



## Ep 95: Raising Smart Kids is the Wisest Investment

**Keith:** Welcome to the Empowered Investor. My name is Keith Matthews and I'm joined by my co-host, Marcelo Taboada. Marcelo, how are you today?

**Marcelo:** Keith, I'm doing really good. I always say the same thing, excited, but honestly, this episode that we just recorded with Robin Taub was amazing. It was remarkable and I'm going to become a parent very soon, so I'm really interested in the subject as well.

**Keith:** Well, absolutely. So, what exactly is the subject, Marcelo?

**Marcelo:** Our guest today, Robin Taub, wrote a book about how to train and coach parents so they can teach their kids about money and responsible money habits. The book is called The Wisest Investment because Robin thinks that this is the wisest investment that parents will ever make.

**Keith:** And for quite a while now, parents struggle with how do you teach kids, doesn't matter whether they're five years old, ten-year, teen, how do you teach them good money habits? She addresses adolescents, teenagers.

**Marcelo:** I'll tell you what the book does something, and we covered a lot of it in the podcast It was a great conversation, but the book is really good at organizing various subjects, it breaks it down by age category. You're not going to talk to a kid the same way you talk to an adult child or a teenager or an adolescent, so it's broken down in those four categories.

She has a lot of exercises and resources in the book that families can sit down, parents can sit down and do together. And she coaches parents how to be better at teaching kids about money, the book has some exercises. It pushes parents to sit down and evaluate their money values. It pushes them to say, are we a good role model for our kids?

And I find the book is short, is very relatable, very readable. I joked with her in the podcast, and I said, I'm going through the process of having a baby now and in the hospital they give you this book about toddlers and babies. Your book should be handed out at the same time because this is such a crucial subject for parents.

**Keith:** Marcelo, you're always ahead of the curve when it comes to reading. So, while you are expecting, I suspect you won't be able to put some of these teachable moments into play for a few years still.

**Marcelo:** You have very responsible kids, were you intentional about teaching kids about money or is this something that just happened?

**Keith:** We tried our best to be intentional. I'm in the world of finance, but I must say, listening to what Robin Taub has to say, I think we just scratched the surface. And it's such a gift for a parent or



grandparent to be able to provide to their kids this idea of learning how to be independent, learning how to be financially responsible, because we see the side effects.

We see individuals who sometimes haven't had that exposure. And at 40 or 50, they're very hard habits. In fact, wouldn't say it's too late, but you can tell they just didn't have that upbringing. They didn't have that direction. So, I'm excited to see you and Robin in the interview and the discussion. I think it's a fantastic topic.

And I know you're full of energy when it comes to this subject.

**Marcelo:** Yeah, and look, she said it in the podcast too, it's never too late. So just because you never started, it doesn't mean parents can't pick up the book and start. I mean, I'm the greatest example of that. I wasn't financially responsible up until I was 19, 20 years old.

I had to learn on my own and now I'm going to pass down those lessons to my kids. But I think if parents are in a period where maybe they think it's too late, it's not. They can just start implementing the ideas in the book right away.

**Keith:** A hundred percent. Today's show is really geared for parents or grandparents with young kids in elementary school, kids in high school, as well as young adults.

Adults, when you say adults, you're talking twenties.

**Marcelo:** Yeah. Getting to university, finishing their degrees, getting their first job. And then the book starts with strategies as early as five years old.

**Keith:** Wonderful. Well, listen, let's get into the episode. Marcelo, thanks so much for doing the interview with Robin Thobe.

And folks, enjoy today's episode.

**Marcelo:** Thank you. Robin, welcome to the show.

**Robin:** Thank you.

**Marcelo:** I cannot tell you how excited I am about today's show. And people make fun of me because I always say that about every episode. But today in particular, I'll tell you something. My wife and I are expecting a kid in July. I think we exchanged that information before.

**Robin:** Yes. Congratulations.



**Marcelo:** Thank you so much, I'm in parenting mode. I'm reading a lot of books and it's funny, I find that your book is fascinating in a lot of ways, and I think this is something that when you go to the hospital and they give you this little book about toddlers and babies, I think this book should be handed over to parents right away.

**Robin:** I've heard that before. Actually. Someone else said that to me. If you know anyone that could get it into the hospitals, hook me up.

**Marcelo:** But honestly, I love so many things about the book.

**Robin:** Thank you.

**Marcelo:** Because the way you break it down into different age categories, the way you added the exercises and the teachable moments and the discussion points.

I think the discussion points are interesting because I'm doing this thing now with my wife that we're trying to jot down our values as a family. And as I was reading your book, I was like, "Oh my God, we're doing this as we speak". So, I find the way you structured the book and the resources you added in the book and then pointing people to your website is amazing.

**Robin:** Thank you. Yes. I did try to make it really accessible for parents because as you know, we're financial professionals, but for most people, this is a really overwhelming, difficult thing to try to teach their kids about money. I did try to make it accessible; it's written in plain language. It's broken down, as you said, by age and stage that your child is at.

First chapter, though, is really for parents to help them get their own financial house in order. And I know we're going to answer a lot of this stuff. And yes, I tried to build in some interactive exercises. The values validator, the financial role model, as well as some financial templates like a team budget, a goal setting worksheet.

It's really a practical book. That's why I say it's a book that you'll turn to again and again. My vision would be for families to have it lying around in the kitchen and just be able to refer to it often.

**Marcelo:** I think it gets people into the frame of mind because I think if you're intentional about it and you write it down and you really put pen to paper, you're more likely to do it.

We're reading this book now, I mean, not related to the subject, but we're reading this book called Atomic Habits, and it's all about just making it easy for yourself.

**Robin:** I have that book too, actually. And you're right, sometimes it is just the act of writing something down, whether it's a goal or something you think you really want. Sometimes just writing it down makes it more real, makes it more tangible, and yeah, we can get into all that stuff.



**Marcelo:** A hundred percent. You have an amazing background too. You work in banking, you worked in accounting firms, you're a CA, CPA by training. I couldn't help but thinking, what is the genesis of the book? What made you go and say, I want to become an author and write about this subject? Because you have kids as well.

**Robin:** I do. I do have kids that are now in their late twenties. As you said, I am an accountant by training, and I did start off very traditionally in audit at KPMG and then I moved into tax at Ernst Young.

And then I took like a hard pivot away from public accounting and I worked at Citibank Canada for five years in derivatives marketing, which I really enjoyed. Very challenging job. I've always been good with numbers, but also good with words. So, it's a weird combination. Usually some people say, Oh, they're terrible at math, they're English people. And likewise, a lot of numbers of people are not great communicators, but I discovered that I had both those skills. The way it came about was interesting, I was doing some work with the Ontario Securities Commission. I was writing content for their consumer website, which is Get Smarter About Money.

But I was also doing some volunteer work for CPA Canada on the women's leadership initiative that they had. Through that, I got to know them and CPA Canada, which was the governing body for CPAs in Canada, they had done research after the 2008 global financial crisis. And that research found that 78 percent of parents had tried to teach their kids about money, but more than two thirds didn't feel they'd been particularly successful, and half didn't even know what information they needed.

Based on that research and focus groups they approached me; they commissioned me to write this book. The first version of this book was written for them, published by them, and then The Wisest Investment. We parted ways and I went on and updated The Wisest Investment for our current digital world.

The original book came out 13 or 14 years ago now. So, that's how it all came about, but at the time they asked me to do it, I had never thought about writing a book. I think a lot of people are like, oh, I've always wanted to write a book. Okay. I never really thought about it, but I knew I could do it.

And once I figured out the structure, which is what you mentioned at the beginning, it really fell into place. I used research. I used my own experiences with my kids. We did focus groups with parents, and I did a lot of other research as well.

**Marcelo:** That's amazing. And by the way, I used to do volunteering at this organization that helped a lot of refugees and people coming into the country.

And I always used to point to Get Smart About Money because it's such an amazing website.

**Robin:** I know it was so good. I discovered it too initially because I was doing work with clients trying to just teach some people basics about personal finance and investing. And I was like, well, I need to go to a good source that's objective and informational and written in plain language. That's how I came across



it. I ended up pitching the director of the site and just saying, like, are you looking for anyone to help with either getting the word out or content. And they actually said, yes, we need someone to help write the personal tax stuff.

Given my background, that's how I started really with financial content creation. And it was a great first client to have. They were really great to work with that. It was part of the investor education fund and ended up getting rolled into the office of consumer OSC. So, it doesn't really exist the way it used to, but I think the website is still out there. Get smarter about money for people that are interested.

**Marcelo:** I still use it a lot because it uses very simple information, and they use very simple concepts to use to explain complex subjects. I like their stuff. I don't know if they have it anymore, but they used to have things about life events, things that were important for people.

**Robin:** That's right. That's how the website was structured, by life events, because that was evidence based. Research showed that people care about these financial decisions and will take in the information when it's relevant to them, life stages such as you're getting married, you're having a child, you're getting divorced, you're critically ill, whatever it was.

And as you can see, you're married, you're having a child, you can see what types of financial decisions or issues come up at those life stages. I learned a lot working with them and it was really a great experience.

**Marcelo:** Honestly, I could tell that when you look at the way the book is written, you can tell it's written by somebody who's very organized, either an engineer or an accountant, because the way you flow the chapters and the worksheets at the end. I really love, and by the way, we're going to buy some copies and offer it to people, but we're going to also share a link where people can go and buy the book themselves. And honestly, I can't say enough. This is a book that every parent should have, because I remember we were talking about dogs, my wife, and I own two dogs. And one of the first things that when we hired a trainer he said is I'm not training your dogs. I'm training you guys to be able to convey to the dog, so I think the book does that for people.

**Robin:** Yes, that's such a good analogy. I love that, and I just listened to this podcast that I really like called What It's Like to Be. Dan Heath is the host, and he did a dog trainer, and she talked so much about training the parents. So that really is the idea with this book, because the book really is written for parents or grandparents or aunts or uncles or really any kind of mentor to teach their children or grandchildren. I mean it could be picked up by older kids and read by them and understood as well. But you're right, it is really analogous to that. And I just wanted to pick up on one other thing you said about the organization, it's funny that you thought I was either an accountant or an engineer. I was just having this conversation with my son. Because as I mentioned, I was always good at math, but it wasn't math-y enough, in my opinion, to be an engineer. And my son said, you mean physics-y enough. And I was like, yeah, I guess so.



But my brother is an engineer and an accountant, actually, as well. And his son is an engineer. So, there's definitely that thinking and brain. And I just started getting into adult Lego, which is all about building and engineering, there's something about that that appeals to me. But it's interesting that you said that, that that shows in the book.

**Marcelo:** Yeah, absolutely. I definitely picked that up and I gave the book to my wife as well as a wink.

**Robin:** Yeah, hint, hint. Well, it's actually, you can see on Amazon that it's often one of the most gifted books in its category. So, I think people are doing that. They're buying it for their adult kids to use on their grandkids, or they're buying it for their spouse or partner, like the hint, hint, this is something we should be doing.

**Marcelo:** Amazing. Okay, let me ask you, because we need to get into the book, why is financial literacy important? Why is teaching your kids about money the wisest investment?

**Robin:** There's two ways to look at this from the perspective of the children themselves, kids, and from the perspective of the parents. So, from the kids' perspective, if we don't teach our kids about money, they're going to be lacking a basic life skill.

I think it's inarguable that knowing how to manage money is a basic life skill and that can really catch up with you as time goes on if you don't build that foundation. Second, if we don't teach them about money, then they may start to form bad habits at an early age, like living beyond their means, that become difficult to break as they get older.

And you mentioned atomic habits, so you know, habits, they create neural pathways in the brain, and they're hard to rewire once they're established. So, it's easier to establish good habits early than try to rewire bad ones later. We want our kids to develop good habits from an early age. And then the third thing, last week was mental health week in Canada and its mental health awareness in the U.S. and something we've been thinking about is the connection between money and health. So, money is the number one source of stress right now, according to research, for the sixth year in a row, sixth year, greater than work, personal relationships, or health. And money worries can lead to losing sleep, not sleeping well.

Half of Canadians say they've lost sleep over money worries and Americans as well have said that 50%. But also, can lead to more serious physical health issues like high blood pressure, heart disease, other ailments like migraines or immune disorders, and obviously mental health issues like anxiety and stress.

And then it can become this vicious cycle because you have to spend money on those things and then can exacerbate your financial issues. And stress and anxiety can even make people more vulnerable to fraud. So, we want better for our kids. We want to help them gain a basic life skill, develop good habits, and avoid some of these implications or consequences of financial stress.



From the parent's perspective, most Canadians cannot afford to support their adult children financially. That's a whole other topic in itself. Now maybe some families can, but they also know that doing so encourages dependency and it's not really something most parents want. They want their kids to find purpose and fulfillment in their lives and be independent and responsible.

It's so important from both the kids and the parents' point of view to answer your question about why this the wisest investment is.

**Marcelo:** A hundred percent. It's interesting that you mentioned that some parents can't afford to help their kids, and I read today in the Globe and Mail that there's a study done by Fidelity recently and they found that 60% of parents in Canada are considering helping their kids with money to either buy a home or something much of a larger purchase, and 25% or a quarter are helping their kids with day to day or month to month expenses.

Which is crazy when you think about it, because we have an impending retirement crisis in this country. And you think about, I'm in this world right now where pre pandemic, rarely, I used to have clients ask me about helping their kids buy a property. And now I'm getting questions, not often, and I'm seeing it more in the news that parents are willing to fork out \$50- 100,000 to help their kids buy a home, and that's crazy.

Most of them can't afford it and it's going to lead to bad outcomes in the future. But again, that's another topic in itself.

**Robin:** I also saw research, I forgot at the moment, it might have been Raymond James. It was in the U.S., but it was 70 percent of parents or grandparents said that they would offer financial support to family, even if it jeopardized their own financial future, which is what you're saying.

I think just post pandemic, the cost of living is so exorbitant right now. Rent and housing is off the charts. Insurance, everywhere you look, interest rates are high. It's so expensive to live, and I think that's why you're seeing that so much more. I'm going to look for that article on the globe. I've seen similar research, but this sounds like it's Canadian and more recent.

So yes, thanks for mentioning that.

**Marcelo:** And then I want to make a comment also on what you said before about relationships and establishing good habits, because I think you mentioned also diseases of despair, you know, anxiety, things that come with a lot of stress in life. I find that sometimes money is interesting in the way that we see these things at the extremes.

You'll see extreme poverty will lead to a lot of bad outcomes and despair and depression and anxiety, but you also get to see that at the extreme levels of people who are super wealthy.

**Robin:** Yeah. The ultra-high net worth. Yes.



**Marcelo:** So, I find it interesting that when you have that concept of teaching your kids, because your book talks a lot about also living within your means and not going into debt and having just this healthy relationship with money where people are making good choices.

I find that that's a very thoughtful way of going about it as opposed to saying, Hey, just go get a career and make a ton of money. It's more like organized in that sense, I find.

**Robin:** Yeah, it's not about how much you make. It's usually about the decisions that you make with the money that you do earn or have.

And like you said, yes, this can happen at both extremes, but I think at one extreme where you don't have enough, it's an issue of scarcity and making ends meet. And that is very stressful. And I think in the high net worth or ultra-high net worth, the issue becomes one of purpose because there's no issue around making money or often there's plenty.

There's more than enough. So, the issue is for your children, how do they have a sense of purpose, not a sense of entitlement, because when you don't have purpose, then life can become really difficult and less meaningful and less fulfilling. I don't know if you've ever read the books about the Astor families or the Vanderbilt families that Anderson Cooper wrote.

I always wonder, I go to New York a lot and like, whatever happened to those families? Clearly, That wealth did not survive, and you can see why. Talk about lack of purpose. It was like the idle rich. So anyways, those are really interesting books to understand, like the other extreme, but definitely money worries do lead to real health issues.

**Marcelo:** Yeah. I don't know if you've read the book, The Good Life. It's based on the longest study on happiness from Harvard University. It's an amazing book. And the way I was thinking about that is when you were talking about our relationship with money and how we teach our kids and how that leads to happier lives is the one common denominator was the fact that people had healthy relationships.

Can you have a support group or friends that you can call at 3am to go pick you up when you're in trouble? Can you pick up a phone and share something intimate with a friend or a family member? The common denominator in the unhappiness was alcohol for some reason.

**Robin:** Yes, people will turn to alcohol, drugs, other unhealthy coping mechanisms when they have stress. I'm not surprised to hear that. I know that personal relationships are a great source of fulfillment and meaning in people's lives. Have you read Viktor Frankl, Man's Search for Meaning?

**Marcelo:** Yeah, that's an amazing book.

**Robin:** So that's a classic, I mentioned that in one of my newsletters and apparently there's an edition for children. I mean, that's not an easy book to read as an adult, but they've created a version for children.





**Marcelo:** But I was going to say too, the other thing that made me think about the book, *The Good Life* is money doesn't buy happiness. And I think you allude to that in your book, but the lack thereof can create a lot of stress.

But I think when you do have a good relationship with money, and you've almost taken care of your basic needs. That gives you the possibility of having a good life and becoming a good person so you're able to have healthy and good relationships with people. Because if you don't have that healthy relationship with money, it can lead to bad things and it can lead to bad outcomes.

And I think that's why it's so important to talk about these things and be intentional about it. I keep talking about being intentional because I think I've been stuck a lot in my life where I feel like I need to do things, but if I'm not intentional about it I just revert back to the mean or the default state, which is sometimes bad habits or something like that.

**Robin:** You're right. As we said, it's hard to rewire. So, you do have to be intentional. And for some people writing something down is one way to do that. Having a coach or some accountability partner, really helpful.

**Marcelo:** Perfect. So let me ask you about something else. So, I was looking at some data and there was a survey of about 1500 Canadians.

And that survey found that 65 percent of people said that their parents' relationship with money influenced their own relationship with finances. Also, in the U S there was another study that found that 70 percent of respondents said their parents was the most influenced in the way they view money or in the way they behave around money.

Clearly, parents are a key part in the financial education, but are we doing a good job? What's an impediment that parents are having to teach their kids about money?

**Robin:** Definitely parents are the primary source of information. As I say, they are financial role models, whether they are aware of it or not, and good or bad, because your kids are aware of the good and the bad money habits in the home.

So, what are the impediments to parents doing a good job with this? Well, like I shared at the beginning, most parents feel like they don't have enough time or enough knowledge to teach their kids about money. They also feel like they lack the opportunity that's related to not having enough time.

But those are the two main reasons, as well as feeling that they're not good with money themselves. So, there's a bit of shame around that and then it's like, well, how am I supposed to teach my kids about money if I'm not even doing a good job myself? But what I feel is that you and your kids can learn together.



It's never too late to learn something new. And that's why the first chapter really is focused on parents to help them get their own financial house in order so that they can lead by example and model good financial behavior for their kids.

**Marcelo:** That is so true. You know, I think a lot about my upbringing and the way I grew up with money.

So, I grew up in the single parent home. I grew up with my mom only and I do remember and the interesting thing about is Latino families. It's a taboo subject. So, I grew up in Latin America I grew up in El Salvador. We weren't poor, but we weren't super rich. We were what you call middle class. One home, one income, and I do remember that my mom never, ever sat down with us and said, "Hey, we are struggling with money, or we can't buy this, or we can't buy that".

As a kid, I used to always say, "Hey, I want this. Just put it on the credit card or just swipe that thing that you have". And I never had those conversations. They only became evident after. I had to be very intentional when I ended up being a financial advisor, which is the irony of all this. But I do think that I would've benefited because I did a lot of mistakes growing up when I was 18, 19.

I remember once I spent a whole paycheck as soon as I got my first job, and that was a hard lesson because I didn't have money.

**Robin:** What'd you spend it on?

**Marcelo:** Shoes

**Robin:** really? Interesting.

**Marcelo:** Which is funny now because I don't like shoes that much. I have a few pairs only, but I had to learn the hard way because I didn't have those lessons as a kid.

And my parents, my mom never talked to me about it. So just how do you think when we have those cultural barriers or money becomes a tough subject, how can parents break that barrier? How can parents become intentional about teaching their kids about money?

**Robin:** So, it is really hard for parents. It's uncomfortable.

I joke around when I do my keynote and I'm like, who here would rather talk to their kids about sex than money? Also, a bit of a, can be an uncomfortable subject. And neither of these are one nor done conversations, usually, especially the money talk. You want to keep having them. I think it's still taboo.

You were saying at either end of the spectrum, if you don't have a lot, there's scarcity. I think maybe in your mom's case, perhaps she didn't want to worry you as a single parent about being a provider, or even in dual household incomes where it's challenging. I think parents are concerned about how much information to share about that.



At the other end, when there's so much money, there's a concern about when we tell the kids that there's this kind of wealth, and if we wait too long, there's issues. Tell them too early, there's issues. I think there's so many reasons. And then also feeling like they don't have enough time. They're not really knowledgeable enough and they're not good at it themselves.

There are so many reasons why it's still taboo. And then I think also, there's just this cultural thing that it's crass to talk about money, or at least it used to be that way. Just, it felt like you're bragging. Maybe it's like a Puritan type of throwback thing to Canadian culture, American culture. But I also think that younger generations now are a, And they are more comfortable talking about how much they make, or if they're getting help from their parents for things.

I just get that impression talking to younger people and just seeing what goes on social media. And I'm sure you've seen a lot of these FinTech apps. You can compare yourself to other people. I think there's less stigma around it than there used to be, but I still think parents are afraid they're going to get uncomfortable questions.

Like, are we rich or are we poor? Or how much money do you make, or do we have a mortgage, those things. And so, parents just, they're uncomfortable, so they want to avoid it. But that's not doing anyone any good.

**Marcelo:** I think the problem too is, you mentioned two working parents or two incomes. You mentioned this in the book, I'm not coming with this up from scratch, that there is less time.

When you look at life in North America, it's two jobs, less community, less family help. People have to bring their kids to daycare, go to work, come back, do supper, clean the house. It is tough.

**Robin:** And it feels like just one more thing you have to do is teach your kids about money on top of everything else.

I think you're going to ask me about this, but that's why I love the idea of looking for teachable moments. These organic opportunities that will crop up naturally in your day to day lives to build in a little money lesson. And when your kids are young, they're with you a lot. Let's say you're going grocery shopping.

That's the classic example. You make your list, you go to the store, you comparison shop, you can explain to them store brand versus name brand marketing, depending on how old they are price per unit, couponing. How are you paying? Are you using cash? Probably not. Are you using credit debit tapping, explain, just take a minute and explain what you're doing.

They're probably curious. They might be asking, but even if they're not, you can just take a moment to explain and you will start to find those everywhere you look. Because every single day we're interacting with money. It's rare that you don't spend money or invest or save or do something with money every single day.



**Marcelo:** A hundred percent. Before we talk about the teachable moments, because I think we should spend some time there. How was your upbringing? How was your relationship with money? Did you have any aha moments as you went throughout your career or through your adolescence? I'm just curious to know.

**Robin:** For me, my journey was really more educational because I did a commerce degree in university and became a CPA.

I was always in the money world, in the financial world. So, I had that formal education and then I just took it from the corporate finance that model more in accounting and just applied it to my personal life. I grew up in a household. My mother was a teacher. My father was a lawyer, solid financially, but three of my four grandparents were immigrants to Canada, and they fled persecution in their countries, and they came here with nothing, and they killed themselves.

And they did all right. They really did. And they scrimped and saved. I think my parents, especially my father grew up with that mentality of scarcity from his parents. That was a mentality that he still had, even though he probably didn't need to, but it was just ingrained in him. My parents didn't really formally teach.

I have a brother, as I mentioned, us not much about money. I don't remember us talking about it too much. So, I think for me, I mostly just figured it out by trial and error. And then because I was attracted to financial stuff, I just became very interested in self-taught for the most part.

**Marcelo:** That's amazing. I was reserving this question for later on, but one of the conversations I have often with my wife is when I moved here, I was 19.

I didn't speak English or French. I had to work through university. I worked full time just to make rent and study and get a career going. And my wife, we have very similar money values, but we always have the conversation. Now we have two good incomes. And our kids probably won't go through the same things that we went through.

And to be honest, Robin, that was the best teacher for me because blowing that paycheck in shoes and then not having enough money to pay for the cell phone and then worrying about week over week if I was going to have enough money to eat and pay for my internet bill and just be able to afford stuff.

That was the greatest teacher for me.

**Robin:** First of all, it's very commendable that you did that. That's unbelievable that you came here at that age without speaking English or French, cause you're in Quebec. So, you have to know both. Good for you. That's very impressive.

**Marcelo:** Thank you.



**Robin:** You're welcome. You're going to grow your own family now.

And I'm sure that was a struggle. And even though you learned a lot from it, you're probably happy that your child will be born in Canada and won't have to go through that. But on the other hand, I agree that the struggle, you've learned so much from that. And I don't know if you saw recently Jeff Goldblum, the actor, he was quoted as talking about, I guess, leaving money to his kid and his quote was, I want my kids to row their own boat.

And Warren Buffett also has that famous expression. I want to leave my kids enough that they could do something, but not too much that they can do nothing. So, I think as parents, we have this instinct to help our kids, especially when they're little and they're defenseless, little babies and toddlers to protect them and to shield them and all that.

And then you have to start letting go of that as they get older, just developmentally. But even with money, it's the same. You want them to make mistakes when the stakes are low, blowing your first paycheck on shoes. Yeah, you might have been eating ramen for that paycheck till you got paid again but thank God you didn't get evicted.

It wasn't horrible, but you learn from that. And often we really need to make mistakes to learn, but you don't want them to be catastrophic mistakes. You want them to be small mistakes. And that's why I encourage parents, let your kids make mistakes when the stakes are low. So don't bail them out. For example, if you've given them some allowance and they've blown through it during the week, just going out, doing stuff, just wasting money.

And then it's the weekend and they want to go out again with their friends. It's really easy just to throw money at the problem, but then you're depriving them of a lesson. So yeah, without making our kids go through all the horrible or difficult things we went through. I think there's still ways to let them learn from their mistakes because those really are the best lessons.

**Marcelo:** I think we hear a lot the term helicopter parents now, and it makes me think of that where parents are just not allowing their kids to fail and build that character. And again, I qualify that because I'm not a parent yet, but I do think a lot about these things. And the one thing that I think it's important as well is I think we need to get comfortable with the idea of being uncomfortable teaching lessons to our kids.

So, one of my personal idols is Phil Jackson. The coach? Correct.

**Robin:** I think I've heard you talk about it on another podcast.

**Marcelo:** Probably, his book, 11 Rings, The Soul of Success, he won 11 rings in basketball, but that's one of my favorite books. I have this right where I read that book every year and I always take different notes and I always get something new about the book.



It's an amazing book on leadership and just life lessons in general. But there's a really great line there where he's in a practice and he identifies us. There's this specific player who has very good qualities, but he's being a bit of a goof and too loose about practice. So, he pulls him aside and says, Hey, it's Luke Walton.

So, basketball fans will know who he is. He did become a coach in the NBA, not a successful one. But anyways, I think the story is very relevant. And he pulls him aside and he says, look. In life, not everything is jokes and giggles, and if you want to be a coach, sometimes you have to be an a-hole and you have to put away your need to be liked.

And I find that it's true for coaching, whether you have employees, but with parents in general, I think the moral of the story is if you want to implement the things that you want in the book, sometimes you're going to be uncomfortable and you're going to have to be, for lack of a better term, an a-hole.

**Robin:** So true. That is such an interesting analogy, and I agree. Sometimes parents can get into trouble if they are too much of a friend to their kids, you still have to be a parent, you have to have boundaries, and that comes in a lot of different areas with money for sure. And sometimes you are going to feel like the bad guy, the one who's saying, yeah, I'm not giving you more money.

You have to use your own money for this because you want to be generous. But, ugh, it is hard, and you're right, it is uncomfortable, but I think it's worth it in the long run. That's what you have to keep in mind, is that you're doing this for the long-term development of your child, and if you just rescue, rescue, rescue, and bail them out, and if they never have to struggle, that's not going to be good for them in the long run.

**Marcelo:** I agree 100%. Let's talk about specific teaching moments, you talked about the one at the supermarket. Can you give me maybe a few more examples of how teachable moments can happen? What could be a teachable moment that could end up in a moment of tension between parents and kids, for example?

**Robin:** I think those arise often when a kid is demanding something.

So, you're out at a store and I'm thinking more of a young child and they're in a toy store. Let's say you're there to buy a gift for someone for a birthday party they're going to and all of a sudden they see something they want too. And it can be kind of uncomfortable and awkward in the moment. You don't want to say we can't afford it if you can because they're just not going to buy it.

But it can be a teachable moment because first of all you can talk about the difference between needs and wants. Needs are the must haves for survivals and wants are the nice to haves. You can talk about if this is something they really want, then maybe it's something that they should save up for.

**Marcelo:** So, you're saying the iPhone is not necessary for survival.



**Robin:** Well, you could argue that a smartphone is, I don't know, but an iPhone, but a smartphone these days, maybe, but that's a good example, because it could be something really big like that, where they're like, they want a new phone, or they want specifically an iPhone.

They didn't have that. You can talk about setting goals and saving for them. You can talk about, depending on their age, again, let's say it's your teenager and you're at the mall and you're going into the Apple store and they're bugging you for something. You can talk about whether they're working or not and if there's something they really want, maybe it's time for them to get a job and start earning their own money so that they can have some of these things that are important to them or that are, you know, maybe not needs but wants.

And just also the importance of reflecting, you were talking about being mindful, sometimes you think it's something you really need or want, but if you take that cooling off period, you maybe just walk away and sleep on it, and then you ask yourself, do I really need this? Or would it just be nice to have?

You can often save yourself a lot of money by doing that. I think if you're thoughtful, you can get into a really interesting conversation with your child. Again, I always stress the information you share should be age appropriate.

**Marcelo:** I love that about the book, by the way, that you break it down between different ages.

**Robin:** Thank you.

**Marcelo:** With very specific examples about how you talk to that specific age, which is great.

**Robin:** The teachable moments are going to be different depending on how old your kids are. Another one with my own kids was always around taxes and tax time. They would see me doing my taxes and I've taught them, we usually do it together, and I've taught them how to complete their own returns and do their own taxes.

And again, I think it's really important for them to understand that it's a good time of year to reflect back and see what went on and how much you made. One of my kids is employed, so her returns pretty easy. She could do it herself for sure. Just one of the things about TurboTax that drives me crazy is they bundle all these files, so I want to split it off, but I can't anyway, so they come here, and we do it together.

But my son is self-employed, and it's a little more complicated, and he has had to learn how to keep track of his revenues and expenses, and that's a really good teachable moment. We were going through the T2125, the business form, and it was, okay, here are all the things that you can be writing off as a contract worker or whatever you want to call him, solopreneur.



And it's, were you aware that you could write off all these things? So, it was such a good teachable moment to talk to him about his business and how he could take advantage and write off the most to be able to keep the most after tax.

**Marcelo:** Yeah, that's amazing. I had a moment of laughter not long ago when my brother-in-law, my wife's brother, he's just starting to work now and he got a big bonus and he's like, "Oh, I only got 60 percent of the bonus".

Like, yeah, dude, there is deductions and taxes at source. Like this is how things work. And to him, it was like, "Oh no, I'm supposed to get this full amount".

**Robin:** Yeah. No, that's a really good point. And that's in the book too, where I talk about once your children are working, if they're teenagers, you want to go over that first paycheck with them because they may not be expecting the gross and the net to be different.

They might not even know that there is a net that things like tax and CPP and EI in Canada are deducted. So that's really important. My daughter also got a bonus, and she was figuring out how to have it go right to her RSP so that no tax would be withheld. So just those moments. And again, I feel comfortable discussing these things with them because of my background.

But even if you're not a tax expert, if your kids see you doing your taxes every April, you can talk to them about why we pay taxes in Canada and what it goes to. And as I said, if you get creative, they're going to start occurring to you all the time. You're going to start seeing them everywhere.

**Marcelo:** A hundred percent.

So, let me ask you two things, one is how do you make budgeting fun? How do you make budgeting a good exercise for people? I struggle with this one because I work in this world, money and stuff, but I hate super detailed budgets. I'm more of a macro person. I want to know, pay yourself first, and then I want to know my macros and then whatever else, I just like to be free to spend it as I wish.

But I understand that different people have different approaches. I'm curious to know what your thoughts are around how to teach this to kids.

**Robin:** I'm more like you, I think, as well. I think because I'm a numbers person, I have a pretty good sense of it all. But yes, for most people, budgeting sounds like deprivation.

It's like being on a diet. It feels like it's no fun. Oh, I can't do this, and I can't do that. You have to reframe it. I think that the way to reframe it is to think about it's a tool to help you have control over your money so that you can have and do the things that are important to you in life. And again, going back to your values, getting really clear with your partner about what your individual and shared values are, and then creating goals based on those values. And then the budget comes out of that. So, you know, how much





you have to save by paying yourself first, as you mentioned, setting up an automatic transfer, and then you have to cover your overhead.

Your needs essentially rent or mortgage payments or property tax or card payments, whatever your overhead is, and then you've got your discretionary spending. I think once people have paid themselves, so they're saving and investing, they've covered their overhead. Hopefully if there's money left after that, that's the money for the nice to have for the ones.

And I think people have a sense of there may be, we'll call them problem areas. Some people do too much Uber Eats. Some people go to restaurants too often. Those are the low hanging fruits where if you're having trouble making ends meet, you could probably cut back. But I find that in this day and age, the tracking tools that are built into mobile banking are really easy way to track your spending and use that data.

As you know, the software learns, and it prompts you and helps you set up budgets. And then you can set up notifications and alerts. Take advantage of those tools that if you're not already using them, they're there in your mobile banking, all the big banks here have it. I think that's a way to make it less work because you don't have to keep track of everything with a spreadsheet or a notebook or anything like that.

And then just tying it back keeping your values front and center so you know why you're making the choices you're making because your values can be a framework for guiding and prioritizing financial decisions. And that is another way to teach your kids, using your values, encouraging them to discover their values and use those, it really helps remind you why you're making the decisions that you are when it comes to money.

**Marcelo:** Amazing. I think that's such a great point because I think about this a lot with my wife and I always tell my friends, and I'm very vocal about this too, that the one thing that you want in a successful marriage is that you want to have the same money values as your partner. Cause if not, that'll create a lot of stress and a lot of points of conflict.

And my wife is remarkable at this. We grew up similar in the sense that same type of backgrounds, but she's very good at saying things like, look, just because we have the money, we don't have to buy it new, or we don't have to buy this or that. She's very good at researching and thrifting and going on marketplace.

And I love that about her. And I find that I'm more or less a fair, you know, I'm like, Oh, we have the money. We are saving already. Let's just buy it new. But those pennies and those savings add up in the end and it goes back to values.

**Robin:** Yeah, that's a really great example, Marcelo. Cause it can add up on the bad side.



If you're spending too much on things that are not really aligned with your values, then it can add up to the negative. But if you are much more aware of that, and I think too, everyone is more conscious of sustainability now and reusing things and passing things down, as opposed to just running out and buying something new.

I think that maybe sustainability is a top value for your wife.

**Marcelo:** It is actually.

**Robin:** So, there you go, she's spending in line with that value and the fact that you share that as well. Sometimes it just seems so quick and easy to just go online and buy new. But I think that's such a great reminder that there's more than one way to achieve a goal, if you need something, there's different ways you could borrow it, you could get it used, there's different things you can do other than just going on Amazon and buying it.

**Marcelo:** A hundred percent, let me ask you, since we're talking about values and this type of thing, when is a good time to introduce to your kids the idea of giving, charity, maybe looking for a bigger purpose? It's worrisome, I think, because I think society has moved in a way that we are living in a crisis of meaning right now because religion has more of a prominent place in society.

I think a lot of people are left with, if you don't come from a religious background or don't practice religion, there is a huge void to fill. And that's problematic in a lot of ways, but I'm just thinking in terms of your book and how do we teach kids about charity and giving and being grateful? How do we effectively do that? Teaching them about it?

**Robin:** Actually, let me back up about one thing. I'm glad you brought this up because the other way I've structured the book is that in each chapter for the four different age groups of young kids, preteens, teens, and young adults, I've structured each chapter under what I call the five pillars of money, earning, saving, spending, sharing, which is what you're asking about and investing.

So those are the five pillars, earn, save, spend, share, and invest.

**Marcelo:** You know, what's interesting about that? What? The other three, the sharing, investing, or what's the other one?

**Robin:** Earn, save, spend, share, invest.

**Marcelo:** Yeah, the last three depend on you saving that money.

**Robin:** Of course, earning comes first, because without earning, you don't have those choices at all.

We want to prioritize saving, saving and investing. But you're right. The information is age appropriate in each chapter around those five pillars, but the five pillars never change, just the specific topics and



examples under each of the five do. So, sharing, I do start talking about it in the chapter for young kids, five to eight, and it can start, I remember when my kids were little, and they went to school and on Fridays they were asked to donate to this charity box that was in the classroom, and I would send them with a Loonie or a toonie.

It can start really young also when they were young, we used to give away their old toys or their old clothes that they had outgrown and we would give them to charity because again, I think that having an attitude of gratitude, modeling that yourself and instilling that in your kids, it puts things in perspective when they can.

Maybe starting to be demanding or a little more entitled than you would like. It reminds them that not everyone lives the way that they do, and it encourages them to think of others and to be grateful for what they have rather than focus on what they don't have. I think gratitude is a really great antidote to entitlement and it's something that as parents we can model and encourage and lead the way at a really early age.

I've spoken to families that have done some amazing philanthropy projects together and there's lots of ways that families can do those things together when their kids are young and that older kids can give back to their communities or just to causes that are important to them. One thing that's really cool that I came across, it's in the book, for little kids that are having birthday parties, there's a website called Echoage.com. So, just a brief description, let's say they invite 20 kids to their birthday party, 20 small gifts, this website allows you to manage the whole party, send out the invitations, but then instead, the guests will pool their money so that through this website, and then half of it will go to a charity of the child's choosing.

And the other half will go to one large gift that the kid has said that they want. And it's just such a nice way to bring that charity into this whole thing of a birthday party and getting all these gifts and kids get so excited about them. That's great. You don't want to take that away from them, but it also reminds them about others that may be in need.

**Marcelo:** That's such a great point because I do feel it, I do see it, I have two nephews and I always used to give them gifts and then they would end up with like 60 gifts and new toys that they just end up in the basement collecting dust. Exactly. I stopped doing that and what I do now is I say, look, I'm not going to give you a gift.

I tell my sister; I'd rather take them a day to the science museum or give them an experience. But I think your idea and actually my colleague is very good at that. My colleague Ruben, he has two girls, and he was saying that that's what he does. Every time they get a gift, he tells the girls you have to go and donate one and he goes with them.



They make it very intentional that I think what he's doing is it's achieving two purposes is what you're saying is making them think that, hey, there are less fortunate people in the world. And then the idea of you don't need to accumulate stuff just for the sake of accumulating.

**Robin:** I love the idea that you said with your own niece and nephew that you take them for the day or do something special with them as an experience because research is showing that experiences have a longer lasting impact on happiness and accumulating stuff.

And again, with sustainability, I remember my kids used to get so many gifts or if they went to a party, they would get like a loot bag with stuff you don't need clutter and it ends up in landfill and you just feel so bad about that. It's such a nice way to accomplish a few goals at the same time.

**Marcelo:** That's echoage.com if people are interested. I love that. And I also loved your recommendation of playing board games like Monopoly and the game cashflow. I think that's a good one for budgeting as well.

**Robin:** Yeah, exactly. And the game of life too. Those things teach real world lessons in a fun way.

A lot of families really love having those kinds of board game nights.

**Marcelo:** And it achieves something else. It gets people off screens.

**Robin:** Yeah. Sitting around and just, it's so true. Good point.

**Marcelo:** I want to talk to you about two more things. I think they're heavy subjects too. So, let's first talk about investing.

I'm in this world, investing is important, saving for retirement, saving for goals. When is a good time to start talking to kids about investing and the stock market and debt and why these things matter?

**Robin:** As I said, the five pillars include investing, so I do bring it up at every stage, so even as young as five to eight, but I'm not telling a five- or eight-year-old about the stock market.

That is in the chapter for emerging adults, which is the oldest age category that I cover. But leading up to that though, you can talk about interest when they're old enough to move from a piggy bank to a bank account. They're going to be opening a youth account, okay, now you're not getting much interest on a youth account because on the flip side, there's usually no fees for those accounts.

But let's say they have enough money that they can open a GIC or a term deposit or something like that, then at least they'll be earning more interest and that's a really good opportunity to talk to them about simple interest versus compound interest. Maybe if they're preteens or teenagers, uh, their math skills are good enough for them to understand that with compound interest, they're earning interest on their interests as well as their original principles.



Growth happens exponentially. And I have a chart in the book that shows that. I think once your kids are in high school, many will be exposed to investing either in a club, an afterschool extracurricular club, or perhaps the high school may offer some course in that. Some kids are really interested in that from a very young age, or they're listening, maybe you listen to podcasts out loud that are financial in nature, like this one, and they're overhearing certain terms and concepts, or maybe on the news, they hear, oh, the Dow did this, or the S& P, or tech stocks, or the Magnificent Seven, well, no one's calling them that anymore, but they might overhear things and start asking you about the stock market.

I think the idea is to get them interested in saving and investing at a young age because they have time on their side, and they can take advantage of growth and the power of compounding. And once they're 18, they can open a TFSA, a tax-free savings account in Canada. And they can buy lots of different things in that.

If they're working, they can open a registered retirement savings plan, an RRSP as well, where they would want to be investing in growth assets for the long run. It really will depend on whether they're interested or not, but I think once they're out of school and they're working, and they may be faced with a workplace RRSP plan or some of these group plans at work.

It's going to start becoming more and more important to understand a little bit about investing. What are the basic asset classes? Like you said, stocks, bonds, cash, real estate alternatives. How do you allocate assets based on what your tolerance for risk, your time horizon, your objectives. They need to understand some of these basic things.

I know, especially during the pandemic, a lot of teens meme stocks. And that just literally roared back with Roaring Kitty now, like there's resurgence of these meme stocks. Someone needs to talk to them about that's not really investing. That's kind of gambling and speculating. I think there's surveys from Fidelity that show that there's a lot more interest now.

Teens really want to learn about investing. In Canada, you have to be the age of majority to open an investment account. And prior to that, it has to be opened by, I guess, your parent or guardian as an interest account.

**Marcelo:** And there are tax implications.

**Robin:** Yes, there are, but I think that could be a teachable moment too.

As a parent, if you do want to open an investment account and trust for your child, then you can talk about what types of securities are appropriate and again, take your cue from your child to see how interested they are. But I think again, it's pretty much a fundamental part of a financial education is to understand investing.

As you said, you have to be able to earn first and save before you can invest, but it's so crucial for long term growth.



**Marcelo:** I think we are big believers here of indexing and evidence-based investing, but I heard one way of teaching kids about money is an interesting one and is, for example, your kid likes Legos, you tell your kid, look, we'll buy the Lego.

We're going to build it together. But there's this way that we could buy a share or a slice of the company and will make money when other people buy Legos and that's a good way of introducing softly the idea of how a stock works and how ownership in a company works and obviously has to be age appropriate and the kid has to be interested but I find that that's an interesting way of putting it because you're using something they're interested in already.

They like Nintendo, for example, you can tell them, look, we'll buy the video game, we'll play the video game, don't worry about it. But there's also this other way where we can buy a slice of the company and make money while other kids like you are also buying the game and playing it.

**Robin:** That makes me think of two things.

One is, when do you have a conversation with them though that a good company may not necessarily be a good buy at that time, like a good investment. Lego may be great, but let's say it's overvalued. You might want to talk about that. With older kids, but I was going to mention another example. When my daughter was born, and this is a long time ago, my brother bought her, I think it was one share of Walt Disney, so she was getting the annual reports every year. And they were fun because they had the cartoons in them because they would talk about their business and. If they had released a film, an animated film, they would have a photo of that. And she was getting these dividend checks, physical paper checks for like five cents or something that were U.S. dollars. It was kind of a pain in some ways. She had a framed stock certificate because she had it in bearer form initially. Anyways, eventually, when she became old enough to open her own account, we transferred it in digital form. She still owns the shares. Split, and she gets a dividends deposit directly into her account, no more paper checks, but it was really good stock to buy a baby because it's like you said, it's something they can understand and relate to.

They see it in their world and it's another good example.

**Marcelo:** Amazing. I love it. I love it. And I think you get them involved and it's just everything. It's very different telling someone that actually getting them involved and having them feel it.

**Robin:** But going back to school for a second, I think there are lots of, as I said, clubs or classes where they do simulations.

It's a competition and you create a portfolio, and you track it over maybe the school year or a term. And I think a lot of kids learn about investing through that as well. And dinner conversation, kids are overhearing things. If you're talking about it at night with your partner and they may start to ask questions based on what information you're sharing.



**Marcelo:** Absolutely. I want to ask you about something else as well that you talked about it in the book that I find it's very interesting is the idea of tying an allowance to chores in a house. I struggled with this one, Robin. I'll be honest with you, because in a way, I think kids should have a sense of ownership in the community that they're part of in the house that they're part of.

But I also feel that the allowance also is a way of introducing a carrot and it may be a good incentive for them to have that motivation to do things. I think you may have a different opinion, but I would love to hear your thoughts about that.

**Robin:** Well, that encapsulates the issue. And this is, I think, my most frequently asked question.

If we were playing a drinking game, every time someone asked me about allowance, I would have to take a shot. And that is the reason. Some families really want their kids to do their chores out of a sense of family responsibility and pulling their weight. And there is a lot of work to do, as you mentioned, growing up in a household.

And on the other hand, other parents want their kids to know what it takes to earn money. They think of tying the allowance to chores to motivate them to do them as well as to know what it takes to make an effort in order to get money. Money doesn't just drop from the sky or come out of a hole in the wall at an ATM.

I think there can be a hybrid solution, Marcello, where your kids get a small basic allowance to be used as a money management tool. They're earning it in quotes and can make those choices we spoke about to save it, spend it, share it, and invest it. And then if they want to earn more money, they can do extra above and beyond chores, like maybe the gross dirty jobs or the stuff that you would pay someone else to do to earn extra money.

And then obviously once they're old enough. They can get a job to earn even more money because some families, they'll taper off the allowance when their kids' become teenagers and they can work. It really depends. Every family is going to have different values around this, have different means at their disposal for this.

But I do agree with you as a value to me, I think in a family, you help each other, you're there for each other. It's not transactional. What have you done for me lately? Or I'm only going to do this if you pay me. You don't want to set that precedent. I agree with your concern about that. And I think there are going to be plenty of times for kids to work and earn money.

And even preteens can work. They can babysit. They can be referees for sports. They can be counselors. And then once they're a little bit older, they can get real jobs like retail jobs. Because I still believe that kids will find it a lot harder to spend their own hard-earned money and that's really true if they're working, but even if you give them allowance, they're going to treat it as their own money, and they'll have more ownership over it because they're going to have to part with it.



If you're paying, it just never counts in the same way.

**Marcelo:** Yeah, it's casino money.

**Robin:** Exactly. It's funny money, you really want them to have some of their own money that you've given them as an allowance that they can use to spend and save and share and invest so that they have to make those choices and they have to live with the consequences, and they have to experience scarcity.

**Marcelo:** I think two of the most teachable moments I had, again, my mom never sat me down and said, this is how money works, but in a way she taught me a lot because she would give me an allowance every week. And I remember if I wanted to go out on Friday and Saturday and Sunday, I had to make sure that the money would last those three days.

And sometimes I would get to Saturday and the money was gone on Friday and I didn't have an option. I just had to stay home. And that was horrible.

**Robin:** Exactly, then you figure it out for the next week. Well, how do I stretch this? What do I have to do? What choices do I have to make differently?

**Marcelo:** Well, it made you think differently because we used to get together with my friends and said, okay, how much did you get as an allowance and how much did you get?

So maybe we can pull some money and we can buy extra beers and we can buy bigger quantities that last longer or something like that. So, it was interesting. Not that kids should be drinking beer. That was 18 when I was doing it.

**Robin:** I know what you mean, it makes you resourceful, you do go to your friends.

And I like that idea too, because maybe this week you're a little short, but maybe next week your friend will be and it's about giving and taking and doesn't always have to be split evenly to the penny. It all comes out in the wash with friends, and I like that.

**Marcelo:** Yeah, and then the second lesson I learned, and I want to transition to the last subject that I wanted to talk to you about, and I think it's the juiciest one.

When I asked my mom that I wanted a phone and I was 16, she said, sure, if you pay for it, which was a very teachable moment for me because phones back then were very expensive, and I just couldn't afford one, so I had to wait till I get my first job, but let's talk about that. We know the effects of social media.





I think there's a lot of chatter around that right now about what they do to mental health and what they do to our attention. I've experienced it myself. I'm a reader. I like reading. I like absorbing information. And when I have my phone next to me, I just find it's so hard to concentrate.

**Robin:** You have to leave it in another room, almost.

**Marcelo:** Oh yeah or turn it off. It consumes you. But what are your thoughts around, at what age should a kid get a phone? And then the second thing I want to know from your thoughts is, is this getting in the way of parents teaching kids about money and being responsible? Because it is an attention grabber.

They're hooked to that thing all the time, what are your thoughts around that?

**Robin:** First of all, you reminded me of this book that just came out. I just have to Google the name by Jonathan Haidt.

**Marcelo:** The Anxious Generation.

**Robin:** Yeah, so he did the coddling of the American mind, which I had read.

**Marcelo:** He's amazing.

**Robin:** He's really great and he's been on a lot of podcasts and the work he does is really, really great. And he's got a lot of rules around what age did you get a smartphone? Because he thinks that a lot of kids would be fine with just a flip phone, and it would take away some of these issues. And then at what age should you be on social media?

So again, that's really a parenting question, but people might want to check out this book. I think it's getting younger and younger. When my kids were maybe 12, they shared a flip phone because we had one. This is a long time ago. They were going to a lot of bar mitzvahs at night and there was carpools and coordination and whoever went with, had one, took the phone with them and that's how it started.

It seems so innocent. And then eventually my husband had Blackberry, so they were getting hand me down phones when they each wanted their own phone. And then eventually they each had their own smartphone. It's hard to avoid in this day and age. And as well, a lot of money management is now happening on these mobile devices.

As you know, you can have a digital wallet. You can tap to pay for things using your phone or your smartwatch. You can manage your money as we spoke of earlier, using these mobile banking tools. And our kids are digital natives. They are so good with this stuff. It's so intuitive to them. I don't think we can go back to the days where they're not using their phones, whether it's for entertainment or communication or money management.



But again, I think you need boundaries and all that stuff. I think the problem with social media though, is it causes FOMO. Fear of missing out. Comparison is like the thief of joy. Compare and despair, and it leads to a lot of upward social comparisons. Our brains automatically make these upward social comparisons, and we feel like we're not as good as, or we're not doing as well as, and we want to keep up.

Everyone's social media is their highlight reel, and we want to keep up the appearances of living our best lives, our brains don't automatically make those downward social comparisons of gratitude, like we said earlier, where you appreciate what you have and you're grateful. It's really toxic. And I think his research, Jonathan Heights really talks, especially for young girls.

It becomes like a management issue, managing this phone. And then the other side of it too, is these influencers, these financial influencers that are on social media that are talking about money and maybe not the most reliable sources. I'm not saying all the information out there is crappy, but there's definitely a lot of dubious information and you got to check who you're getting your financial information from.

There's so much misinformation. You want to be getting it from solid, reliable sources, vetted podcasts such as yours. And there's lots of good stuff out there on YouTube. I know my son learns a lot about money on YouTube, but he's careful about what he's listening to and who it's coming from. And there's so many trends, loud budgeting and quiet luxury and quiet quitting and everything has to have a cute name and label.

And a lot of those things are just fundamental principles. What's loud budgeting? It's just budgeting.

**Marcelo:** The problem is that you have a double-edged sword in a way, because take Robinhood, for example, the app that just it's easy to invest. I think in a way it gamifies investing, it gamifies the whole process of using your money to buy shares.

And I think that is a problem tied with the influencers that you're talking about, because that's the other issue with the internet, that the internet is this platform that equalizes everyone. They hear from a guy who's not a CFA and a CA, and they hear from a guy who has no background and is talking about something.

The internet platforms everybody at the same level, the onus is on the person and the person receiving the message to do the research and qualify where the message is coming from. I think that's an issue, but on the positive side, things like Robinhood, yeah, they're gamifying investing and a lot of these things that lead to bad outcomes and money, but they're also giving them access to investing and buying a fractional shares of like Apple, for example.

It's tough because you can't separate them. They come together, they come bundled together. And even what you said before is we use phones for everything now. And your kid's going to a party or a



social event. And that's how kids communicate now. You remove that and you actually completely shut them down from a social circle.

And that is a problem.

**Robin:** Well, yeah, that's it. And that's covered in his book where he talks about everyone has to agree to these new rules or else it's not going to work because your kid's going to be the only one that can't communicate with their friends. Wait, can you just clarify though, just going back to Robin Hood, my understanding is, is Robin Hood available in Canada?

**Marcelo:** I don't think it's available in Canada. But Wealthsimple, they started with this very good approach of indexing and. Robo advisor. And yeah, based on index funds. Robo advisor. And now they have the trading platform where you can go and buy stocks and you can buy crypto, and you can buy gold.

And I don't want to sound like a boomer here, but. I'll do that. A lot of those things lead to bad outcomes when it comes to money and try having a 30-year-old or 35-year-old parent explain Bitcoin to a 16-year-old. Like it's hard.

**Robin:** Yeah. I was actually interviewed for an article in Money Sense about how to have conversations with your parents about Bitcoin.

If you as a young person want to invest in Bitcoin, but your parents are terrified of it. How would you have that conversation and other difficult topics that was written by Sandy Young? It's an interesting article came out a month or two ago. But you want your kids to have fundamental investing knowledge and understand how stocks are valued.

When do you buy? When do you sell? What is an index fund? For example, they don't have to be buying individual stocks. They could be buying a basket of stocks. They need these basic understandings. And they have to get that information somewhere. And I mean, I think that there are a lot of good courses out there, some of which are even free that will teach you how to invest properly that are not all about just chasing a meme stock, but you're right, especially fractional ownership has made it really easy to buy these big expensive stocks that may be overvalued.

And again, it could be such an expensive lesson to buy something that's run up. That's really hot right now. That's getting a lot of media attention. It's the classic people buy high, and they sell low because they're following these trends as opposed to buying low, buying something that's undervalued in the market and selling high.

It seems so simple, but it's not easy to execute.

**Marcelo:** It's not, but are there any apps that you recommend? I know you listed some courses, the McGill course, for example, that is a hundred percent free.



**Robin:** I've heard good things about it.

**Marcelo:** I haven't taken it, but I know people who have and it's amazing and I recommend it to everybody.

But when it comes to technology and cell phones, are there any specific things that you suggest parents should do or apps that they do, any techniques that they could use to say, use that as a teaching tool instead of being a distraction and a tool for detracting? I know that's a loaded question by the way.

**Robin:** One of my clients is Fidelity Investments. I've done a bunch of webinars with them, and I just did a Reddit AMA with them. They've just come out with an app called Investly and it's just in beta testing mode, but Lauren, my colleague and I are trying it. We literally just got approved to try it. And.

Apparently it's a simple investing app that you would use obviously on your phone and there is an educational component to it. So, they're trying to teach you about investing in stocks or not just stocks but other asset classes as well, ETFs included I'm sure, and I'm really curious to check it out.

Because I admire what they do, and I wouldn't partner with them if I didn't, and I'm really curious to see what they've built in, in terms of the educational piece, and I think they're intending to roll it out more fully, so people might want to check out Investly. You mentioned Wealthsimple. They have really evolved.

Michael Katchen, the CEO was one of those kids that won a stock competition and got into it at a really young age. He's a really nice guy. I've met him a couple of times. I think they are expanding. They want to be a challenger bank, like an option to these big, big banks.

**Marcelo:** Which is great to see too, by the way. I'll give credit when it's due.

**Robin:** Yeah, I know. And he's always talking about open banking and I'm in favor of that as well. One of my colleagues who I've known for a really long time, Preet Banerjee. I don't know if you know that name.

**Marcelo:** Oh yeah. Yeah.

**Robin:** He's amazing. I think he did a course that might've been for BMO. I hate to single out one bank and recommend their course, but Preet's amazing. And he really knows his stuff and he's a great communicator. I would say if he's done a course, I would have full confidence that it would be really good. I did this course. My son did it. I basically forced my son to do it during COVID.

And then I did it. Do you know who Phil Town is?

**Marcelo:** No.



**Robin:** He's America, based in Atlanta area and he does a value investing course and it was a really intense course and it included option writing, basically put writing strategies and it was three days, 30 hours. Really intense. A colleague of mine had done it.

She had done it in person and during COVID you could do it online. It was interesting. They took you through different valuation methods for how to buy a stock. I really liked it. He has a podcast that he does with his daughter. So, you might want to check out, it's called rule one investing. He's like a big Buffett value investing person.

**Marcelo:** I love it.

**Robin:** Yeah. It was good.

**Marcelo:** There are so many resources.

**Robin:** Yeah. There really are. I mean, there's such good stuff out there. You just have to vet it. Ask people you trust.

**Marcelo:** Absolutely. Listen, at the end of the day, everybody has an agenda, but I did liberal arts in school, and I studied a lot of political science and philosophy.

I think critical thinking is a great skill to have no matter what field you work in. Whether it's accounting or music or business, I think it's critical for everything in life.

**Robin:** Wait, so you said you studied political science and philosophy? That's what my son studied also, interestingly.

**Marcelo:** Oh, amazing. So, I have a background in liberal arts, political science, and economics.

**Robin:** Okay. So yeah, and I agree with you. The way he thinks of things is on a very deep level. And so, he also has that training and my husband, my daughter and I were all accountants by training, but he's the one that isn't. And he's the one running his own business. And he does have some fundamental. He took accounting in high school because we thought it was really important for him to have some basic understanding because accounting is the language of business.

I heard someone say that the other day, I think it was Jamie Dimon. And I was like, yes, it really is. Accounting gets a bad rap, but it is the language of business. And if you don't understand how to read financial statements or those terms, and then that flows through into investing. So, we thought that's just another example.

We just felt that was important for him to learn, even if he was going to study philosophy and political science.



**Marcelo:** Which are great things to have, honestly. I think the one thing that I learned a lot is it's good to be multifaceted, educated in different subjects, multifaceted. Yes. And that's what I tell the guys in the office all the time.

Just because you like investing in finance doesn't mean you can't read about history and philosophy and fiction. I've taken a lot of fiction. I heard this quote the other day that said something like fiction is the lie that tells the truth. And I find that was a great quote because in stories. I love fiction.

You get to relate more. Do you have any books you recommend for kids to learn about money? Not specifically, because yours is about teaching parents.

**Robin:** Yes, it is. I do. And they're all on my website. So, people go to [robintaub.com](http://robintaub.com).

**Marcelo:** We'll put all those links in the notes.

**Robin:** There's like a further resources section.

So, one that just comes to mind is Grandpa's Fortune Fable.

**Marcelo:** I had Will on the podcast.

**Robin:** Yeah, Will Rainey.

**Marcelo:** We all know each other.

**Robin:** Rob Phelan, have you ever met Rob? Emma's for money. He's in the US.

**Marcelo:** No.

**Robin:** And there are kid's books with kids' stories and illustrations and, I mean, the one that kills me because it's always in my Amazon category is the Berenstain Bears.

I forget the name of it, it's like a classic series of kids' books, the Berenstain Bears, and there's a money one. I think it's called Dollars and Cents or something, that one's been around forever, I'm sure it's amazing. And there's more on the website.

**Marcelo:** Perfect. We'll check them out. Before we go here, I want to ask you one last question, Robin.

This has been amazing, by the way, I enjoyed this conversation. What do you hope readers will ultimately take away from The Wisest Investment?

**Robin:** Essentially why financial literacy is so critical and that was how we started off this conversation by explaining that it's basic life skill. about the importance of forming good habits and also of trying to avoid some of the health consequences of financial worries.



I want people to understand how to go about it, how to use your values to guide and prioritize your financial decisions, how to look for teachable moments in your everyday life for a little money lesson, and how to be a good financial role model for your kids. And I want parents to know what to talk about.

And those are the five pillars of money, earn, save, spend, share, and invest. So that's really what I hope. And I hope that families have good financial health and happiness.

**Marcelo:** Amazing. We will have some books to give away on a first come, first served. We'll also put your link in the notes to all your resources, your book, your website for people to go and check out.

And I do encourage parents to buy this book and read it and implement the lessons. I don't think it's ever too late to start.

**Robin:** I agree. I'm glad you brought that up. It's not. Just start. And if your kids are already older, just jump in at that stage.

**Marcelo:** Absolutely. And if you don't want to, you can hire a financial advisor, but.

**Robin:** Exactly. And use your advisor. No joke. Advisors are an amazing source of information and support. And parents who are struggling with this should definitely speak to their advisors about it.

**Marcelo:** Well, look, I view my job as part educator because a lot of what we do is, yeah, we help people with a portfolio and financial planning, but we need to educate people because if they don't integrate and ingrain the knowledge, it's really hard to implement.

You cannot drill this stuff to people. They have to want to know it.

**Robin:** They have to keep the long game in mind. And why this is important and what they're trying to eventually achieve with it to keep with it.

**Marcelo:** Robin, thank you for your time.

**Robin:** Marcello. This was great. Thank you for having me and keep in touch.

**Marcelo:** Thank you for listening.



Robin Taub is the bestselling author of *The Wisest Investment: Teaching Your Kids to Be Responsible, Independent and Money-Smart for Life* (Canadian edition). The Canadian edition of *The Wisest Investment* was awarded the Best Adult Book of 2022 by the Institute for Financial Literacy.

Robin is a Chartered Professional Accountant (CPA, CA) by training and has held professional positions in both audit and taxation at KPMG and EY and spent five years in the complex world of Derivatives Marketing at Citibank. She lives in Toronto, where she and her husband have raised two (mostly) money-smart young adults.

#### **Mentioned in this Episode:**

- [The Wisest Investment by Robin Taub](#)
- [Get Smarter About Money](#)
- [Atomic Habits by James Clear](#)
- [ECHOage](#)
- [The Good Life by Robert Waldinger](#)
- [11 rings: The Soul of Success by Phil Jackson](#)
- [Man's Search for Meaning by Viktor E. Frankl](#)
- [Grandpa's Fortune Fable by Will Rainey](#)
- [The Anxious Generation by Jonathan Haidt](#)