to make it seem like there is one single way to do it, but there really isn't. I have talked to many couples who combine all of their finances. Some who keep it all completely separate. And some who have like a hybrid system where you each have your own accounts, but then you also have joint accounts where you share and cover bills for the household. I personally would prefer that hybrid model. I think it's important that each of you are able to have your own accounts where you get to spend money, no questions asked. And then you also have a joint account again where you're covering like household bills or you're saving for common expenses. I also want to really reinforce the fact that you should both be investing in your own accounts as well. Right? So all of your investments don't have to be joined. You should have your own 401k, you should have your own IRA. You can have your own brokerage account. Those things don't all need to be combined. And it's important that you're both well-informed about investing and growing your wealth as well. At the end of the day, communication is key, and not hiding things from each other is going to help to prevent resentment or any miscommunications in the future. I hope that helps. And thanks again for calling. Our next caller has a question about high yield savings accounts.

00:15:45

**Alex**

Hi Delyanne my name is Alex. I am 28 and I'm from Philadelphia. I'm calling because I'm sort of in this like middle moment, transition moment financially. And I was curious to get your take on it. So my situation, I'm in pretty good shape and debt free. I'm contributing to my 401k and I have been pretty good at saving. Mostly that has meant putting like most of my money in a high yield savings account. But the more that I learn about personal finance and inflation, the more I sort of like look at that money in the high yield savings account and almost feel like it's rotting, like I'm doing the wrong thing with it by putting it there. And while I'm interested in investing and I know that that is a good idea. I also have been putting away that money thinking that I would one day buy a house. And I think that's something I'm going to want to do in a couple of years, maybe even like a duplex that I would rent part of it out. So I guess I'm just curious, what do you think is the best thing to do in this little moment? Like, does it make sense to put some of that into the stock market for just a couple of years and not the long term? Or should I just keep socking it away and hope that inflation doesn't eat too much of it up? Awesome. Thank you so much.

00:17:02

**Delyanne Barros**

Alex. It sounds like you're doing an amazing job. Your debt free. You're investing in a 401k account. Well, guess what? a 401k is the stock market. A lot of people don't make that connection. So you are investing even if you didn't realize it. I love that you're saving up for homeownership. I definitely want encourage you to listen to both Episodes three about investing and episode ten about homeownership. So go back and give it a listen. And as far as being in this middle moment, I'm not sure how many years out you are from buying a home, but assuming that it's 4 to 5 years, I want you to look into something called I bonds, which are these inflation adjusted bonds where you have to keep your money in there for a minimum of one year, hopefully at least five, and you're getting some interest on it. That's higher than what you would get in a high yield savings account. If that turns out to be too much work or too complicated for you, don't worry. Keep the money in the high yield savings account. I would suggest not investing that money. I know it can be a little painful right now because of inflation, but it will not always be this high. I know that inflation is high right now, but it will eventually, you know, settle down. I think that investing that money is just far too risky with the time horizon that you have. But you're doing an amazing job. Keep focusing on that 401k. Look into a Roth IRA or a brokerage account to bulk up your investments. But keep doing what you're doing. You're way, way ahead of most people, believe it or not. And I hope you're super proud of yourself, because you should be. Our last question is all about hustle culture.

00:18:38

**Lauren**

Hi, this is Lauren. 37 in Maryland. And I was just wondering your opinion or even others opinions or hustle culture versus having one job? Because everyone keeps telling me, oh, you should just you don't have you're not married. I don't have any kids. So you should just have as many jobs as possible to get as much money as you possibly can. But I don't feel I that's the best life for me. Money is really important to me in the sense of I have a roof over my head and food on the table, my importance in my life experiences, being able to travel, being able to eat at a new restaurant, hang out with friends. So I just I'm just confused, like, should be should we be contributing to hustle culture or should we just find one really good job, well-paying job and go from there? Thanks. Bye.

00:19:45

**Delyanne Barros**

Hi, Lauren. Thank you so much for that question. Hustle culture is a hot topic it always has been, but I definitely think that a lot of people fall prey to this idea that you just need to monetize every hobby, every idea, every passion for the sake of capitalism. And I'm not about that. I think that you can easily side hustle your way to burnout, and we don't want that. Like, what is the point of life if you're just feeling burned out all the time? Now, I want to be realistic that having a good paying job, like a solid, good paying job, is not a possibility for a lot of people, which is why so many people have to do side hustles because it's so hard to find that one good paying job where you're like, Oh, I can work my 9 to 5 and then I can just sign out and be good. That's actually not as easy to achieve as many people think. But if you are fine and completely happy and satisfied with your job and it's allowing you to live the life you want and progress towards the goals that you have for your future, then there's really no reason, right, to pick up all these extra jobs just because you're single or you don't have kids. Like there's no reason to fill up your time with work just for the sake of it. But I do want to highlight one thing. I hope that you are saving for the future. I do believe in, you know, enjoying life today. But you should also be saving and investing for the future. So, again, if your job allows you to do that, great. But if you haven't started down that path yet, then that's when you really do need to consider, Hey, is this one job enough to meet all of these goals? So keep that in mind. I also want to highlight that you should look into the negotiation episode that we did. If you do want to first think about, okay, can I increase my income where I am before I immediately jump to the side hustle idea? I want you to first exhaust the option of negotiating your pay at the job that you do have. Thank you again for the question. I really loved it. Thank you so much to everyone that called in with their questions. That is all we have for today, but certainly not the last listener Q&A episode. Money impacts your everyday life and helping you guys navigate the world of personal finance is why I became a money coach. Remember, you can reach out any time. If you've got a story you'd like to tell me or a question you'd like answered, or even a thought about our show. You can give me a call at 2025397370 or shoot me an email at CNN Audio Finance at gmail.com. Send me a message and let me know what you're thinking. Calls for unions are popping up in grocery stores, warehouses and coffee shops around the country. Next Monday, we're talking about organizing your workplace.

00:22:39

**Alejandro Ortiz**

Forming a union as a vehicle for self-help. It's a way to build solidarity. It's a way to have a voice for marginalized, vulnerable groups of workers, workers of color, particular, low wage workers who are disproportionately workers of color, to band together to improve their working conditions.

00:22:57

**Delyanne Barros**

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