

## I Will Teach You To Be Rich podcast Episode 39:

### Nicole and Alex

**Nicole:** [00:00:03] How can you expect to afford a dog whenever you're saddled with so much debt, you can't see out of it? Like she says this to me a few times a week, right? And she's right, and I saw it whenever we were dating, down for whatever, Alex was always down to like go on a quick trip or just do whatever. Now, she's become so much more uptight. The concern of money is always on her mind. It brings her down, and I hate to see that. It makes me feel like I'm the problem, at least that's the way it makes me feel, like I'm the one that's bringing in the problems and she's the one that's cleaning up after the mess,

**Ramit Sethi:** [00:00:44] What do you do if in your relationship, one of you is interested in talking about money and the other one just wants to avoid it? This is common in lots of couples. Inevitably, the more interested person starts trying to talk about money, then they get ignored. That escalates to nagging the other person about money. That gets ignored, which then leads to resentment, which can lead to much worse. Money is unlike some of the usual things that we delegate.

In lots of relationships, one person might be in charge of emptying the dishwasher, another might be in charge of mowing the lawn or taking out the trash, but money isn't like that. It's not something that can be delegated to your partner. It's not something that can be delegated to an outsider. It applies to so much in our lives that both partners have to be engaged with it. In that way, money is more like parenting. You'll almost never hear about one partner who's solely in charge of parenting, so why do we think that's okay with money?

Today, we're meeting Alex and Nicole, who are engaged. Now, Nicole does not deal with their finances. She doesn't want to engage with it and she prefers to ignore it. That puts Alex in the difficult position of having to handle the finances on her own, and that's setting them up for resentment. Now, if you've heard couples like this, the advice usually consists of someone berating the non-engaged partner, saying things like, you really have to get involved, it's important, seriously. I don't find that that approach works at all. So, in today's episode, you're going to hear what I do to hopefully get Nicole engaged with money. I'm Ramit Sethi. Welcome to I Will Teach You To Be Rich.

**Nicole:** [00:02:41] I unabashedly want to go out and explore the world and not have any restraints, right? Alex is much more cautious. We bump heads quite a bit on things that we can do, things we can afford, things we can't afford. Specifically, I want to get a dog, right? Like that's my number-

**Ramit Sethi:** [00:02:57] Okay. What kind of dog?

**Nicole:** [00:02:58] I want a doodle or a shelter dog. I really want a dog. I work alone at home all day with the pandemic. So, Alex is out in the world, she goes to work three times a week, I'm at home alone all day. I need a companion, just interaction. That's like

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my end all, be all right now. It's like our first step, I think, into starting a family, and to building a life together, and I don't know, taking care of something together.

**Ramit Sethi:** [00:03:27] So, you bring up to her, hey, I really want a dog, and you've got the type of dog in your mind, I wouldn't be surprised if you have, what, a Pinterest Board or some Instagram things you saved?

**Nicole:** [00:03:39] Sure. I even have a name.

**Ramit Sethi:** [00:03:41] Okay. So, you've gone that far, great. You're really into having this dog.

**Alex:** [00:03:44] I don't want to sound awful, but like if I was by myself, I would have a dog, because my concern with the dog, it's not really, per se, the monetary issue. It's more of because we're not on the same plan as far as like the steps that we want to take. I know that Nicole struggles a lot with the concept of time, so I know she gets really involved with the job, which is totally great, but she struggles with separating the work-life balance, which is very common.

So, I feel like having a dog would just add an extra thing for me to do, and wouldn't be as much of an enjoyment to have a dog, like I want to have a dog. It would be more like, at the end, I would have to take care of the dog, bring it to the vet, like all of that stuff, because I have more of a—I created more separation between my work and my life, so it's just more work-life balance that works for me.

**Ramit Sethi:** [00:04:41] So, is it a lifestyle question? Is there any financial element of this that troubles you, or is it just, you'd end up having to walk the dog?

**Alex:** [00:04:51] I think it's a little bit of everything. Also, like I'm originally from Europe, so that means that if we leave and go overseas, it's usually for about a month. We can't bring the dog with us as easily, especially if it's a bigger dog, so it would be like, okay, then on top of all the regular bills that anyone has, then we would have to figure out, what do we do with the dog? I also don't want to constrain it like if I want to travel to just be able to do it, because I have to worry about, what do we do with the dog?

**Ramit Sethi:** [00:05:21] Okay. Nicole.

**Nicole:** [00:05:22] I think that Alex is skipping over like her mantra that she says all the time, which is, how can you expect to afford a dog whenever you're saddled with so much debt, you can't see out of it? Like she says this to me a few times a week, right? And she's right, I see the merit in that, of course, but there's also an element to me

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that's like, let's live for now, like we're going to have this debt, whether we like it or not, until we pay it off.

**Ramit Sethi:** [00:05:56] Most of this is very unsurprising so far. We have one partner, Alex, who wants her partner, Nicole, to care more about money. And Nicole has this philosophy, "I want to live for today, I don't want to save everything for tomorrow". She almost talks about it as if it's a surprise, as if it's something unique, but that's like someone sitting down at a restaurant, spending 10 minutes studying the dessert menu, and then leaning in, and whispering to the server, you know what I think I'll have, the chocolate cake.

It's like, ah, yeah, 90% of people who walk in this place order the chocolate cake, I could spot you were going to order that 10 miles away. But in order to change, people need to feel heard. And I want Alex and Nicole to feel heard. Even though this beginning part is rarely a surprise to me, it's important for me to let them get their stories out. And I will say, the individual wrinkles of these stories are always, always fascinating and usually quite surprising. It turns out that Nicole has a significant amount of student loan debt, which Alex didn't know about until very recently, like when they got engaged. Not surprisingly, this has been a source of conflict.

**Alex:** [00:07:17] It was kind of a shock, because it was like, I know this person, I know that she's very competitive, she's extremely good at her job, but then she had no idea what was going on when it came to the student loans. How can she not have a plan? It was more like understanding of like she did not see the student loans are like, it's debt. We got engaged, and it was something that I knew she had student loans, and again, very fortunate for me not to have any, so when we got engaged, I was thinking, it might be a good idea to assess our finances together, see what we can do better, what we're doing well, see where we're at so that then we can sort of like have a clear understanding of what our path in the next few years can be.

So, we just logged in, looked down at the numbers, and realized that her payment was supposed to be an X amount, and she was paying the minimum, and the interest that she was accruing every month was three or four times what the minimum that she was paying for was. I believe my reaction was something kind of like, are you nuts, just because I knew how much she was making, so I just couldn't comprehend. Like I just couldn't logically comprehend how she could be making that much money, but also contribute so little to repaying debt when it wouldn't have hurt her living style or anything that she wanted to do in her private life, basically.

**Ramit Sethi:** [00:08:49] Okay. Nicole, so here you are in this conversation, how long after you got engaged did this conversation happen?

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**Nicole:** [00:09:01] Like within weeks. So, it was a bombshell, definitely, that I dropped on her.

**Ramit Sethi:** [00:09:07] Did you bring it up or did Alex bring it up?

**Nicole:** [00:09:11] Alex brought it up. Alex, we're talking about our future, our money situation, put wedding planning, you're going to talk about budget, finances, and so I let the ball drop. At the time, it was about a \$100,000 worth of student debt.

**Ramit Sethi:** [00:09:26] And how much is it today?

**Nicole:** [00:09:28] Today, we've knocked it down about, I think, around \$70,000, but also, I'm still not super connected with it. So, Alex is the one that handles most of that and like knowing where it is.

**Ramit Sethi:** [00:09:42] Okay. Wait. Hold on. Okay.

**Nicole:** [00:09:44] Yeah.

**Ramit Sethi:** [00:09:44] Yes, we'll get to all of that, but how come you just blaze right by the fact that you've taken it from 100 to 70K? That's pretty impressive.

Remember my philosophy, take the win. So many of us live under constant stress when it comes to money. When we look at our numbers, we actually start holding our breath. When we even think about our finances, our heart starts beating faster, which means that when something good actually happens, we rarely pause and acknowledge it. We hardly ever celebrate it. Do you realize how much that sucks?

You spend your entire lives feeling bad about money, then when something good happens, you just glumly take another bite of that bagel, and go, ho-hum, and then you go on with your day. I used to have this problem. I'm not naturally a celebrate kind of guy. So, when we'd launched something huge, I would go, nice job, and then I'd get right back to work, what's next? It was my wife who finally told me, "Hey, you just published a second edition of your book, you were in Times Square, we need to celebrate", and she was right.

We have to take the win, to celebrate when something good happens. And when I say celebrate, it could be something as simple as a candle on a piece of cake or as exotic as an international vacation, but it has to be something you take the time to mark, something you look back on a year from now and remember it. Those celebrations seem small, but they are part of the journey to treating money with respect and joy.

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**Nicole:** [00:11:29] It's all because of Alex, because she put me on a plan. She really kind of sat down, and organized our finances, and made a real strategy for what to do, so it was impressive, but it's all her. Unfortunately, I still don't know much about how we got there, I guess, or the real bits that it took to get there. I just am not as connected as I should be with it.

**Ramit Sethi:** [00:11:57] You want to be?

**Nicole:** [00:11:58] No, but I will be.

**Ramit Sethi:** [00:12:00] Thank you for being honest. I actually love the honesty.

Normally, people who have no interest in their money make excuses, yeah, I really should, I know I should. It's a lot of shoulds. Nicole just straight up says she doesn't want to hear or think about it. That's actually refreshingly honest. Hey, I just talked about taking the win a few days ago, I'm going to take the win right now. I'm dealing with someone who's actually being honest with me. This shows me that Nicole is self-aware, which is a very good start.

That's honest.

**Nicole:** [00:12:35] Yeah. I don't know what it is about like personal finances or money, it makes me feel like I'm working in my personal life. And I work enough hours, but I have to understand that these are my finances and this is my personal life, this is our future together, so I know that I need to be more involved.

**Ramit Sethi:** [00:12:54] And what's the pattern that has emerged between the two of you? For example, who's the one who brings up the money conversations?

**Nicole:** [00:13:01] Alex, 100% of the time, always brings up the money.

**Ramit Sethi:** [00:13:04] Yeah. And who was the one who asked to be on this podcast?

**Nicole:** [00:13:08] Alex, of course. I know that it's unfair of me not to, like I'm fully aware of that, and I think that I judge myself, like it's an awful thing to put that all on Alex, but I have no interest. I can't find the interest. I try to have interest, and I'm trying to sit down and look at spreadsheets, and I don't know, like graphs that Alex puts together on like our timeline, and stuff like that, and I cannot get excited.

**Ramit Sethi:** [00:13:37] But those sound horrible to me. Like, okay, if you gave me a really cool graph, I mean, do you think I'm going to get excited about that?

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**Nicole:** [00:13:49] I don't think anybody would.

**Ramit Sethi:** [00:13:51] Exactly.

**Alex:** [00:13:52] I am not excited myself and I do all those things. It's just like things that I'm trying, I'm just really trying to figure out what can work for her.

**Ramit Sethi:** [00:14:00] Mm-hmm. And how long do you talk about this stuff for?

**Alex:** [00:14:04] I would say that the conversation usually lasts about a minute to two, because she automatically shuts off about it, like she doesn't want to talk about it, but like they're very, very short, because there's no interest. And so, it's like it gets shut off immediately.

**Ramit Sethi:** [00:14:22] So, how does it go? Just have the conversation with each other, I'd like to understand it.

**Nicole:** [00:14:26] Alex, I am coming off of, I don't know, a 10, 11-hour workday, why on earth would I want to work more right now, is my usual question.

**Alex:** [00:14:38] And I would say something like, well, you can work a little bit longer now that you have the energy, and then in two years, not have to do anything, and then it shuts off.

**Ramit Sethi:** [00:14:49] This is cool. This is helpful. Now that you just replayed that for me, what do you both notice about that interaction?

**Nicole:** [00:14:59] It's immediately tense. Like I felt myself, whenever Alex was describing her perspective, getting a little bit like frustrated, just like the start of the conversation, and it makes me want to turn off. It makes me want to cut the conversation off, because I genuinely cannot see her perspective, I can't see her side of it. I can't imagine myself working more than 10 hours a day.

**Ramit Sethi:** [00:15:24] Okay. Alex, what do you notice about that interaction?

**Alex:** [00:15:31] That perhaps there's like a lack of—I mean, I think for me, it just comes from how many times we've talked about it, and now, it's more like a frustrating thing. So, like there's a lack of like, while at the beginning, I was very much way more understanding and more—not calm, I don't know if that's the word, but like just more chill about the conversation, because it's been years of trying to have the conversation, now, it's very much like, we should do that, I don't understand why you don't want to do this.

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**Ramit Sethi:** [00:15:56] Hmm.

**Alex:** [00:15:57] Yeah.

**Ramit Sethi:** [00:15:59] What do you think I noticed about that interaction?

**Nicole:** [00:16:04] I'm not sure.

**Alex:** [00:16:06] I think that we're completely on two different spectrum.

**Ramit Sethi:** [00:16:12] Yeah. I noticed that it happens late at night, red flag number one. You're tired. Well, one of you is more tired than the other. It happens when you're unbalanced. One person is almost ambushing the other. There's not a set time where you both know that this is the topic we're going to talk about. I noticed that it has a dynamic where Alex, you're going, 'I want you to do this', and Nicole, you're going, "No". So, there's this pursuer-pursuee relationship and dynamic at play. I'm guessing that you see that a lot. I mean, look at who decided to talk about coming on the podcast, and say like, alright, fine, right? It's one person kind of leading the way. Finally, I noticed that it's not fun.

**Alex:** [00:17:08] No.

**Ramit Sethi:** [00:17:09] It's a drag. Both of you, at least you're both agreeing on that. It's a total drag.

**Nicole:** [00:17:12] 100%.

**Ramit Sethi:** [00:17:13] And I don't want that. You've got to have a way of having these conversations that is actually productive, because right now, I don't blame either of you for the way that you act around money. It's like, man, if I had the same conversation with my wife for five years, and then like nothing changed, we would be frustrated, and we'd be jabbing at each other, and just like, I don't need the small talk, let's just get to it, you really need to do this. So, I don't blame you, but I do think maybe there's a better way.

**Alex:** [00:17:41] Okay.

**Ramit Sethi:** [00:17:42] Alright. Nicole, are you willing to share the name of this dog you want to get?

**Nicole:** [00:17:47] It's named a Bailey in my brain.

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**Ramit Sethi:** [00:17:49] Bailey. Okay. Cute name. Alright. So, just dream with me for a second, Nicole. You get this dog and the dog is great. So, dog's at home with you, keeps your feet warm, take the dog out for a walk, I see the smile on your face. So, you love the dog, great. What about when you travel? What would you do then?

**Nicole:** [00:18:20] Well, okay, I have this planned out. I would have a small enough dog, so I can take it on a plane with us.

**Alex:** [00:18:26] But when she says she thought this through, to get the dog to Europe is not as easy. So, in reality, even if the dog is small, there are very few airlines and all of that that would actually help us get the dog over there.

**Nicole:** [00:18:46] Then, I take it another step, and I'm like, we have such a huge support system in LA, so many friends would dog-sit our dog for X amount of time that we're in Europe, so I still think that there are ways that we can compromise and work around it.

**Alex:** [00:19:04] But I don't think our friends, any of our friends would agree to like keep the dog for a month. Like when we're talking about a week, like a weekend trip, I'm 100% on board, and I agree with Nicole, we'd have so many people that would take care of the dog, but asking friends for like a month, at least, I think we'd have a harder time finding people that would be okay with that.

**Ramit Sethi:** [00:19:28] So, a lot of uncertainty around this decision. The dog question is a legitimate one. You probably could afford it, maybe. You could probably find a way for certain friends to share taking care of the dog, it's possible. But I think something that Alex said earlier really sticks with me, which is Alex, you said, if it was just you, you would probably get a dog, but it's the fact that the two of you, and I think the implication was, you're not quite sure if Nicole can manage things properly with this dog. Am I interpreting that correctly?

**Alex:** [00:20:11] Yes, time-wise, but also money-wise.

**Ramit Sethi:** [00:20:15] Okay. Nicole, do you see that, that it's not really about affordability?

**Nicole:** [00:20:22] I mean, I see that. It's made pretty clear to me now, I think, especially in terms of comparing Alex's answers before, getting the dog to Europe isn't a concern for her if she's by herself, right?

**Ramit Sethi:** [00:20:39] Yeah. So, how can it be different if it's the two of you?



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**Nicole:** [00:20:42] Exactly. So, it makes me feel kind of bad that she doesn't have, I guess, like the faith in me to be able to take care of a dog.

**Ramit Sethi:** [00:20:52] So, that's what I want to focus on today, because whether you get a dog or not, that's not my focus. I think that's a detail in the grand scheme of your lives, but I do think that if you're planning to get married and start a family, that you want to have a partner you can trust and somebody you can rely on. And life gets complicated, somebody gets sick and you have to take care of elderly parents, whatever, you got to know that I can trust my partner, time, money, and also being able to be flexible in the way they talk about this stuff and think about it. So, we might come back to the dog, okay, but the dog is just a detail, right? Until you can work together on the finances and the vision that the two of you have, you're just going to be fighting over these—like spinning over a dog. And it's not about a dog, it's bigger than that.

**Alex:** [00:21:48] Yeah.

**Ramit Sethi:** [00:21:49] I'm curious, Nicole, when you think about your rich life, what is your rich life?

**Nicole:** [00:21:57] Doing what I love, moving up in my career, and getting to travel, sure, but building out this family, because I think that whenever you say rich life, it could be so much more than just finances, right? It's having a big family. It's having the dog. It's being happy, right? I want to start family planning. I want to have a couple of kids. And I know that that's more expensive for us, because we're LGBT, but I want to have a big family of my own. We both come from larger family. I guess having the people there, having the family, having the experience to go see our own families and watching that grow is something that I really want.

**Ramit Sethi:** [00:22:44] You mentioned the costs, talk to me a little bit about what those costs are, for you.

**Nicole:** [00:22:51] Yeah. So, we're two ladies, so we would have to get a sperm donor.

**Ramit Sethi:** [00:23:03] I'm so glad that Alex and Nicole shared this moment, these family planning expenses, like a sperm donor are common expenses for LGBTQ couples, but if you're in a heterosexual relationship, it's likely you never even thought of this. I know I didn't until I talked to my gay friends who told me they spent over \$125,000 on a surrogate for their son. That's money that came directly out of pocket.

This is yet another example of how money is political. Think about what gets covered, for whom. That's one of the reasons that I insist we talk about the links between money and politics. And I want to give a special shoutout to my coworker, Sydney, who

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instantly recognized that this would be a part of Alex and Nicole's story. I didn't catch it, but she did, and I want to thank her for that.

And so, what are the costs with this?

**Nicole:** [00:24:02] You can get sperm for \$1,000, right? On some nicer clinics, it costs a lot more, upwards of \$10,000. And that's something that makes me nervous, because that's just the sperm, that's not insemination, that's not hospital costs, that's not doctor's visits, that's not diapers, that's not school. That's your base cost. That's the first cost, where for straight couples, that's free, sperm is free.

Then, on top of that, let's say that we can't get pregnant without IVF, then we have to do IVF, and each round of IVF is thousands of dollars. What if it doesn't take the first time, and it likely won't? So, already, we're looking at a huge cost. You're starting in the deficit and that scares me, and that's why I know that I need to change, and that's why, like in terms of getting interested in money in some kind of a way to be able to plan for this stuff, because right now, it's just kind of looking a little bit bleak.

**Ramit Sethi:** [00:25:07] It sounds expensive, I don't want to minimize it, but the rest of your lives that you both described, it's a beautiful life. You're traveling, you have children, you're seeing family, you're going—that's arguably more expensive than having those children in the first place.

**Nicole:** [00:25:25] True. I guess it's the cost coupled together, because I want to be able to afford to have this rich life, but the thought of the down payment on this life, which is starting those lives, getting the sperm, getting the treatments, having the baby, like that is nerve-wracking.

**Ramit Sethi:** [00:25:45] Yeah. So, if someone were listening to this and if they were very mathematically oriented, they would say, well, Nicole, I don't get it, you have said that you're not interested in money, and you've articulated this vision of what you want, you even know that it's expensive to have children, so why don't you just start handling your money? That's what they would say. I would not say that. What I want to know is, what is stopping you from engaging with your money?

**Nicole:** [00:26:19] I don't know. I genuinely like don't know what my block is. Maybe it's not being able to focus, because I'm not interested in it, but I know that it's something that's crucial and vital. Maybe it's like an initial—maybe it's a subconscious kind of fear from actually growing up and starting that, like that could totally be it.

**Ramit Sethi:** [00:26:39] Nicole has given me a little bit of the Innocent Doe routine, what, me, little old me, I have no idea why I can't engage with my money. Most people use this technique because it works. How can you argue with someone who says, I'm

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just not interested? But I'm not going to let her off that easily. There's a puzzle here, because Nicole has these vivid visions of a dog, Bailey, and having a family, and traveling, but the fact is she can't do any of those things unless she engages with her money. This is one of the reasons I started I Will Teach You To Be Rich, because I'm fascinated with the difference between what we claim we want and what we actually do, so I started probing with Nicole.

**Nicole:** [00:27:27] So, both of my parents are blue collar workers. My dad's a truck driver and my mom is a postal worker. So, I grew up with a lot of anxiety around money. It always made me nervous, because my parents had credit card debt, so I never got a credit card.

**Ramit Sethi:** [00:27:41] Like how much?

**Nicole:** [00:27:44] It's like one of those things whenever you're a kid, you just don't know, but it's enough that I could, as a child, feel the stress, feel the worry surrounding it, right?

**Ramit Sethi:** [00:27:53] Do you remember phrases that you overheard them talking about with money growing up?

**Nicole:** [00:27:58] Struggle. Mortgage. Second mortgage, like those things.

**Ramit Sethi:** [00:28:04] Really?

**Nicole:** [00:28:05] Yeah. It's things that you're not sure of the specifics, but you know that something happened, right?

**Ramit Sethi:** [00:28:13] Yeah. Was money ever a source of positivity for you growing up?

**Nicole:** [00:28:19] Not really. I mean, I got my allowance, so maybe that was positive, that I'd get to go buy a shirt or something with my allowance.

**Ramit Sethi:** [00:28:27] How much did you get?

**Nicole:** [00:28:28] I got like \$10 a week.

**Ramit Sethi:** [00:28:29] And what would you do with it?

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**Nicole:** [00:28:31] I would go to the movies with my friends, like do small—I've always spent my money on social activities, of getting out in the world and doing something. I never saved it. I was like, I earned it, I spend it. So, that was kind of my—I guess, and it really shaped my adulthood now that I'm thinking about it, because I earn it, I spend it.

**Ramit Sethi:** [00:28:51] Did you ever make that connection before?

**Nicole:** [00:28:53] I didn't know. I've tried not to overanalyze some of these things, because it does make you a little bit nervous.

**Ramit Sethi:** [00:29:00] No need to be nervous. I mean, this is your own experience, you're just trying to understand why you do the things you do. You mentioned at the beginning today of our call, sometimes, you feel bad, and I hate hearing that. I don't want you to feel bad about money. I don't want you to have to avoid it. You have memories that you don't even quite remember from childhood like stress and second mortgage, doesn't even make sense, but you know it's bad.

And so, until you can confront those things, and say, whoa, now that I think about it, I got my allowance, I spent it. Well, now that I'm an adult, I get my money, I spend it, and you make those connections. Until you can do that, it's so all-encompassing, so confusing, and so negative, you just go, I don't want to feel this way, I'm walking out of here, and I'd rather just go and play with a dog, or my friends, or whoever, just not feel this way.

**Nicole:** [00:29:59] Completely. I think that you just read me like a book, honestly, because that's exactly how it feels. I think that you're spot on that that's exactly where my discomfort with talking about money comes from. It gives me anxiety, it gives me frustration, and it gives me fear.

**Ramit Sethi:** [00:30:16] Yeah. And no chart is going to change that.

**Nicole:** [00:30:20] No matter how pretty the color is.

**Ramit Sethi:** [00:30:22] But here's the thing though, there is a day where I can see you, Nicole, totally engaging with a chart. There is a day where I can see you saying, you know what, Alex, thank you for helping me create a debt payoff plan, but I got this from now on. I want to start owning this. I might need your help, I'd love it if we could talk once a month and I can just check in with you, but I want to take this on for myself. Do you believe that there's a future where you might say something like that?

**Nicole:** [00:30:55] It's a possibility, but I think a lot of things have to change within myself before I can get there.

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**Ramit Sethi:** [00:30:59] Tell me, what might they be?

**Nicole:** [00:31:01] I don't know. I guess like willingness to confront my fears, or I don't know, I guess like my habits and a willingness to plan out my future. I'm such a person that I want to live every day for that day and not think about tomorrow. I don't know if it's just like something where I don't really want to grow up and commit to being an adult, or like if it's—I mean, who knows what the real issue there is, but I also feel such a comfort. This sounds ridiculous, but I feel such a comfort whenever she says, I've got this, it's fine. Who wouldn't feel comforted by that?

**Ramit Sethi:** [00:31:40] What does that comfort feel like to you? What does it remind you of?

**Nicole:** [00:31:43] I don't know. I guess it reminds me of an authority figure, I guess. I don't know, I don't want to like make it weird, but almost like my parents, we've got this, you can walk away, and you can spend that 10-dollar allowance that you have, and we've got everything else. That's what it feels like to me.

**Ramit Sethi:** [00:32:01] Alex, does that resonate with you, that she feels that way?

**Alex:** [00:32:05] Yeah, 100%. And in a way, I am glad that I can provide sort of like source of non-anxiety, because she knows that I've got it, but I kind of like would love to also relax a little bit and remove that anxiety from my plate as well, because then I feel like I'm always, always thinking, because I know that that's how she wants to live her life. That's how I would want to live my life, too, honestly, I wouldn't want to worry about anything, but I wish we could swap every once in a while, but right now, that's just not possible. I'm the doer, I'm the fixer. I'm the thinker, the planner.

**Ramit Sethi:** [00:32:51] And what is Nicole?

**Alex:** [00:32:54] Nicole is the, I don't know. Like I think it's just also the set of skills that we have.

**Ramit Sethi:** [00:33:03] Uh-uh. It's not that. Nicole, what are you in the relationship if she's the fixer, and the planner, and the doer, and the thinker?

**Nicole:** [00:33:09] Gosh, it makes me feel like I'm the problem, at least that's the way it makes me feel, like I'm the one that's bringing in the problems and she's the one that's cleaning up after the mess.

**Alex:** [00:33:18] Well, I don't think you're the problem though.

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**Nicole:** [00:33:21] I would hope I'm not the problem, but I don't know. I guess it makes me feel like I don't know what I would be, I don't know what my place, I guess, in that relationship is.

**Ramit Sethi:** [00:33:34] What would you want to be described as?

**Nicole:** [00:33:37] I would want to be described as an equal partner, somebody who can alleviate her stress as well.

**Ramit Sethi:** [00:33:42] Love it. Both of you use the word, partner, I love that.

**Nicole:** [00:33:45] Yeah.

**Ramit Sethi:** [00:33:47] That's how I think about my wife and me. She's better at certain things. I'm better at certain things. That's okay. We can support each other. There are certain things she does only around the house, and then there are certain things that we both do, and there are certain things that I do. Partnerships can work however you define it. But right now, it seems that it's out of whack. And if you want to be partners, then money's one of those core things. It's kind of like childcare. You can't just have one person being the parent. It's so all-encompassing that both parents have to parent in some way.

**Alex:** [00:34:28] Yeah, sure.

**Ramit Sethi:** [00:34:30] Money is the same. What do you think about that, Nicole?

**Nicole:** [00:34:33] I mean, I completely agree and I've really kind of—I just feel guilty for dropping the ball and like creating the situation where I'm not, I guess, even trusted to handle my own money, like that makes me feel bad.

**Ramit Sethi:** [00:34:46] Okay. I totally hear you on that, and I'm sure that you're going to think about that, and you'll talk to Alex about that. While we are together, can we put a pin in that for you to think more about, and can we flip that to be a positive perspective? Because feeling bad, if you just indulge in that and you start spinning around it, is it going to move you closer to your rich life?

**Nicole:** [00:35:12] No, it's going to give me more anxiety.

**Ramit Sethi:** [00:35:14] Exactly. It's this terrible cycle. It's just terrible. And so, I'm not saying that you should stop feeling that way. I honor your feelings, you've got to honor them, too. You've got to work through them in whatever format you choose, therapist, friend, partner, whatever, but for the time that we're together, let's flip it to see if we can

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help you get closer to your rich life. So, you want to be a partner in this relationship. Actually, both of you want to be partners in this relationship. Nicole, paint the picture for me. What would that look like, as it relates to money?

**Nicole:** [00:35:48] I guess I would be handling half of the financial decision. So, I feel like it means that my opinions and my ideas on what our next steps in life are taken seriously, are respected almost and not just shot down immediately. I think that it would also be me stepping up, and taking more of the reigns, and taking ownership of the debt that I brought into this relationship, and the ways that we can grow our wealth to hit our rich life in a future.

**Ramit Sethi:** [00:36:22] That sounds pretty good. I liked that you insisted on two things. That was really cool. First, you said, "I want to be taken seriously". I think implying, if I can read between the lines, that currently, when you bring up certain things, maybe you're not seen in an equal light in terms of what you want to do financially, et cetera. Second, and I especially love this one, you said, "I need to step up", right? I can have higher expectations for my partner, but in order to have those expectations, I need to also step up.

This is a turning point. Remember at the beginning of this episode when I said that whenever you hear a couple where one partner is unengaged with money, the usual advice is to berate that person, and shake them, and tell them, this is really important, you really need to pay attention to it, hey, just look at this compound interest chart, and I told you, that's not my philosophy, that I take a different approach.

Well, here we are just a few minutes later with Nicole, herself, admitting that she needs to step up, and that she expects to be taken seriously, and that she wants to put more skin in the game and take responsibility for her finances. How do you think that happened? It's all right here, right in front of you in this episode. Think about it and think about how you can apply that to your rich life.

**Alex:** [00:37:56] Just finances, and all of it, it's become such a big central part of like my life, our lives, and our relationship that it's almost kind of like that's, in a way, 80% of what we are, right?

**Ramit Sethi:** [00:38:10] You're the financial person, and she's the, what, dog lover?

**Alex:** [00:38:18] I don't know. I guess she's the YOLO person.

**Ramit Sethi:** [00:38:21] Okay. Nicole, would you agree with that?

**Nicole:** [00:38:23] Yeah, I would.

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**Ramit Sethi:** [00:38:24] Okay. What an interesting dynamic, very common, by the way. Very common, one partner is sort of the, we got to sit down, and like read the books, and like do the spreadsheet, and they're always the ones who contact me. And then, the other partner is like, ah, God, whatever, if this thing is going to make it stop, fine, I'll get on this podcast. It's totally common. And I kind of love it because I've seen the pattern before, but typically, I find that the YOLO person, deep down, they like nice stuff. Fine. I have no problem with that.

You want to buy nice stuff, you want to have children, you want to live in a nice house or travel. Awesome. I'd love to talk about that. I typically find that there's just a few small tweaks we can make so that the YOLO person can still live a really good life, but they start to understand how their decisions connect with their bigger rich life. And they often discover that some of the stuff they've been spending money on is almost like a sugar high. It's stuff that they don't even remember a week later. Okay. And then, similarly, Alex, a lot of times, people feel like they're put in the corner, they have to be the money enforcer. Does that sound familiar to you?

**Alex:** [00:39:36] Yes, but I feel like our dynamic is slightly different, because I want to be the YOLO person, and I, by myself, used to be as much the YOLO person, but now in this dynamic, I've become 100% the finance person, and I don't get to enjoy my YOLO self as much.

**Ramit Sethi:** [00:39:57] Whoa.

**Nicole:** [00:39:59] And I saw it whenever we were dating, down for whatever, Alex was always down to like go on a quick trip, or just to blow money at the mall, or whatever, like we would do whatever. Now, she's become so much more uptight, and I just feel like the concern of money, it might be rich coming from me, but the concern of money is always on her mind. It brings her down, and I hate to see that.

**Ramit Sethi:** [00:40:27] Alex, what is this? Where did this come from?

**Alex:** [00:40:29] Like we're getting married, so we're combining finances, more so that like we have to be serious.

**Ramit Sethi:** [00:40:37] So, theoretically, Alex, you used to be YOLO, shouldn't it be like, oh, sweet, I just basically doubled my income now that I'm partnered with Nicole, isn't that like, shouldn't it be awesome? Right?

**Alex:** [00:40:51] Yes. And that's when everything then kind of started with the student loans, because yes, we did double the income, but for me that have zero debt, we also added a hundred-plus thousand dollars of debt, so did we really double the income?



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**Ramit Sethi:** [00:41:08] Okay. And what is your conclusion? What is your answer to that question?

**Alex:** [00:41:13] I think more than doubling the income, we doubled the power that we have to tackle the debt, because we're contributing 50-50, because I was like, if you have debt in a way, and we're becoming a family, we're trying to create a family, as long as you have debt, I have debt, even though, legally, it's not mine, right? But it's like it's part of, if she has debt and she can't do certain things, I also can't do certain things, so I'm 100% down to contribute 50-50.

**Ramit Sethi:** [00:41:46] Mm-hmm. Okay. Go ahead.

**Nicole:** [00:41:50] That was her idea by the way. So, like I never asked for her to pay my debt or to feel like she needs to take on this huge responsibility. Like for me, student debt, and like going into college, I knew that I was going to come out with student debt. I think that it's very normal for people, I don't know, I guess like Americans at large, but especially people from my area to come out with debt, so I knew that I was going to come out with debt, so it's just something where I was like, just going to live with that, and it was shocking-

**Ramit Sethi:** [00:42:20] Nicole, being a partner in this relationship, what do you think a partner would say when it comes to their student loan debt that they're bringing into the relationship?

**Nicole:** [00:42:34] And what I tried to say, it's my debt, like I don't want you to feel pressured to pay for it. Like I understand that we're getting married and we're embarking on this joint life together. That's what I want, but I also know that I have to pay that and I hate that she's taken it on. Like it makes me feel guilty and it makes me feel-

**Ramit Sethi:** [00:42:58] Okay. Let me pause right there. You're about to spin into all the negative things.

You're hearing a couple of things. First, I'm not especially in love with this idea of 50-50 payments for Nicole's debt, but I'll get to that later. I've learned that sequencing is half the battle in these conversations, like knowing when to bring certain things up. Second, notice how Nicole was about to spin into her negative script about money. That's where she lives. It's comfortable for her.

And if you're having these discussions about money, you have to find a way to avoid these weeds. One way is to create a funny word, like Negative Nancy, and then use it almost as a half-joke, uh-oh, it seems like Negative Nancy is starting to come out, can we take a quick break? Hell, you can use my name if you want to. Oh, wow, Ramit says we have to stay out of the weeds and I get the feeling we're about to head there, can we

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pause and focus on the positive for just a minute? With Nicole, I gently encouraged her to refocus on the positive.

Just listen in.

**Nicole:** [00:44:07] Alex, thank you so much, genuinely, for everything that you do, not just for me or for us, and for the future that we're paving together, because I would be lost without your help. I would like to accept your help graciously, truly, and I would like to get real and serious about this, and get serious about the debt that I brought into our relationship and the debt that I brought into your life. And I really appreciate you taking on my debt as yours, like it's never something that I asked or expected from you, but it's something that I'm truly grateful that you did and that you're continuing to do.

**Ramit Sethi:** [00:45:00] What a difference when she focuses on the positive. In retrospect, Nicole focusing on all the negative aspects of money is actually selfish, even though she probably didn't intend that. When you jump into automatic negative scripts, you're focused on yourself, your own insecurities, your worries, your fears, but a relationship isn't just about your own issues, it's about working together towards a rich life. I just love what a different perspective this is. It's positive. It's significant. It's meaningful. We can build on this, and now, I want to get to the idea that a partnership to them means 50-50.

Nicole, what has the effect been of Alex offering to pay 50% of your student loans? What do you think they are?

**Nicole:** [00:45:58] Probably just to start on a positive. It's that we've beat my debt down a lot faster than I would have alone, which is phenomenal, but I do think that it's taken an emotional toll on us, where it's set up almost like a dynamic where she feels like she needs to take care of it, where she feels like she needs to really step up and overachieve.

**Ramit Sethi:** [00:46:24] Yeah. And what do you feel, Nicole?

**Nicole:** [00:46:26] It makes me feel insecure.

**Ramit Sethi:** [00:46:28] Because?

**Nicole:** [00:46:31] Because it makes me feel like I can't do it on my own.

**Ramit Sethi:** [00:46:33] Yeah. So, you're disempowered. Alex, you're like, what happened to my YOLO life? I used to be able to just go anywhere. And the two of you have this weird dynamic where it's almost an authority figure, but not really, you can't

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quite label what Nicole is in this relationship, and yes, you are paying the debt off very quickly, which is awesome. Okay. My point is not that you should stop paying everything towards Nicole's debt. That's not my point. What is my point, Alex?

**Alex:** [00:47:06] That I should create a dynamic where it's not—like it doesn't have to fall 50-50, basically.

**Ramit Sethi:** [00:47:17] Correct.

**Alex:** [00:47:18] It can be different and achieving the same result by just splitting in a different way.

**Ramit Sethi:** [00:47:23] Yeah. And to put it bluntly, what would it mean if it took an extra six months to pay this debt off, but the dynamic between you was true partners?

**Alex:** [00:47:35] It will feel worth it to me.

**Ramit Sethi:** [00:47:37] For the rest of your lives, it will be awesome. Awesome. And yet, right now, we've got Alex taking on this burden without even really communicating, without getting the appreciation that you deserve. And then, Nicole, what was your part in this, when she said, "I'll pay off your debt 50%", you accepted it, but let me ask you this, a partner—put it this way, if I had a business partner, and I walked in, and we're going to start a business, oh, and by the way, I make \$10,000 more than my business partner, and I brought in some debt, what would I do to be a good partner in that relationship?

**Nicole:** [00:48:18] Step up and pay more.

**Ramit Sethi:** [00:48:20] Bingo. Bingo. I love that you said that. How do you feel saying that?

**Nicole:** [00:48:24] I feel good.

**Ramit Sethi:** [00:48:25] Fuck yeah.

**Nicole:** [00:48:27] I feel great. I feel empowered.

**Ramit Sethi:** [00:48:29] Exactly, because you're admitting, this is what a good partner does.

**Nicole:** [00:48:34] Yeah.

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**Ramit Sethi:** [00:48:34] So, you can still accept the help of Alex. Alex, if you want to contribute to this debt, okay, that's up to you two, but a true partner, Nicole, says, you know what, Alex, I really appreciate that you've got me on a path to pay this off, I didn't even realize. Truthfully, I had my head in the sand paying the minimum, you've set me up, but I now realize in order to be a partner, I need to step up, so this is what I want to do.

Number one, I would love it if we could set up time on Sunday in the morning, let's go walk, get some coffee, we'll both feel good, and I would love it if you could show me that website, how do I log in? How do I set this up? Once would be great for me, and then I'll take it from there. And the second thing is I want to pay way more. This is my debt. I believe that I should pay, I don't know the number. It could be 60%. Do you have a number in mind, Nicole? You look like you're ready to blurt it out.

**Nicole:** [00:49:29] I mean, I would love to pay around 70, 75%, like I'd love to pay as much as I can. And I already pay, like every spare dollar that I have, it either goes to our wedding fund, our savings, or my debt, so maybe a reallocation of those three or something like that, where I can take on this burden more so than Alex does.

**Ramit Sethi:** [00:49:53] Beautiful. Beautiful. So, you step up and you might have a conversation about that. And Alex, you might say, you know what, I totally appreciate that. That sounds great. Maybe we can reevaluate after six months. You can always change the rules later, but to be able to have your partner step up, and say, you know what, you did so much for me, now, it's my turn to take this on. And, Nicole, by the way, here's a little secret code, what did Alex say she really wants to do more of, what she used to do all the time?

**Nicole:** [00:50:22] Live that YOLO life.

**Ramit Sethi:** [00:50:23] Live that YOLO life. And so, when you tell her, hey, I'd like to take on 70%, I still appreciate you contributing 30%, means the world to me, but instead of you contributing, I don't know, 500 bucks a month, why don't you take that and just contribute 200? Take the 300 back for yourself, and then tell her what she might be able to do with that money. What would you say to her?

**Nicole:** [00:50:50] I would say, take that 200, 300 bucks and plan a trip with your friends, or go out, go out somewhere, go to a nice dinner, live your best life, go get some more clothes, like do it.

**Ramit Sethi:** [00:51:06] You earned it.

**Nicole:** [00:51:06] Yeah.

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**Ramit Sethi:** [00:51:07] Yeah, do it. And, Alex, then it's up to you to decide, how do you want to spend that? Right? And if you want to go out to a great dinner, do it, you want to put some towards your wedding fund, also do it, but suddenly, there's a bit more of an equality in this relationship, which I love, and it feels good to everybody.

**Alex:** [00:51:27] Yeah, that's exciting.

**Nicole:** [00:51:29] Completely.

**Ramit Sethi:** [00:51:31] Ah, I'm happy so far. How are you both feeling right now?

**Nicole:** [00:51:33] Feeling a lot better.

**Alex:** [00:51:35] Good.

**Ramit Sethi:** [00:51:35] Okay. I think we're at the point where we've already had a pretty cool breakthrough, actually, two breakthroughs. One about growing up with your parents, and two about, what does a partner do? Let's come back to the dog for just a second. Do you remember how, in the beginning, I said, okay, Bailey sounds nice, let's put a pin in Bailey, we're coming back to Bailey. Nicole, do you see how Bailey fits into the overall vision of your rich life?

**Nicole:** [00:52:04] I do. I see that she's not something that I can just have right now, but something that I need to show Alex that I can be responsible for Bailey, and money, and all the ways, right? In life and in finances, and knowing what our situation is fully enough to be able to say, yeah, we can afford a dog and this is why, or that sounds—it gives me more confidence in being able to back that big decision up.

**Ramit Sethi:** [00:52:37] It's beautiful.

**Alex:** [00:52:38] I feel like she's going to come back to me with a chart about the dog when she's finally figured out all the parts of it.

**Nicole:** [00:52:45] Wouldn't you be proud?

**Ramit Sethi:** [00:52:47] That would be the ultimate flex, Nicole comes in with the most complex chart of all. She's like, don't even bother trying to use these pivot tables, there's no human chance for you to understand what's going on in this model that I created, but just enjoy the beauty of it, and now, we're going to get Bailey. That would be an amazing moment. Nicole, I think you read this situation exactly right.

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The dog is not just a dog. It represents so much more. It represents your ability to step up as a partner, represents your ability to plan, all of that. If and when you demonstrate that, I think you're going to have an awesome discussion between the two of you. Maybe you decided to get a dog, maybe not, that's up to you two, but at least you're at the partner level discussing these big decisions.

**Nicole:** [00:53:34] It feels exciting that I could do that in the future, because it's something that I never really envisioned for my—in my grand scheme of life, I never thought you can manage money. I don't know why, but it feels like I left at a roadblock and it's great.

**Ramit Sethi:** [00:53:53] I totally believe it. Are there any questions that I can answer for either of you?

**Nicole:** [00:53:59] Gosh.

**Alex:** [00:54:04] I have more of, I guess, a specific question.

**Ramit Sethi:** [00:54:08] Sure.

**Alex:** [00:54:09] For work, I get bonuses and this kind of stuff, and how would you allocate that bonus that you're getting? What would you suggest?

**Ramit Sethi:** [00:54:20] This is a great question. So, I would actually like for the two of you to talk about this, because this is a great question for two partners to discuss, and I'll offer my thoughts at the end, but let me listen in.

**Nicole:** [00:54:36] So, your bonus is about \$17,000. I think that we don't have to put it all in one place, and I mean, we found out about this today. So, Alex's overall thought was, let's put it directly into the 401(k). I don't know. I mean, it sounds like that's a great investment opportunity and it's not money that we would've had before, right, Alex? Like it came in, so you might as well put it there, but I don't know, I feel like I'm not totally sold on the plan that we had before.

**Ramit Sethi:** [00:55:12] Do you know what a 401(k) does?

**Nicole:** [00:55:15] It takes your money before you're taxed, and then you save it, and then whenever you're retiring, you take it out and you pay tax on that later.

**Ramit Sethi:** [00:55:23] And like what's the point of all that?

**Nicole:** [00:55:26] To retire.

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**Ramit Sethi:** [00:55:27] So, the money like grows a lot, so you put 17K, and then when you retire, you pull it out and like how much is it, as a guess?

**Nicole:** [00:55:37] Oh, my gosh. I have no idea. I would say—wow, I really don't know. This is going to make me sound really dumb, but I'm going to say like \$100,000. I don't know.

**Ramit Sethi:** [00:55:45] Okay. That's fine.

**Nicole:** [00:55:46] Is that wrong?

**Ramit Sethi:** [00:55:46] But if you want to know, that \$17,000 would turn into about \$181,000.

**Nicole:** [00:55:52] Oh, my God, that's so much. So, maybe we should, let's put it in the 401(k).

**Ramit Sethi:** [00:55:57] So, here's my question. Nicole, I feel like you answered that question as the old Nicole.

**Nicole:** [00:56:05] I did.

**Ramit Sethi:** [00:56:06] The old Nicole, what would the old Nicole have done?

**Nicole:** [00:56:09] I would have asked Alex, what do you want to do with it, and let her do with it what she wanted.

**Ramit Sethi:** [00:56:14] Okay. That's true. That's true. That's the old, old Nicole, the old of like an hour ago Nicole would have said what you just said was just like, well, I don't know, I'm not sold on the 401(k), but what did I say about, how do you become confident with money?

**Nicole:** [00:56:32] You become competent with money.

**Ramit Sethi:** [00:56:34] Exactly. And so, one of the ways to know you're competent with money is to be able to say, okay, well, if we took that \$17,000, let's break out all of our options, first question, if you put it in a 401(k), how much is that going to turn into? You got to know the basic numbers, otherwise, how can you make a decision?

**Nicole:** [00:56:53] Yeah.

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**Ramit Sethi:** [00:56:53] And I think that is what Alex is really looking for in a partner. You want to get a dog? Okay. But tell me everything, show me the plan, and let's have a discussion about it. And any partner, if they come up with an idea proposal, they got to be able to back it up, just as we would do at work. So, 17,000 bucks, over about 35 years, conservatively turns into about \$181,000. That's pretty cool.

**Nicole:** [00:57:21] It's way more than what I would have imagined. And I think what's cool about it, too, is this isn't money that either of us were expecting. This is money that—you worked hard for it, but this is money that fell into our lap. That's lovely, so it's lovely to contribute that for later.

**Ramit Sethi:** [00:57:41] Yeah. So, now, you start to have this conversation, where you go, wow, okay, so that's option one, that's a great option, oh, my God, high-five, like we didn't even expect this, but that's an amazing option. Okay. Let's play out option two. YOLO, let's just go out and take an amazing trip. Yeah, we could do that. Maybe we can find some middle ground. If it were me, I have my own rule of thumb. When I get unexpected money, I take 50% of it, I invest it, I take 50% of it and I spend it. Okay. That's my rule, though. I wouldn't recommend that rule for you, because you're in a different financial situation. I might do something like, what do you think? Which direction do you think my rule would change for you?

**Alex:** [00:58:23] You wouldn't like invest the majority of it, but still keep some for the reward and the enjoying.

**Ramit Sethi:** [00:58:30] That's exactly right. Pick the number. What number do you think would make sense for you?

**Alex:** [00:58:35] I would put everything in the 401(k), and if I need to spend a thousand, I'll just grab it from the money that, it's already sitting in my account.

**Ramit Sethi:** [00:58:42] Okay. That's cool if it was just you, but now, you're in a partnership. So, what do you think that an answer might be that would honor what both of you want with your money?

**Alex:** [00:58:56] To just take some of it and plan a trip.

**Ramit Sethi:** [00:59:00] What percent? What percent should you invest and what percent should you YOLO?

**Alex:** [00:59:05] I would probably invest like 80% of it, and then 20%, do something with it now.



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**Ramit Sethi:** [00:59:12] Okay. Have the discussion now. Now, you two are getting specific. I love when the two of you get specific, because then you can really like talk about real details. Otherwise, it's just like, this is what I think, and it's up in the sky. It's too crazy when you're up there. It's actually dangerous, because people start talking about, this is what I feel, and feelings are good, but I don't want you talking about this stuff for three hours. Okay. You've come with a proposal, Alex. I think 80% in our 401(k), which will turn into like a lot of money, six figures, and I think we should take \$3,400, and what? What are you going to do with that money?

**Alex:** [00:59:49] I would put it towards our honeymoon.

**Ramit Sethi:** [00:59:54] Great. Okay. Ask her, ask Nicole what she thinks.

**Alex:** [00:59:58] Would you want to do that, have that extra \$3,400 to the honeymoon? Do you think that would be a good way to use that money or would you want to do something sooner than that with it?

**Nicole:** [01:00:11] I definitely like the idea of using it towards the honeymoon, because we both want this to be like a blowout trip, a trip that we could never go on in our lives again, like as far as we can see right now, so I love that idea. I almost would want to do like, I don't know, like 75%, around that same, but like 3,400, like why not 4,500? I don't know. I don't know. I have a hard time conceptualizing percents I feel like on some. So, for me, it feels like let's figure out how much money we need to make our dream honeymoon a reality and see how much we need to put down for that, right?

**Alex:** [01:00:58] Well, it just depends on like, you have to feel—like I think if you go about it in that way, then you're going to end up wanting to put all of it in the honeymoon, because the more you can dream, right?

**Nicole:** [01:01:10] Yeah, I guess. I mean, like dream with limits, obviously, like not like just out of the moon, but I also-

**Ramit Sethi:** [01:01:19] So, this is the work that the two of you have to do. So, this is a great example where the two of you go, okay, cool, well, first of all, let's pour a glass of wine and talk about this, because we have \$17,000 to decide what to do with. This is awesome. This is a great discussion. It's not stressful. It's fun. So, mentally getting in that place, not talking about this at night when everyone's tired, but like, oh, this is a good time, we got some music on, let's talk about this stuff. This is great.

Second, Nicole, you said, I don't know how to think in terms of percentages or I find it difficult. Cool. I bet Alex could work with you, and say, well, let's talk about it, here's how the numbers break down, what do you think makes sense? I don't know, that seems a

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little, if we do that, then we're actually costing ourselves \$50,000 at retirement, so what if we do something else? That's how you have that discussion.

**Nicole:** [01:02:15] That's amazing. I didn't even think about what it would cost us in the future. That's like an element that I didn't even bring into it, like that opportunity cost in that future.

**Ramit Sethi:** [01:02:25] Alex, did you catch that? You were thinking opportunity costs, right, right off the bat? That's not how she thinks about money, yet.

**Alex:** [01:02:32] Yes.

**Nicole:** [01:02:32] Yes.

**Ramit Sethi:** [01:02:34] But she will, and both of you will. And suddenly, now, you're going to be speaking the same language, oh, it's so good. Okay. So, money can be joyful. In this case, you have a perfect opportunity to talk about money in a joyful way, because you have 17,000 bucks to decide what to do with. Ah, that's amazing.

**Nicole:** [01:02:52] Yeah.

**Ramit Sethi:** [01:02:53] Let me leave you with just a few last parting words, and it's something that you actually just said, Nicole, it really perked my ears up. You said, we want to go on a honeymoon that's like once in a lifetime, like we could never go on that again, and I want to share something with you. So, we went on a really amazing honeymoon. It was long, and it was in different countries, and we saw all kinds of stuff, and we had also described it as once in a lifetime.

And on the last night, my wife, when we met and we started talking about money, she had more of a sense of scarcity than I did, I was like, we can just make more money, compound interest, it's so cool, tax-advantaged accounts, and she was not thinking like that. We spent a lot of time working together. She took money seriously. She got her own outside training. She worked on her money psychology. She worked on her earnings. We are total partners. It's awesome.

And on the last day, we were in Thailand, we're looking out on this sunset, it was like out of a movie, and she goes, normally, at the end of a trip like this, I would be sad, because I know we could never come back, but now, I know if we ever want to come back, we can. What a moment for my partner, my wife, we're just at the same level, we're total partners. And every year after that, except for COVID, we have done a similar trip, mind-blowing, crazy. We did it together, because we had to plan all year how to do it, how to earn enough, all that stuff, but we did it. So, I love that little verbal

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slip up you had, which was like, once in a lifetime, maybe it is or maybe it's something that the two of you who both love traveling can do frequently. Wouldn't that be special?

**Nicole:** [01:04:43] A dream.

**Alex:** [01:04:44] Yes.

**Ramit Sethi:** [01:04:45] Alright. That's what money can do for you. I wish you both the best. It is such a pleasure to talk to both of you.

**Nicole:** [01:04:51] It was lovely to talk to you. Thank you so much for changing my mind about money.

**Ramit Sethi:** [01:04:58] The thing I love most about today's episode is the transformation. Nicole came in here openly not caring about money, even though Alex wanted her to. It would have been very tempting to sit here and lecture her about, you really should do this, retirement, tax advantages, and compound interest. Trust me, if a compound interest chart was going to change anybody's life, it already would have. Instead, there was a way of meeting her where she was. Nicole has a vision of her rich life.

Bailey fits in there, traveling to Europe fits in there, but I don't think she'd ever had the chance to really talk it, to really connect money to that vision of a rich life. And when she did, she quickly started to realize that she does need to be more engaged with money, that it can't always be Alex taking the lead. I appreciate them, especially Nicole for coming on and being so open about that.

I also appreciate them for sharing some of the things that a lot of people don't think about when it comes to expenses. LGBTQ relationships have expenses that straight couples don't have. And I also want to thank my coworker, Sydney, again for flagging that. Money is politics and money is political, and you'll continue to hear about that on this show. It's interesting, Nicole was able to change her mind about money. There was no magical chart, no magical spreadsheet I gave her that did it. It was her changing her own psychology, and you could hear it on this episode.

A lot of people think that they need some magical spreadsheet to change. No. In order to change, it's about making a decision to change and it's about mastering your money psychology. If you are interested in mastering your money psychology, I have a program a lot of you don't know about, it's called Wealth Triggers, and it helps you master your money psychology, so you can take dream vacations, so you can design a life you love. You can learn more at [iwt.com/wealth](http://iwt.com/wealth). That's [iwt.com/wealth](http://iwt.com/wealth). As always, thanks for listening to I Will Teach You To Be Rich.

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