

Episode 100 of Living With Money! - Transcript

Tim Mullooly: Well, everybody, it's here. We started this podcast, Living With Money, in January of 2018. I think it was the third week of January, we put out episode zero. We did episode zero first to kind of outline what the podcast was going to be about, so that was almost two years ago now, and this is episode number 100. If you've tuned in from episode zero until now, first of all, thank you. Second of all, we did it. We did it together. We got all the way to number 100. I'm super excited that this episode is finally here.

As always, I'm your host, Tim Mullooly. So today, we wanted to revisit the initial message of Living With Money, what we set out to do, and kind of check in 100 episodes later and see, have we done that? Have we delivered on what we said we're going to do? What are some of the main takeaways, main messages and themes that kept popping up throughout the podcast? I wanted to share some thoughts and share some numbers and just kind of break down what we've done over the last 100 episodes and get a handle on things before we dive into episodes 101 through 200. Let's get into it.

So like I said, in January of 2018, the first post, episode zero, in quotes, said, "This podcast is aimed to promote financial literacy and help you understand your relationship with money." I remember before January of 2018, so it was late 2017, conversations kept coming up with clients and just people my own age wishing that they had learned some topics about personal finance and doing anything with their money, learning how to manage it, learning how to spend it better, learning how to make more of it, and people always just said, "I wish I learned this in school. I wish they taught us this in middle school. I wish they taught us this in high school or even college, but they didn't. Instead we learned about science. We learned about the anatomy of a plant and animal cell, but we didn't learn how to manage our own money and stuff that we deal with in everyday life." It's kind of a head scratcher when you look back on it.

I had the conversation with my dad, Tom, who has been on a handful of podcasts, and we decided it'd be a good idea to start a podcast that would talk about these topics that people wish that they learned in school. Personal finance, budgeting, saving, basics of retirement planning, investing. We've pretty much gone out and talked to people from all different walks of life. A lot of different industries, whether it's finance or not, finance-related, and just heard about how they got their money, how they make their money, how they spend their money, their financial habits. If they're an advisor or they work in finance, how they help people manage or get more of their own money, invest it and let it grow. All things like that.

We really just wanted to hear everyone's different, unique stories with money, because every person on this planet is different. We're all individuals, so we all have our own individual stories to tell, and it couldn't hurt to hear from as many people as we can to have different resources to pull from when making our own decisions. So we've talked to a handful of small business owners, entrepreneurs, financial advisors, financial authors, people that have written books about personal finance, saving, investing, all that stuff. We've talked to restaurant owners, we've talked to lawyers, comedians, realtors, marketing professionals, personal finance experts, psychologists.

We've talked to so many different people from different career paths on this show. It's been a really wide range of guests, and I've really enjoyed that aspect of the show. We've covered financial health, we've covered mental health, we've covered athletics and finance, how those two are intertwined, emotions and people's money, how those are intertwined. Entrepreneurship, starting your own businesses, parenting and finance, how parents talk to their own kids about money, when's the right time to introduce money to their kids? How do you work that into parenting? Working with family members, we've talked about that directly here at Mullooly Asset Management, and with a couple other guests as well. We've talked about women in finance, increasing diversity within the financial industry space, building your own personal brand, early retirement, the FIRE movement, financially independent, retire early movement, pretty much just about every other personal finance tip or trick in the book. We've pretty much covered it all, but there's still plenty more that we can tackle throughout these next hundred and counting episodes. So I'm looking forward to those as well.

So to think back, when I started Living With Money, I really had no idea what I was doing as a podcast host, but I was really kind of just flying by the seat of my pants in the beginning. I didn't really know exactly what it was going to be like until we got started.

So each episode really took me kind of a long time to finish, because I spent a lot of time editing out all of the weird pauses and mess ups that I had along the way, not necessarily to guests. It was more me editing out my own mess ups. As we started episode zero here in episode 100, the turnaround time in terms of putting out episodes has significantly decreased, which is great.

So naturally, this podcast started from zero. We started with episode zero. We started with zero downloads. As of this recording today, we have a total of 21,500 total downloads. Having started from zero and having that many downloads in the first hundred episodes is really something special, and I'm super grateful for anyone who has downloaded even just one of these episodes. I didn't really have a specific number of downloads in mind as a goal when this all started. Bordering on 22,000 total downloads is certainly more than I was hoping for. If a handful of people would listen to each episode, that would be great, as long as the message was getting out to somebody, but to have the number up in the 21 thousands is pretty special. Having consistent growth of our average downloads per episode since the beginning is really something that I was hoping for and striving for, and we've accomplished that.

So like I said, I didn't really have a goal in mind in terms of number of downloads that I wanted to have, but just consistent growth was what I wanted, and so far, we've accomplished that. I also wanted to say thank you to all of the guests that I've had throughout the show. If you're listening and you've been a guest of the podcast in the past, just know that I really, really appreciate you taking time out of your day. I know we're all super busy on a day to day basis. The fact that anyone takes any time out of their day to talk with me and answer some of my questions, I'm very grateful.

So as I was getting ready to put together episode 100, I wanted to kind of reflect back on some of the things that I enjoyed the most throughout the first 100 episodes, my favorite parts of this podcast, and some of the more important lessons that I've learned throughout doing this podcast for a hundred episodes, and then also what my least favorite part is, and maybe if I could change

that throughout the next 100 episodes. So I'd have to say that probably my favorite part about hosting this podcast over the last almost two years now has been how much it's expanded my network professionally.

Being an advisor, being a young professional in this industry, it's tough to make a name for yourself or, for lack of a better phrase, have people take you seriously when the traditional, close your eyes ... Someone says think of a financial advisor, you picture someone in their 50s, maybe 60, gray hair and a suit with 25, 30 years experience, and here I am with no gray hair yet. My experience level right now is only at five years.

These last two years have really felt like they've added almost a decade to my repertoire in terms of knowledge, personal finance topics, investing topics, financial planning topics that we can talk about with clients. It's really made me a better advisor overall, hearing from all of these people, all of these advisors, people that I probably wouldn't have had these types of interactions with if I didn't have a podcast.

There are people from Twitter. If you follow along on Twitter, there's always a conversation going on fin twit, finance Twitter. Not just interacting on Twitter, but being able to actually connect with these people, whether it's in person or remotely, and having an hour long, even longer sometimes, conversation with these people. It's definitely great to meet, establish that connection, just build your network from such a young age. It's really something special that I definitely cherish a lot, and it's been my favorite part, probably, of this podcast.

The most important lesson that I've learned through podcasting and hosting Living With Money is to always be prepared, even if that means being over-prepared. In my experience, it's always been better to have more to talk about than less. In the beginning, I didn't really know how much content was going to be needed to fill up the amount of time that I wanted each interview to be, but as we went along, I really did learn how much was needed to fill the time, and that it was always better to have more questions to talk about than less. Researching guests and creating outlines for episodes was something that I was completely new to. Taking the extra time to really go in depth with my preparation has certainly made for more thoughtful conversations and better episodes.

As a host, I feel like my favorite compliment from a guest is when they say how thoughtful and good the questions are. That really makes me happy, because I do take time to research what we're going to be talking about that day, and in my opinion, if that person is taking the time out of their day, which ... We're all super busy. Like I said before, if they're taking 30, 40 minutes, even an hour out of their day to come and talk to me and be on my podcast, the least I can do is take time to create thoughtful, thought provoking questions for them to dig into on the podcast and make it as good of an episode as possible. So I always like hearing back from the guests when they enjoyed the questions that I had for them. It means that we're going to have a really great episode.

So I wanted to take a second to talk about social media when it comes to podcasts, and just content in general. Obviously, without platforms like Apple Podcasts, Spotify, Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, LinkedIn, the show wouldn't have nearly as many downloads as it does, but

social media is probably my least favorite part of this podcast, if I had to pick anything. I still enjoy, obviously, the ability to reach so many people on Twitter, Facebook, Instagram. The whole internet is at play at that point, so that's a really great aspect in terms of promoting your content, but sometimes, probably the only thing about the podcast that sometimes gets me down is social media. If for some reason, that week's episode doesn't get the engagement on social media that I was hoping for, or that I built up in my head, "This is one of my best episodes. I know for a fact it's going to go crazy on the internet. People are going to love it. They're going to share it. It's going to be one of the most downloaded ones."

If for some reason, that doesn't happen, I find myself thinking that it's, for some reason, a reflection on me or that it wasn't my best work, and I also feel a sense of letting the guests down by not getting them the "right amount" of downloads necessary to warrant them taking time out of their busy day to come on the show in the first place. I know that that is not the right way to think about things, but in the beginning and for a while, that's what would go through my head when we put out a new episode, and it wouldn't catch fire right away.

It took me awhile to realize that it's kind of a trap set up by social media. Just because an episode or a post didn't get the amount of clicks or likes that I was hoping doesn't mean that it was bad work or a subpar episode. There are so many different factors that play into how a poster, an episode "performs" on social media that have nothing to do with the quality of your work, and that goes for this podcast, it goes for anyone out there creating any types of content.

The best part about these podcast episodes is that they exist in perpetuity on the internet. You can easily go and listen to episode one right now, just as easily as you can listen to episode 99. They are always going to be on the internet, and that's one of the best things about the internet. Some of the earliest episodes of the show are still getting regular plays and downloads almost two years later, and that's absolutely amazing.

So like I said in the beginning, we've had a lot of guests on the podcast that have touched on different areas of finance, whether it's investing or budgeting, saving retirement, student loans, millennials, and we've also had entrepreneurs, business owners from different career paths all over the place. There are some common themes or common topics that have come up throughout the episodes. Everyone has their own unique spin on things, which is why I love talking to individuals, because you can talk about what seems to be the same topics, but hear it in a different way that might make it more clear if you had listened to it from another person. Even if someone's describing the same topic to you, if someone says it a little bit differently, they might say it in a way that just clicks in your head, and there are some common themes, though, within how people describe these different topics.

So I've picked out a handful of topics, and then I've also picked out the common themes within those topics that people have described. There are plenty more than what I'm going to outline here, but these are just the ones I feel like that have been said the most and reinforced the most on the podcast.

Here we go. The first thing ... We've talked to a handful of business owners, whether they're owning a registered investment advisory firm or a restaurant, or their own type of business,

whatever it may be. In terms of entrepreneurship, there's a handful of points I feel like that have been touched on throughout the podcast and throughout the number of interviews that we've done. So the first point is, regardless of the industry, you need to deliver value to your clients and customers. It feels almost like common sense, but if you're not delivering value to the people that you serve, they're not going to pay you for whatever good or service you're offering. So there needs to be some sort of value add there. Whether you're running a restaurant, selling homes, operating an auto shop or starting your own RIA firm, if you deliver consistent value to your clients, you're going to succeed.

Entrepreneurship, really, another point, is also all about planning, especially things on the back end in terms of finances within small businesses and other ventures, planning out your finances is so important. Cashflow planning is probably the most important thing, honestly, for an individual, but also in terms of entrepreneurship and running your own business. You hear so many times that startups fail in the first few years because they run out of money, not because, necessarily, the idea that they had for the business was bad, but they didn't necessarily know how to do the books on the backend or successfully run a business from a financial standpoint. They just ran out of cash or they weren't bringing in enough revenue. Planning out your cashflow ahead of time and how much money you're going to need, how much money are you going to need to break even, bring in, turn a profit eventually. These are all things that you need to plan ahead of time, regardless of the industry that you're in.

Another point in terms of entrepreneurship is that you have to love what you're doing. We heard the quote, "If you love what you do, you never work a day in your life," too many times to count, honestly, throughout the first 99 episodes, because it's so true.

The amount of hard work and hours and manpower it takes to get a business off the ground and running is so much that it'd be really easy to burn out quickly if you didn't have a real passion for what you're doing. So if you're about to start a business and you don't really love waking up every morning to go do what you're about to start doing, I would think twice about starting that business. I feel like it's a prerequisite for your career and entrepreneurial venture.

Another topic that we talk about a lot on the podcast is budgeting. I've said a couple of times that I don't like the word budget, because you see people cringe a lot when you mention the word budget, because it makes them think of all the things that they can't do or they can't spend money on, but I always like to kind of reposition that, and that it lets you know what you can spend money on. We're going to touch on a couple points about budgeting here, or if you want to call it cash flow planning, there's an alternative term for budgeting as well. There's a million ways that you can slice it and you can say it however you want, but tips for successful budgeting, it really all boils down to one thing, and that one thing is spend less money than you bring in. If you spend less money than you're bringing in, you're going to have fewer financial problems than majority of humans on this planet, I guarantee it. It's hard to be financially successful when you run a deficit every month.

Another point that a lot of people brought up throughout our interviews on the show was when you're making a budget or when you're planning out your cashflow, make sure that you're focusing on the right things or the most impactful things, I think. There's a lot that gets said in

the media, it's kind of click baity that people write headlines about, "That three or \$4 cup of coffee that you're buying every day is ruining your finances."

Understand the impact that these items are having on your budget. Yeah, you can save money by not buying that \$5 latte every day, but you not buying lattes isn't going to fix the fact that, let's say you bought a bigger house than you can afford in terms of mortgage payments, or you rented too nice of an apartment and you can't afford the rent payments every month, or you bought this new car that you really can't afford.

Saving \$5 every day on your latte isn't going to move the needle enough in terms of savings for that to balance out your cash flow problems. Big ticket items like housing and vehicles, cars, medical expenses on a monthly basis, monthly groceries, how much you actually spend on food and not just the little accessory items are going to significantly outweigh the little things like spending a few extra dollars on a latte. The last thing that I'll mention in terms of budgeting is to pay yourself first. In terms of saving money, only saving what is left over at the end of each month is really a recipe for disaster, and it's also a recipe for having no savings. Establishing good savings habits at the beginning of each month, at the beginning of each pay period, if you get paid once or twice a month, it'll increase your likelihood of actually increasing your savings rate.

There are more episodes than I can count that touch on retirement in some way, shape or form. In terms of retirement plans at work, I think one thing that almost everyone brought up when we talked about 401ks was if your company has a match for a 401k, those are very important to take advantage of. "Free money", so at least contributing up to the match for a 401k, if that's an option for you, is definitely something that you want to take advantage of. Another thing that people kind of agreed upon was in terms of contributing at all to a retirement account, make sure that you have your current expenditures taken care of first, things that you need now in the present day, because you don't want to put money into a retirement account like an IRA or 401k or a 403b that's earmarked for retirement, and then you have to prematurely take money out of those retirement accounts to pay for emergencies today.

Having said that, another thing that people also mentioned was that getting started earlier, if you can ... Again, if you can, is the key phrase there. Getting started as early as you can is one of the most impactful things that you do. We talk about compound interest and the power that that has to really elevate your savings and elevate how much money you have in retirement and how much your investments are worth. Making regular contributions over a long period of time and letting them grow in a diversified portfolio like a 401k or an IRA with low fees is a good recipe for success down the road.

Another point that we wanted to bring up, if you're young and early in your career, the most important thing to focus on in terms of your retirement and your retirement accounts is how much you're contributing and how much you're putting away. The day to day, even year to year performance of the investments is significantly less important to the money that you're regularly sending in to the account. So as long as you're sending money in and it's being invested, if you're in your 20s or 30s and this money is earmarked for your 60s or 70s or 80s, the performance of

those years when you're 31, 32 years old are way less important than actually just putting money into the account. So keep that in mind.

In terms of retirement, too, that word is kind of squishy, it's kind of fluid. Retirement is changing in terms of the definition of retirement. So one thing that we talk about on the podcast a lot is to identify what retirement means to you. Everyone's goals are different, and it's hard to plan for retirement and what you're going to do in retirement if you don't know what you want to do when you get there.

So having goals, specific goals, or as specific as you can at this time, specific enough goals for retirement, that'll really help you plan things out, and you can narrow down the specifics as you get closer, but just having goals in mind, questions to ask yourself when you're thinking about retirement.

Are you ever planning on fully retiring? Do you want to work part time in retirement? Retire, but then just get a part time gig to keep yourself busy? Are you going to reinvent yourself completely and start a new business when you retire from your current job? Are you physically going to move in retirement? Do you want to move down south? Do you want to move out west? Do you want to move down the street? Things to consider. Do you never want to retire at all? There are a lot of different questions in terms of retirement, and it's going to be different for everyone else.

One topic that was touched on a lot were student loans, and I think almost everybody that I talked to mentioned at some point, student loans, there needs to be more education surrounding student loans, whether that's for parents who are taking out loans or for students. It's a head scratcher to think that a 17 year old student is going to be able to make such an important financial decision when they don't know the first thing about these loans. We haven't taught them anything about these loans. We haven't given them the knowledge or the tools to be able to make these decisions, and we haven't really taught them about the consequences, potentially, of what they're doing to themselves. So just across the board, I think education about student loans would be a really helpful crash course for students in their junior, senior year of high school.

In terms of investing, we've done a handful of episodes that are strictly about investing, but some quick bullet points about investing that I think are important and that have been touched upon in different episodes here. Thinking back on all of the conversations that I've had about investing with people on this podcast, I don't think there was anybody out there petitioning for more complex investment strategies. So when it comes to investing, in a phrase, keep it simple. In terms of investment vehicles, we talked a lot about ETFs, exchange traded funds. They have a handful of advantages over other types of investments like mutual funds or individual stocks. A few key advantages that we've talked about on this show for ETFs, they generally have lower overall fees than a mutual fund or other types of investment vehicles out there, and the diversification aspect of it. It's more diversified than just owning an individual stock. You can own a basket of stocks.

So there are certain prerequisites that a lot of the guests agreed upon before you should start investing. One of those is to have a sufficient emergency fund. The general rule of thumb is

anywhere from three to six months of expenses in the bank. Having a handle on your debt is also another thing that you should have before you start investing. Now, having a handle on your debt doesn't necessarily mean having no debt. If it's credit card debt, that's another story, but in terms of debt, as long as you're managing a debt like student loans or your mortgage payment or a car loan, those kinds of debts, as long as they're being managed and you have a game plan for how to attack those on a monthly basis and eventually pay them down, that's what you need before getting started with investing.

Again, credit card debt is something else on its own. You should tackle that before getting into some serious investing. Potentially, one of the most important things about investments and different types of investments in your account is finding an allocation for those investments that you can stick with. There's endless debates on the internet on fin twit, finance Twitter that you can go check out. These debates, like I said, they're never going to end about what the "best portfolio construction" would look like, but really, the best one out there is the one that you can live with, the one that you can stick with when markets get tough, and they don't cause you to rip your hair out and lose sleep over it. So as long as your portfolio is something that you can feel comfortable with and it gives you peace of mind, then that's the right portfolio for you. So it's all about finding that balance.

We talk a lot about marketing and branding. I think one of the most agreed upon topics in terms of marketing and branding was just to be authentic, to be yourself. I mean, there really is no such thing as being too authentic. People can always sniff out a phony. It's not going to help you build any strong relationships if you're being someone that you're not. People can tell when you're being fake or people can tell when you're just trying to say something that you think they want to hear. So as long as you're being yourself and you're being authentic, that's going to be a way to build stronger relationships with the clients that you have.

Another thing in terms of branding, putting out content and marketing is that the platform in which you put it out is relatively unimportant, but it doesn't hurt to try out the different platforms until you find what you enjoy doing the most, and that's the biggest key, I think. Whether it's video or written blog posts or podcasts like this, the most important thing when choosing a platform or platforms is finding the ones that you enjoy doing. Your passion for the work will shine through, and it's really going to just attract people more to your brand and to your business if you enjoy what you're doing.

This next topic is more for financial advisors specifically. We talked to a lot of different advisors out there who own their own firms or work for some sort of family firm or small office RAA out there. The one point that a lot of people brought up was get used to technology. Don't avoid it. The advisors that do, the advisors that refuse to adapt to the change in technology are going to be left behind. It's that simple, and this probably goes for any industry, but finding ways to incorporate this new technology. It's only going to help attract new clients, and it's going to help you service your existing clients at a higher level.

There are a handful of other topics that were covered in a lot of different episodes, but those were just a handful that popped up the most in terms of things that were covered on a lot of different episodes by a lot of different guests. So I just wanted to take a couple minutes to recap

there. Probably one of the most overheard phrases on this show is that they call it personal finance for a reason. It's personal. I can't count, and I don't want to sit down and count the amount of times that some variation of that phrase was used during the first 99 episodes of the show, but it was a lot, and it's a lot because it's so true. It really underlies every topic and every point that we've touched on in this episode and in the 99 episodes before that.

I think that is what makes managing your personal finances so difficult. The true answer, the absolute truth to every answer could very well be, "It depends," and that is super frustrating, and I get it. For people that don't work in the industry and they don't manage people's money and they don't deal with personal finances on a day to day basis, it's very easy to just throw your hands up in the air and say, "Well, I don't know. It depends." What works for you might not work for me, and what works for me might not work for someone else, but that doesn't mean that we shouldn't try and learn as much as possible about these different topics and about making the most of our money. We're just going to be happier people for it if you have a handle on, on your finances.

There are a lot of choices to be made in terms of personal finance, and that's why we've been able to have 100 episodes of a show like this, because there are so many different choices that can be made that can end up being the right choice, but choosing ignorance when it comes to learning about personal finance and burying your head in the sand and not wanting to acknowledge that you need to learn how to manage your money, is always going to be the wrong choice.

We've heard from so many awesome, awesome, amazing people during the first 100 episodes of this show, but I need your help out there listening right now to make the next 100 episodes even better. Who should I look to talk to you for episodes 101 through 200? Who do you think would be the very best guests possible that I could get for this show? If you have someone in mind that you think would be great to have on the show, it doesn't have to be finance related. Like I said, we've talked to people from different industries. If you know someone that you would want to hear as a guest on the show, let me know. You can send us messages on social media, find us on Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, all Living With Money, or you can shoot me an email over at tim@livingwithmoney.com. Not only guests, but topics too. If there's topic that we haven't covered yet on the show, or one that you would like us to expand a little bit more upon, let us know. Again, email, social media, any way you want to get in contact with me, that'd be great.

I just want to say thank you for hanging in there from episode zero to episode 100. It's been a really, really fun two years, and I can't wait to see what happens during the next 100 episodes of this show. So as always, thanks for listening to this episode of Living With Money, and we'll catch you on the next one.