

**Alexandra:** [00:00:05] I very much feel that whenever I want to spend money on myself, it is an asking for permission and I'd rather not ask permission, so I just go without. I have a question. Do I get any budget for things I need or do I need to wait until I'm earning my own money to be able to have my own budget for things I want to spend on myself?

**Brandon:** [00:00:28] That's a question. That's my answer there, right?

**Alexandra:** [00:00:33] I know there are things underneath the surface for both of us that we're not saying to each other, we maybe just harbor a bit of resentment towards each other.

**Ramit Sethi:** [00:00:48] Hi. I'm Ramit Sethi, and welcome to the I Will Teach You To Be Rich podcast. Today, I'm talking to Alex and Brandon. Alex is 33 years old and she's jumped from job to job for years. In fact, she just recently quit her latest job. Brandon is 34 years old, and he brings in 135,000 dollars a year. Now, the reason that they originally reached out was Alex felt resentful over having to ask for money, almost like an allowance. A little bit of context, Brandon brings in \$135,000 a year. They have about \$85,000 in savings and investments. They also have \$78,000 in debt.

**Ramit Sethi:** [00:01:31] But this relationship is unlike many others that you've heard of, because Brandon and Alex were previously married, then they got divorced, and then they got remarried. In today's episode, you're going to hear lots of fascinating variables. You're going to hear so much indecision. They talk around issues. You're going to hear them admitting that they've basically done what others told them to do for most of their lives. But now, Brandon and Alex are realizing that they don't really know what they want for themselves. At times, today's episode is going to be very frustrating to listen to, but the layers here are quite fascinating. Let's listen in.

**Alexandra:** [00:02:15] When we're making financial decisions, I wish I would stand up for myself, and say like, yeah, but hold on, I want to do these things first, or can I just put some input in there? And not that, again, Brandon never says I can't, I just don't offer it up.

**Ramit Sethi:** [00:02:32] Can we talk about those things right now?

**Alexandra:** [00:02:35] Sure.

**Ramit Sethi:** [00:02:35] What are the things that you want to do?

**Alexandra:** [00:02:38] So, it more so has to do with health and wellness, like for myself, of like wanting to go get acupuncture, or see a chiropractor, or buy supplements for myself on a monthly basis, or go take recurring exercise classes. So, things that have a recurring monthly price tag on them are the things that I find challenging to advocate for myself, because it means incorporating it into a budget and making it like a known every month thing that I have to say, I'm taking this for myself.

**Ramit Sethi:** [00:03:12] I noticed that you're talking about the things that you want to ask Brandon, do you think you could just ask him right now?

**Alexandra:** [00:03:21] I could. I could, and I kind of have. I've hinted at it, and he's always very generous and welcoming, but we never have an actual conversation. And I think because in my mind, it needs to be a numbers conversation, it can't just be me asking and he says yes or no, but it's like we actually then have to sit down, and really think it through, and figure out where that money comes from and how we allocate it, and then that's the conversation I don't want to have.

**Ramit Sethi:** [00:03:47] Because what?

**Alexandra:** [00:03:49] Not that I don't want to have it, I do want to have it, but I feel guilt, because I know one of the answers is that I could earn more money and pay for it myself. And then, that's the answer, so I just shouldn't ask, because it's on me.

**Ramit Sethi:** [00:04:03] Sounds like you have a lot of stories that you're telling yourself.

**Alexandra:** [00:04:07] Yeah, that sounds right.

**Ramit Sethi:** [00:04:09] What do you think those stories are?

**Alexandra:** [00:04:12] I think one is that while I keep saying I don't make money, I can't make money, it's hard for me to make money. So, that's a story that's recurring. I very much feel that whenever I want to spend money on myself, it is an asking for permission. And again, not that Brandon set that up, I've kind of worked that into my own mind, that yeah, it feels like I need to ask permission and I'd rather not ask permission, so I just go without.

**Ramit Sethi:** [00:04:40] Alex has been talking around a specific example for minutes and minutes now. It's getting a little frustrating candidly. When I asked, do you think you could just ask him right now? Did you notice what she did? She just started spinning. She started giving me a 50,000-foot view of what's going on instead of just asking him the question. You'll notice this a lot.

**Ramit Sethi:** [00:05:03] A lot of people resist giving specific examples, because they're afraid, if they get specific about what they want, they're going to be seen as demanding, or selfish, or even a bitch. But I think details and specifics are where our rich life is created. That's why I pushed so hard for them. So, I'm going to use a principle now that we call from the clouds to the street, which means I want to take her from the clouds, all this theoretical, meta-level, hypothetical stuff down to the streets where we reside. Real examples are what I'm looking for.

**Alexandra:** [00:05:41] Top of mind is I want to be able to purchase supplements for myself every month, and I would say that totals like 150 to 200 if you're getting high quality health supplements for yourself. To start with, I've just been buying them little by little as I have money in my account, and then the goal, I guess, or idea was that I would be able to talk to Brandon, and be like, how can we fit this into our budget, like in a monthly thing? But the other-

**Ramit Sethi:** [00:06:12] Go ahead. Ask him, He's right here.

**Alexandra:** [00:06:14] Okay. Okay. Brandon, would it be okay for me to spend between 150 and \$200 a month on supplements for myself?

**Brandon:** [00:06:25] I think like we've always talked about, if it's something that you really want to do, I'm all for it. I say, let's go. For something that's 150 to 200 bucks a

month, I do think that that warrants looking at it and like talking through, like is that a monthly cost that we can take on and that we're comfortable with? And are we going to get the benefits from that, that warrant that kind of a cost.

**Brandon:** [00:06:50] 200 bucks a month is pretty heavy for a supplement routine, but at the same time, I'm never a yes or no, I don't make the decision, I want you to run with it and do what you feel you have to do. And I think that as we go, we just need to check in with each other. But that's, again, something where like I don't really want the job to say, I hold the money, yes or no, you can do it. I'd rather like we're partners, if you feel it's right, let's do it. And then, when we hit a problem, maybe we'll take each other aside and talk about it.

**Ramit Sethi:** [00:07:27] Hmm. Okay. Brandon just said a lot of words, but what did he actually say? Think back to what Alex asked him. She wanted to know if she could spend money on her health supplements. His response in plain English was, well, sure, but maybe not, but I guess it's not my place to say, really, and I'll leave it up to you. What is that answer? This is a textbook example of being noncommittal and indecisive.

**Ramit Sethi:** [00:07:58] Remember earlier, I pointed out some of the reasons that people resist asking for specifics, well, people also resist being decisive. Why? They're afraid or they're inexperienced with making decisions. Sometimes, they feel the need to do more and more research. And most of the time, they don't understand the costs of kicking the can down the road. I want you to listen for this indecisiveness as the episode goes on. It is everywhere.

**Ramit Sethi:** [00:08:29] Alex, how clear do you think Brandon was in his answer to your question?

**Alexandra:** [00:08:33] Pretty clear.

**Ramit Sethi:** [00:08:34] Really? What was his answer in one sentence?

**Alexandra:** [00:08:37] Oh, it was, yes, let's spend, but also have a discussion beforehand to make sure.

**Ramit Sethi:** [00:08:46] Really? So, can you go out and go get those supplements right now?

**Alexandra:** [00:08:49] No, we need to have a discussion first.

**Ramit Sethi:** [00:08:51] Well, how many discussions are we going to have? We're trying to have 10 levels of discussions here. So, again, I want to ask you the question, how clear was his answer to you?

**Alexandra:** [00:09:00] Okay. Maybe not as clear as I had hoped.

**Ramit Sethi:** [00:09:03] No, it wasn't clear at all.

**Alexandra:** [00:09:05] Yeah.

**Ramit Sethi:** [00:09:05] He didn't say anything in response to your question. You asked him, can I get these supplements? Here's how much they cost. And his answer, although it felt neutral or slightly negative, it didn't actually answer your question. I suspect that this is something that happens a lot, you two talk around it, because we spent the first 20 minutes of this call talking about having a conversation. Do you guys want to have the conversation right now?

**Brandon:** [00:09:34] Yeah.

**Alexandra:** [00:09:35] Yeah.

**Ramit Sethi:** [00:09:37] Okay. So, who wants to take the lead?

**Alexandra:** [00:09:40] Oh.

**Ramit Sethi:** [00:09:43] What's that? What's that sigh?

**Alexandra:** [00:09:46] It's like I don't even know, like I know there are things underneath the surface for both of us that we're not saying to each other, because we care about each other and probably don't want to bring up any tension. And so, we do

the dance on eggshells, walk across each other, but then we don't get anywhere with it, we maybe just harbor a bit of resentment towards each other, and that's not good, either.

**Ramit Sethi:** [00:10:13] I noticed that when the two of you speak, it's almost like magnets repelling, right? Not in a bad way. I'm not saying that there's not love and respect between the two of you, there clearly is, but I noticed that you both dance around each other. Yes, I never want to be the kind of person who says this, but we should talk about it, and of course, I'm not the decision maker, she's the decision maker, and in the truck, and on, and on, and on.

**Ramit Sethi:** [00:10:39] So, ultimately, you circle and dance, but there's no fulfillment. There's no answer. Sometimes, the worst thing in life is to not have clarity. I don't care if I have to do something really hard, just tell me, when? Tell me how long it's going to last. I can do it, but I just need to know which direction to go. Yes or no. Brandon, do you see how you are playing into this as well?

**Brandon:** [00:11:07] I do, yes.

**Ramit Sethi:** [00:11:09] Mm-hmm. Tell me.

**Brandon:** [00:11:11] It comes from a place of not really actually knowing what to say, because that question that you asked Alex just a minute ago, how would that feel if Brandon said no or yes? How would I feel in that situation is I wouldn't feel good either way, because I don't want to be the all powerful keeper of the money and say yes to this, no to that. That's not a partnership, and that's not what we've always talked about creating.

**Ramit Sethi:** [00:11:43] So, Brandon, I'm hearing that you don't want to accept the mantle of being the holder of the purse strings. You don't want to be the person who's saying yes and no to money. Okay. How do you make decisions?

**Brandon:** [00:12:00] I just buy it.

**Ramit Sethi:** [00:12:04] Hey, I appreciate the honesty.

**Brandon:** [00:12:06] No.

**Ramit Sethi:** [00:12:07] Okay. How do the two of you make decisions, Brandon?

**Brandon:** [00:12:12] I think that Alex and I make decisions on the large things.

**Ramit Sethi:** [00:12:18] How? Describe it to me as if you're describing a McDonald's standard operating procedure, you come in here, you put the fries for 45 seconds, what's your SOP for making financial decisions?

**Brandon:** [00:12:31] Step one is Alex puts together a pros and cons list on a big decision.

**Ramit Sethi:** [00:12:35] Okay. So, would you write it on paper?

**Alexandra:** [00:12:37] Yeah, I'm all about the notebook and pen.

**Ramit Sethi:** [00:12:39] Alright. And then, what happens, Brandon?

**Brandon:** [00:12:41] And then, we talk through it, and I think that we have a pretty good dialogue. I'll be totally honest with you. I've taken a couple of projects to Alex, where I'm like, hey, there's this old motorcycle or this old car on Craigslist, I think that we should jump on it, it's a great deal. And we talk through it. And then, at the end of it, sometimes, it nets with, I bought an old motorcycle, but more often than not, it nets with a, look, that's not something we need to take on right now, we have other priorities that we need to take care of.

**Ramit Sethi:** [00:13:10] Okay. Great. You have more of a refined decision making process than most, so I want to applaud you both for that. So, if you have this SOP or this way of making decisions, can we connect that to this question about supplements?

**Alexandra:** [00:13:29] We could. I think it's because it's not a joint thing, if it's something just for me, that's where the hang up is, is because he's not benefiting in any way from this. This is just me getting something I want.

**Ramit Sethi:** [00:13:42] So, Alex, what is the SOP for making decisions when it's just for you or just for him?

**Alexandra:** [00:13:51] If it's just for me, then it's, do I have enough money to cover it or not? And if I don't, then it's a don't buy it until you have enough money.

**Ramit Sethi:** [00:13:59] Okay. Very straightforward.

**Brandon:** [00:14:01] I can't tell you how many times I've told her, go buy the jeans, go buy the shoes, just do it, just buy that stuff, because I think that she feels bad about spending any kind of money on herself. And I think some of it is some family-inherited stuff of just preconceived ideas, but I think a larger part of it is the contribution thing, because it's been an issue for Alex and I in the past.

**Brandon:** [00:14:30] We've had conversations, we've had fights about this, and I think that her mind constantly goes back, and I don't think that we fully resolved that when I look at our finances, I consider them to be a team effort, and it goes into the pool, and that's our money. Like if I'm not just like right on, that sounds great, let's do it, buy those supplements, then she feels automatically, I'm feeling resentful, I don't want her to spend this money, because part of me feels like she's not contributing.

**Ramit Sethi:** [00:15:05] Uh-oh, did you hear the C-word? It's the word that comes up almost 100% of the time when one partner earns way less than the other. That word, contribute. Lower earners are obsessed with the word contribution. How much do I contribute? I want to contribute. There are other ways of contributing besides making money. Who's contributing? Now, the dynamics of a higher earner and a lower earner are very tricky.

**Ramit Sethi:** [00:15:32] I've covered this in previous episodes of this podcast, but one general rule is the higher earner must be aware of these dynamics and take on the responsibility of making the lower earner feel comfortable. For Alex and Brandon, one of the biggest driving forces behind their problem is simple. Alex doesn't earn enough money to live the lifestyle she wants. To live that lifestyle, she needs Brandon to help

fund it. Well, my question then is, why did she just quit her job? I want to know if you've had discussions about Alex quitting her job.

**Alexandra:** [00:16:12] So, this most recent one was not as much of a discussion as it was like, I just need to get out of this. Previous times this has happened, we did have conversations. I'm now realizing that like Brandon's used to this, perhaps.

**Ramit Sethi:** [00:16:27] How many times has it happened?

**Alexandra:** [00:16:29] I've had like 10, 15 different jobs.

**Ramit Sethi:** [00:16:33] What?

**Alexandra:** [00:16:33] Like I've done so many different things, it's kind of crazy.

**Ramit Sethi:** [00:16:37] Why 10 to 15?

**Alexandra:** [00:16:39] I mean, maybe that's thinking back too far. That's not since graduating college. It's like from high school through now, I probably had like 15 different jobs. Yeah. Life has just been wild. I think for a long time, I was trying to fulfill other people's ideas of who I was, and then I've also tried to like do things that I think this is who I am, and then I fluctuate, and try different things, and don't just have one set trajectory. And then, when I thought I had a set trajectory, that's when we got a divorce, and then that threw that out of the window as well. And so, everything just got tossed up in the air again.

**Ramit Sethi:** [00:17:15] What age were you when you both got divorced?

**Alexandra:** [00:17:17] So, we got divorced in 2015. We were like 27, I think.

**Ramit Sethi:** [00:17:23] Okay. And then, how many years until you got back together?

**Alexandra:** [00:17:27] It was like two years until we officially got back together, but there was back and forth in that two years as well.

**Ramit Sethi:** [00:17:34] And what was the reason that you got divorced, and is that reason still present in the relationship?

**Brandon:** [00:17:40] I think we got married very young. We got married when I was 21 and she was 20. And we were playing out this fairy tale story, and I think at a certain point, we just kind of hit a wall where at least, and I'm speaking for myself here, of like I was just like, what the hell am I doing? I'm grinding, making zero money. And we got married so young, we aren't fully formed people, we need to be going off and doing our own thing.

**Brandon:** [00:18:10] I think separating, and then being apart for a while, we did kind of realize that we are very good together, but I think that a lot of the issues do kind of exist of like, we both had that thing of like we got out of college, we felt like we were just like fulfilling these steps that were already laid out for us. Like it was just everybody assumed, oh, you guys are going to get out of college. Brandon, you're going to get a job, you guys are going to have kids. And I think that we both kind of got out of that, we're like, hey, that's not us. That's not our decision.

**Ramit Sethi:** [00:18:43] Okay. So, you two are not sure about 200-dollar a month supplements. What do you notice so far? One pattern I notice is that they describe their lives almost as if they're watching themselves float down the river of life, not as an active participant, but just as an observer. It's like they're Patrick Swayze coming out of their own bodies in Ghost. And I see this a lot, the idea that life happens to you instead of you being able to influence it. In my experience, this habit of being passive is extremely difficult to change.

**Alexandra:** [00:19:23] Maybe part of the problem is we let life decide for us.

**Ramit Sethi:** [00:19:27] Tell me.

**Alexandra:** [00:19:29] Yeah, we kind of wait and see what happens, and we have tentative goals or things we think we want in life, but we wait until there's a sign or something happens that allows that to be possible, and then we jump on it, versus, yeah, deciding for ourselves what we actually want, and then going for it.

**Ramit Sethi:** [00:19:49] Tell me a time you let life decide for you.

**Alexandra:** [00:19:53] I think that's how I roll, pretty much. Even with all the jobs I've had, I throw a wide net at a bunch of different things, and then I see what comes back, and then I go with it. That seems to be, yeah, quite a repeating pattern in my life in general. It's people pleasing. I very much am concerned with how I'm viewed and what other people think about me, and that is what informed a lot of Brandon and I's relationship in the beginning.

**Alexandra:** [00:20:18] The whole reason we got married to begin with was actually because other people didn't like the idea of us living together, and parents and even friends chimed in, saying like, well, you shouldn't live together before you're married. And so, we kind of did a double take at each other, and like, oh, my gosh, yeah, you're right, I guess we shouldn't live together before we're married, and so we got married.

**Ramit Sethi:** [00:20:41] Whoa. Hold on. So, I've heard stories about this happening, because I have friends in high school, but I've never had the chance to meet an actual couple who did this. So, I understand everything up to the moment where you looked at each other, and you go, I guess we should get married. So, you're young, you're like in your late teens, early 20s. And was there a moment where you said, let's just not live together? We'll date each other, but we're not going to live together. Was there a moment where you had that conversation?

**Alexandra:** [00:21:16] I don't think so. Bran, do you remember that?

**Brandon:** [00:21:18] I don't think so. I think we were fully bought in on this storybook story and we were just, in a way, content just like playing it out, playing out.

**Ramit Sethi:** [00:21:29] Where did it come from?

**Alexandra:** [00:21:31] Parents.

**Ramit Sethi:** [00:21:32] Religious?

**Alexandra:** [00:21:32] Religious, yes, we got married in the Catholic Church, neither of us are Catholic anymore.

**Ramit Sethi:** [00:21:37] Right. Was it unusual for you in your peer group to get married that young?

**Alexandra:** [00:21:44] No. Weirdly, no

**Ramit Sethi:** [00:21:46] Catholic, is that what it was?

**Alexandra:** [00:21:47] Catholic, and then also like Mormon friends. Those are the other group of people doing that around that time.

**Brandon:** [00:21:53] I think parents were one thing. I think we were just very young and kind of swept up in this thing of, we're high school sweethearts, we're going to get married anyways. My instinct was kind of like, oh, we've always been told that we're the good kids, like we're the good kids, this is just what you do.

**Ramit Sethi:** [00:22:10] Wow. It's almost like you're just following a path that has been created for you. And not surprisingly, a few years later, you both start to ask yourself, did we ever intend to go down this path? Were we ever intentional about it?

**Brandon:** [00:22:10] Yeah.

**Alexandra:** [00:22:27] Yeah.

**Ramit Sethi:** [00:22:27] Okay. I'm understanding now. So, you divorce, you then get back together. Now, here's the question. Do you still have some of those same beliefs that caused you to go down other people's paths? Do you still have some of those same beliefs today?

**Alexandra:** [00:22:47] I think I do, and I think that's part of the problem. is even though logically, I can know and understand certain things, and not want to repeat patterns, it's like there's a subconscious block that's there that I need to work to get rid of. And I think one of those stories is that the husband is the provider, and the woman stays at home

and has the kids, because that's what my mom did, that's what Brandon's mom did, that's what our grandmas did, like that's the women in our family, was that was the role. They weren't career-oriented. They didn't have jobs. They stayed at home with kids.

**Ramit Sethi:** [00:23:24] These are great examples of invisible scripts. All of us were raised with beliefs that are so deeply held, they're invisible to us. Alex saw the women in her life staying home with kids, not having a career, and so she believed it. How many ways do you think she absorbed the message that working is not for women? Think about the specific times she might have picked up those messages. Maybe her mom once said, that's what men are for. Maybe her aunt once said, why would you work?

**Ramit Sethi:** [00:23:59] Maybe her grandma had her own phrases. These are the types of messages that we invisibly absorb for years and often decades. We're all guided by invisible scripts, and sometimes, those invisible scripts are positive, like working hard gets you good results. But other times, those invisible scripts do not serve you anymore. Now, for Brandon, recall his lack of specifics, his inability to make a decision. I want to tackle that. You think we can make a change on that? If you were to say no to Alex, no, you can't buy this, would it make you the bad guy?

**Alexandra:** [00:24:44] Yeah, oh, my gosh, there it is, I've never thought of it in that way before, he doesn't want to be the bad guy and tell me no, and he's operating with that story in the back of his mind. And that's why he dances around or we don't quite answer it.

**Ramit Sethi:** [00:25:02] Brandon, what would happen if you were to say no? Play it out for me.

**Brandon:** [00:25:07] I think that if I was to say no on my side of things, I would feel hypocritical. I would feel misogynistic. And in a way, I'd feel overbearing. And then, on Alex's side, I feel like she would feel her belittled, lessened, that her voice isn't strong and as worthy as mine.

**Ramit Sethi:** [00:25:37] What do you get to become when you avoid making a decision?

**Brandon:** [00:25:41] Good guy.

**Ramit Sethi:** [00:25:42] So, you're doing everything to fulfill the idea of being the good guy. I'm not the one who has to hold the checkbook. It's both of ours. I love you. I trust you. You make the decision. You're the good guy, because it's not up to you. There's only one problem.

**Brandon:** [00:26:04] I think the problem is the input. If I'm providing, does that mean that I need to assume the responsibility or does it mean that I have to find in myself the ability to buy into this completely as a couple, as a team to say, whatever I produce in this world is 100% mine and Alex's, we share.

**Ramit Sethi:** [00:26:34] Well, I don't know the answer to that, but you two do, but you haven't had the courage to confront it. You earn the money, Brandon. There's nothing misogynistic about saying that you are the earner for this family. Fine, you've accepted that. Fine. That doesn't necessarily mean that you make all financial decisions for the family. That's a separate issue. Let's first acknowledge, you are the earner for the family. Can we all agree on that?

**Alexandra:** [00:27:10] Yes.

**Brandon:** [00:27:10] Yes.

**Ramit Sethi:** [00:27:11] Okay. So, you tell me, how do the two of you want to make small financial decisions? Let's start there.

**Brandon:** [00:27:24] For the small decisions like the supplements?

**Ramit Sethi:** [00:27:29] Yes.

**Brandon:** [00:27:30] I want Alex to come to me, and say, I want to spend on this. And then, we both look at our bank accounts and determine whether or not that's the way to move forward.

**Ramit Sethi:** [00:27:48] Okay. Well, she did that. She came to you and said, I want to spend \$200 a month. So, you have all your finances in front of you. Now, I want to watch the two of you make this decision.

**Alexandra:** [00:28:00] Okay. What I would say and what I've been hesitant to say or don't say to Brandon is that I feel this is a reasonable ask, because if I'm to tally up the amount you spend per month on yourself or on the things, yeah, you buy just for you, this is minimal comparatively, so it's not that much and I should be able to just get it, but I also want you to know that you spend this much more than I do.

**Brandon:** [00:28:31] Yeah.

**Alexandra:** [00:28:32] I think I could find the little things, the eBay purchases, the things here and there that all add up that I'm not spending on myself.

**Brandon:** [00:28:42] Yeah. And that's fair. But I think it all comes back to, I think both of us need a framework to work within, because you've got the supplements, and believe me when I say this, I want you to do everything, because again, like I want you to feel empowered to do these things and I want these things for you. Absolutely. But you do have supplements, dance classes. We spend a good amount on some kind of upscale groceries to buy certain things. So, there's just like when you start to kind of stack things up and I do the same thing, it becomes a lot.

**Brandon:** [00:29:24] And then, all of a sudden, we're in the zone, where it's scary, because we don't save or like we're spending more than our means, and we're not chipping away at our bad debt that we need to get out of here. So, a \$200 a month thing, I feel like, is just, that's definitely something we need to consider. It really has to be beneficial to us as a family. So, I want that. I want to step back, and take a look at that, and say, is there a good reason to be spending this money on a monthly basis? Alex, I want you to contribute to our bottom line, so that when we have these discussions, we can come to it as equal partners.

**Alexandra:** [00:30:10] I understand it's important to you that I am contributing to this. It may not be at an equal amount, but something, and I'm aware that's important to you, and I want to be able to provide that. I'm sorry I haven't been able to do it to the level

you've wanted. The other thing I want is I do want us to look at all the finances. Like my first step in this dance is I want us to read Ramit's book together, and go through it, and make sure we're on the same page. Even though I don't have the contributing finances yet, I want us to start off on the trajectory of knowing where our finances are at. And then, when I have the income to provide, we're just that much more prepared and ready to allocate everything accordingly.

**Ramit Sethi:** [00:31:06] Brandon, what did you just hear Alex say to you in one sentence?

**Brandon:** [00:31:11] She wants me to be on board with her vision of managing the finances.

**Alexandra:** [00:31:18] I feel like I'm feeling resentment, like you don't like that it's my vision, that maybe you have a different idea that you'd want me to hear.

**Brandon:** [00:31:26] Yes. I want us to be aligned on a compromise of yours and mine. Mine, I don't want to manage to a fine point the granular finances. I work a lot in a stressful environment and I don't want to chase down every dollar. I wish that I was super financially savvy, like with the stock market and I could do all that, but my brain doesn't really work that way. And I want you to take ownership of the finances for us to include paying bills and all that. But like Ramit said, I have serious concerns about some of the freedoms within that income that I'm bringing in, that I'm concerned with, that I will lose the freedom to exercise some of the things that feed my soul after working a long day.

**Ramit Sethi:** [00:32:29] Okay. Pause. This is great. Alex, he just said a lot. What do you take away from that?

**Alexandra:** [00:32:35] It makes me so excited. You saying that you would want me to like pay bills and be on top of this, I'm like, yes. And guess what? You haven't read Ramit's book yet, but I know his ways and all you're talking about is Ramit's rich life. The things that are important to you and you want to spend money on, I'm not going to nitpick those things. If those are the things that truly bring you joy in life, I'm going to put that in the rich life category, and we're going to figure out all the other expenses and

budgeting in other areas that are less meaningful to us. So, it will all be okay and you don't need to worry about being limited or cut off in the areas that are important to you, and that can be conversations we can have.

**Brandon:** [00:33:16] I feel entitled to that release because I work hard, and I think it is just like I work hard, and it's stressful, and there's a lot going on. And so, sometimes, I do feel entitled like if I want to go on eBay, I've earned that, and I'm going to do it, and I'm not going to ask anybody, I'm not going to explain myself to anybody.

**Alexandra:** [00:33:38] I get that.

**Ramit Sethi:** [00:33:39] Validate him, Alex.

**Alexandra:** [00:33:42] Yeah, Brand, you do work really hard. You work incredibly hard. You are a great leader in your work, and I'm so impressed by all the things you do, and you do deserve that time to, yeah, kick back, relax, work hard again in your own way, in your garage and your projects.

**Ramit Sethi:** [00:34:01] Yes, this is great.

**Brandon:** [00:34:04] One thing that I'm afraid of is we go through Ramit's strategy, and then we find that like, look, there's a hundred bucks at the end of the month that is like free use, and then, all of a sudden, it's like, well, I can't do anything with that, like my projects need more than that or whatever.

**Ramit Sethi:** [00:34:21] Ask a question, Brandon.

**Brandon:** [00:34:23] So, how do we go through this process but retain my ability to exercise my hobbies?

**Alexandra:** [00:34:33] That's a great question. I'm not exactly sure, but I think it might be making adjustments in other categories.

**Ramit Sethi:** [00:34:41] If you had \$100 a month, Brennan, is that too little?

**Brandon:** [00:34:45] That's too little.

**Ramit Sethi:** [00:34:46] If you had \$500, is that too little?

**Brandon:** [00:34:50] \$500 could do it.

**Ramit Sethi:** [00:34:53] That's it, all we had to do is ask two numbers and we got the answer?

**Brandon:** [00:34:58] Okay. Maybe let's bump that up.

**Ramit Sethi:** [00:35:01] Pick a number. It's not my budget, it's yours.

**Brandon:** [00:35:05] I'm thinking about larger projects, and I think about, okay, well, if I need to do something heavy, I got to save over the course of like three or four months, and how do I do that?

**Ramit Sethi:** [00:35:14] Just give me some specifics here. I'm dying for some specifics. You guys are going to walk out of this call feeling really good, and tomorrow, you're going to wake up and realize you have no plan, whatsoever, and it's going to be like another conversation you had where nothing gets solved. I am dying for specifics here. Please.

**Brandon:** [00:35:33] \$500 a month would be a workable budget.

**Ramit Sethi:** [00:35:38] Lovely. 6,000 bucks a year. Buy all the car parts you want and motorcycles. I love it. I'm so happy. Of course, you can adjust that number if you want. Perfect. This isn't set in stones.

**Alexandra:** [00:35:52] I have a question. Do I get any budget for things I need or do I need to wait until I'm earning my own money to be able to have my own budget for things I want to spend on myself?

**Brandon:** [00:36:07] That's a question. That's my answer there, right?

**Ramit Sethi:** [00:36:12] It's not mine unless you want me to allocate your money for you. I'll be happy to do it. You might not like what I allocate it to, though.

**Brandon:** [00:36:18] Ramit, I have to be the good guy, so you're going to have to take this one.

**Alexandra:** [00:36:21] No.

**Ramit Sethi:** [00:36:22] No. Go ahead.

**Brandon:** [00:36:24] The answer is just as I have a budget for my stuff, I want you to have the same budget for your stuff.

**Alexandra:** [00:36:33] Is it an even budget or is it a minimized budget, because I'm not contributing as much? Like do I not get as much—I know what you're saying equal, but I'm giving you the opportunity to speak your truth if you really think that it shouldn't be even, and I will respect that.

**Brandon:** [00:36:51] I don't know. Not even because of input. Again, I'm doing my absolute best to look at all of this as like equal partnership. Like Ramit came to me and asked, what was my budget? What's your budget for your stuff that would provide you with the stuff that makes you happy and fulfilled, and feel like you've got what you need for the month?

**Alexandra:** [00:37:16] It might be around that 500-dollar mark, also, if I'm like living my rich life and really like the things I want to do.

**Brandon:** [00:37:16] Okay.

**Alexandra:** [00:37:25] I don't know if we have a thousand a month to allocate to this. I kind of feel like we don't, so we're thinking kind of lofty here. But once we go through everything, we'll know for sure, and then we can talk then to find what the real number is.

**Brandon:** [00:37:42] Okay.

**Ramit Sethi:** [00:37:44] I'm loving this so far. I'm loving this. I love a couple of things about this. One, I love that you're both asking each other these very crisp, candid questions, hey, how much do you need to feel good about your hobbies? Well, okay, I gave you my number. Now, I got to ask you the same question, how much do you need? I love that. That's a pretty pointed direct question. I love that you both have the courage to do it.

**Ramit Sethi:** [00:38:13] The other thing I love, Alex, you said I don't know if we actually have this much money, but let's at least take these guesses and go figure out the plan. That is a beautiful way of thinking about it. You know the most important thing you're doing right now is coming up with some basic frameworks for your finances. Now, you need to go test it against reality and see how much you have every month. But guess what?

**Ramit Sethi:** [00:38:40] Maybe you don't have enough to do it. Okay. You both cut your number down by 25%. Great. Oh, you know what, that's not going to let me have enough for my motorcycles, and I really want it. I'd like to discuss with you that I want to have a little bit more. And Alex, I think for the time being, I'm going to need you to take a little bit less. Of course, when you earn more, we can discuss X, Y, Z, whatever is your framework. I love that you're both getting into making decisions right now. Brandon, how are you feeling?

**Brandon:** [00:39:10] I'm feeling good.

**Ramit Sethi:** [00:39:11] I think what you're going to realize when you finally check all these boxes is how much of reality you've been ignoring. The numbers are the numbers, they're already there, they're happening one way or another, it's just that you haven't been intentional behind it. I think you're going to realize how indirect you two have been with each other and how just setting simple rules like, I want you to manage the conscious spending plan and I want you to pre-read before we come Sunday at 11:00 AM.

**Ramit Sethi:** [00:39:46] It's clarified so many things. Finally, I think that you are going to both start to realize, yeah, okay, we have a long road ahead of us in terms of paying off

our debt, and maybe I can't spend as much as I wanted to on the things I want in the short-term, but we actually have control of our money. We can decide if we want to pay off our debt faster. We can decide if we want to live somewhere else. We can decide if financially, we want to have kids. We now have control of our money. We can see more than 50 yards ahead. That is an incredibly powerful feeling. Incredible.

**Ramit Sethi:** [00:40:28] Believe it or not, most people would rather not know the truth, even though it feels painful. Every day, they're fighting and [making sounds] but they don't want to know the truth, because they have to look at the whole picture, and it's scary. You two are showing a lot of courage. You are courageous enough to confront reality, to look at the numbers, to really build some bridges in your own relationship, and the answers are going to be scary. Yeah, you have a lot of debt. Yeah, you might not be able to spend as much as you want, but you are in charge now. The world isn't passing you by, you are in charge.

**Alexandra:** [00:41:06] That's right where we want to be.

**Ramit Sethi:** [00:41:18] Thanks for listening to I Will Teach You To Be Rich. I'm Ramit Sethi. Please follow the show on Apple, Spotify, or wherever you listen to podcasts. To find our entire back catalog of podcast episodes, go to [iwt.com/podcast](http://iwt.com/podcast). I'm giving away a signed copy of my book. Send me a screenshot. Show me that you're following my podcast on Apple or Spotify, and I'll pick one listener to send a free signed copy of my book right out to you. Here's what you'll find next week on the I Will Teach You To Be Rich podcast.

**Lauren:** [00:42:01] Getting into the house, there were more things that needed to be fixed, that like more than met the eye originally, and it was overwhelming to me. I felt that same horrible feeling like, oh, gosh, the spigot has been opened, the money spigot, and it's never going to stop, like the faucet is never going to stop.

**Alex:** [00:42:20] I said no amount of money that we make will make you feel secure, because if we're making a million dollars a year, you're going to think, oh, we need two million or a million-and-a-half, and it's just going to keep escalating.