



*013: Living Like a College Student with The Ultimate  
Millennial Money Nerd Whitney Hansen  
(Transcript)*

**PT:** Whitney, welcome to the show.

**Whitney:** Thank you. I'm so excited to be here.

**PT:** I'm excited to have you here. The first question is, what's the one thing you do that you feel has been the biggest contributor to your financial success so far?

**Whitney:** The one thing I do that has contributed to my financial success, honestly, is just living like a broke college student. I'm no longer college student. I've been out of college for a little while, but keeping my lifestyle as simple as possible has allowed me to have some pretty cool financial successes.

**PT:** And how long have you been out of college?

**Whitney:** Well, I graduated the first time in 2010 and then I graduated with my Masters in 2014.

**PT:** Okay.

**Whitney:** I should probably know that but I can't really remember. Sorry, it was 2015.

**PT:** So it's been a long time with the college mentality. What does it look like? Does it mean you don't buy a house? What else comes into factor there?

**Whitney:** Ironically, I bought a house when I was about 19, and that's kind of what 'not to do' even though it worked out for me. It doesn't typically work out for most people but I live in the same house so my house payment is like less than \$900 a month. Utilities in Idaho are actually really pretty inexpensive, so utilities are really cheap. I don't have a car payment. I haven't had a car payment since 2007 so I drive a really broke-cheap car. It's a 2001 Toyota Celica but it allows me to spend money on what I truly care about which is traveling. My grocery budget is about \$150 a month. I keep things really, really, simple.

**PT:** Are you single?

**Whitney:** No. I have a fiancée. We don't combine our money though.

**PT:** Okay. So, \$900 a month goes toward the mortgage and that includes all the insurance and all that jazz?

**Whitney:** Exactly, and the taxes.

**PT:** The 2001 Celica, you don't mind driving around an old car like that?

**Whitney:** No, no, because I like a big bank account. *[Laughs]* That's more important to me.

**PT:** And, \$150 in groceries, how do you get by doing that? Do you have any special tricks?

**Whitney:** What works for me is, (and it's not the sexiest advice) I eat the same thing pretty much every single day. I go to Costco once a month and buy a big huge bag of frozen chicken and I will cook every Sunday—that's my meal prep day, so I prep everything up. I have all my Tupperware in my fridge so everything's ready to go. Because I eat so simple, it's just really inexpensive. It really is.

**PT:** How do you spice it up? How do you keep it interesting? Or do you just not need food to be interesting?

**Whitney:** Not anymore. That comes from my background. I used to be in bikini, body-building kind of competitions and with that you have to be so strict with how you eat. Your 'spice of life' is Mrs. Dash, just to give it a different flavor and so it does get kind of boring sometimes. But, for me, I'm such a busy person that it doesn't matter. I'm not eating for pleasure all the time. It's more like, "Oh, darn, I have to eat or I'm going to forget." That's really it. Just different seasonings and on occasions I'll cook on the weekends but usually it's about the same thing every day.

**PT:** Do you still workout? And what else keeps you busy?

**Whitney:** Yeah, working out, for sure. That doesn't keep me as busy as it used to, but about 4 or 5 days that week is about all I can get in because I've got a full-time job to do. A lot of people don't know that I work 45 hours a week. I've got my business on the side, working out, constantly doing something—that really keeps me extremely busy.

**PT:** What's your full-time job?

**Whitney:** I work for Venture College. It's a university initiative to help students start businesses. It's actually where I launched my business. I was part of their first cohort. They have an amazing team of directors that are angel investors. All kinds of different people like ex C.E.O.'s and they are just dedicated to helping students do economic development in the Boise area. So it's pretty cool.

**PT:** And you got that coming out of grad school?

**Whitney:** I did. During grad school I started working at the university because you get a discount on tuition. It's super, super cheap. That was my initial way to get into grad school without having to take out student loans. I did that for a little while and was hired on last January to do content marketing for Venture College so that's what I'm doing now.

**PT:** One of the things you say you're passionate about is traveling. Where have you traveled within the last year and how do you do that like a college student would? Or do you travel luxuriously?

**Whitney:** No. It's a funny conversation to have but, about two 2 years ago I was looking at my

life—and I live really simply but sometimes that's frustrating too because I think, “Okay, I'm starting to make some decent money and I want to experience life and travel and do all this stuff.” But before, I would take a trip once a year that would cost maybe \$1,500. That would be my Hawaii trip or a cruise... whatever it might be. I thought that was great but I have such an adventurous soul, I want to go places a lot more frequently and so I just made a little deal with myself that anytime I got time off of work, like a 3-day weekend or something I would go somewhere. The first time that I ever decided to start doing this I took a 9 ½ hour road trip to Zion National Park which sounds crazy because a few days is all that I had, but that kind of sparked it. Every single weekend I'd go somewhere. It might be just a little hike, but I'd go quite a bit. Now I'm doing a lot more big international trips. I recently went to Italy (which was amazing) and Costa Rico in May.

**PT:** Sweet, sweet. And it just comes out of the normal budget? Just from savings? Or do you do any sort of special travel hacking? Any of that stuff?

**Whitney:** No, I don't do the credit card hacking. I know a lot of people do, but that's just not for me. It kind of freaks me out. I don't do that but every single month I'm saving a little bit of cash towards a travel fund. Most of the time, I don't have anywhere specific in mind. I'm not saying, “Okay, I'm going to go to Europe next month,” or whatever. But if I find a good deal, I jump on it.

**PT:** Was there a moment your life where you realized you wanted to become a “master of your financial life,” a master of your money?

**Whitney:** Yeah, it actually started back in high school which sounds really weird. But, I was growing up in a really small farming city and my parents had been married for 27 years and it was a bad relationship, just not a healthy relationship at all. Finally it got to the point where my mom left the relationship more or less for her life. I know that sounds dramatic but it was pretty rough. So, at that time I started to see the reason she stayed in that relationship was because of money. She didn't know how to manage it. Even at 16 years old, I knew for a fact that wasn't going to be me. That's kind of where it really started to spark that interest.

**PT:** So how did you go from that to buying your first home at 19?

**Whitney:** I was a damn good saver because of all of that. I've always been pretty good at saving money. During college I was really fortunate that I didn't have a serving job or a job where I was barely scraping by. I was a nail-tech, so I was 100 percent commissioned. Actually, at that time was making decent money as a college student. I was bringing home about \$30,000 a year so that allowed me to save up a nice down payment to buy my house.

**PT:** A nail tech? Are we talking about fingernails?

**Whitney:** Yeah, toes and fingers.

**PT:** Is that is that a common thing, people can get paid on commission for that type of job?

**Whitney:** Totally. In the cosmetology industry, it's pretty common that you are commissioned. Some days you make great money, some days you make nothing. It's rough. It's a different industry for sure.

**PT:** So you help the business owner get people in the door by promoting them and you're a nail

person as well.

**Whitney:** Yeah, exactly.

**PT:** So, you were working in college, was that expensive for you? Did you have any loans there? How did you manage that?

**Whitney:** Yes, stupidly I did get loans. In hindsight, I definitely know there were ways that I could have worked a little extra and did some things slightly different to pay more towards my schooling. Again, with my family background, college was on me. That was no surprise for me so that was partially why I got the job as a nail-tech. I needed to figure out how to survive. I could have done things quite a bit differently through college. I didn't necessarily have to buy a house. I didn't have to finance my car when I did buy it. So, in hindsight I definitely would have done those things differently.

**PT:** That was the 2001 Celica?

**Whitney:** You betcha!

**PT:** That's the only car you've had?

**Whitney:** I had a car in high school. My mom co-signed for my car. Again, that's what not to do. Thankfully, I was a responsible kid so I actually did my car payments and that kind of stuff and paid it off super early. But that car— when we financed it, I was making payments of \$120 a month on it and my car insurance was also \$120 a month. The first month we had the car—no joke— the first month, the car motor blew.

**PT:** Wow.

**Whitney:** And so, I was making payments on a broken down car.

**PT:** Oh, my goodness!

**Whitney:** It was the worst! Yet, between those two cars I definitely learned a lesson, that I would probably never finance again.

**PT:** And you haven't.

**Whitney:** No, no.

**PT:** What a way to stick with it. Okay. So, with the house, did you put a big down payment on it? How did you get financing for that?

**Whitney:** I put 10 percent down which is not too bad. And, I bought it in October of two 2008 when the market was not quite at its lowest, but it was pretty darn close. It was amazing. I bought my house, then the house right next door to mine (when I was getting ready to close) went for \$10,000 less than mine, so my realtor renegotiated it and we got my house for \$10,000 less than that so it worked out really well.

**PT:** Do you mind sharing what your house was worth at the time?

**Whitney:** Right now it's worth \$190,000. But when I purchased it, I actually got it for \$143,000. That was the total amount, then I put the 10 percent down. Then I got a couple of my friends to

rent rooms so it was a cheap way to go.

**PT:** Nice, nice. That's smart. And that's the home you're still in, right?

**Whitney:** Yeah, yeah. You can see my chevron wall and my vision wall.

**PT:** That's great. That's a huge financial step for a 19-year-old. That's fantastic. After that, was there a financial goal you set for yourself or were you just sort of getting by, waiting to get out of grad school?

**Whitney:** It started with buying the house. I was pretty excited about that. I didn't have a car payment but I was taking out student loans, so when I graduated in 2010, I had \$30,000 in loans. That's when reality really sunk where I realized I should have paid attention more when I was in undergrad instead of just trying to get by waiting for the next test. I was living more for that moment and not thinking of my future. That's when I saw that \$30,000 and thought, "Okay, how do I pay this off? Let's get this plan together." That consisted of working as a public accountant (which is another story) and then as a nail-tech at the same time. That was such a weird conversation to have with people, but that's how I was able to pay it all off.

**PT:** Very cool, very cool. And it took how long again?

**Whitney:** It took me 10 months.

**PT:** Ten months. Amazing!

**Whitney:** Yeah, I was hustling.

**PT:** Were you still doing accounting work or was it just like, "Let's just do this until I get it done?"

**Whitney:** For me, I was looking at it as, okay, it's got to at least pay for itself because there's no way I went 4 years of my life and took on that much debt for it to just be something I never worked on. And so, yeah, I worked in public accounting for about 2 years then slowly made my way out.

**PT:** What was inspiring you? You talked about your family situation and being out on your own, independently doing your own thing, was there a leader out there for you? Maybe a book you were reading or someone that was inspiring you at that time?

**Whitney:** It was really Dave Ramsey. I saw his stuff. I think I was in high school when I first learned about him. I thought it was interesting. It was just a different perspective. When I was paying off debt I did follow a lot of his stuff. I got a lot of inspiration from—not necessarily from him, but from the other people that were calling into his show. I thought that was pretty cool. Podcasts were no big deal at that time. Now we're so fortunate where we can just hop on and listen to a really sweet podcast like yours, anytime. But, at that time, they just didn't have those.

**PT:** Well, thanks for saying that. The same goes for your podcast. What about tools? Were you using and tools during that time in your life like budgeting spreadsheets, Mint, anything like that?

**Whitney:** No, Mint. I was pretty old school. I just would write it out on a piece of paper, pencil and paper. I would sit there and write my budget over and over and over again. I know that sounds so weird, but for me it was that mental reminder. Every single time I would look at it, I'd find something slightly different and think, "You know what? I could actually try it this way..." And

so I started doing different analysis of how things could be put together. It kept me motivated and inspired to stick to it so it was kind of fun.

**PT:** What do you mean? How can you change a budget up? Isn't it just sort of static?

**Whitney:** Yes, it definitely is somewhat static but there are certain things where you can start to weigh out opportunity costs. You can look at it and say, "What if my grocery budget was this instead? What would that do for my life?" It's running really small scenarios in that capacity. "What if what if I picked up an extra shift? What would that do to my get-out-of-debt plan?" It's those kinds of things where I'd sit there and run those over and over. Eventually, I'd find stuff, like, if I worked an extra 3 hours on a Friday night that's going to get me potentially an extra \$200 on my paycheck. That's pretty sweet. So that's the kind of stuff I was doing.

**PT:** I love that. So many times we use budgets as a tool to look back and kind of beat ourselves up, but you were using it as a way to see opportunity and make changes and to be inspired to live your life differently. That's cool. I think that's how budgets ultimately should affect us. I'm always curious about folks who are getting out of a lot of debt like this. Are you able to do investing at the same time? Was investing a part of this mix?

**Whitney:** It wasn't at that time, no. I pushed files on all my investing just temporarily until I got out of debt. If it takes you a long time to get out of debt that's probably not always the best choice, but for me it was 10 months and 10 months not investing isn't going to make, or break my life. So yeah, I pushed files on all investing.

**PT:** What were you doing before that point?

**Whitney:** Before that point I was with a big-box firm. I was doing all of my investing through one of the bigger firms and did a little bit here and there. Investment Company of America is one of my in my primaries. I no longer do that, but at the time that's what I was doing.

**PT:** Explain that for folks that may not know what that means— big-box companies?

**Whitney:** These are like your big investment firms like, Edward Jones, Charles Schwab, Fidelity, all these really big names. Some of them are amazing. They all have some really great services. But for me, I'm smart enough that I can look at something and kind of manage it on my own so I don't need anything too complex yet. My financial life is pretty simple. But, I was paying a lot for that actively managed fund and because it was so expensive—I found out I was paying 7 percent on the back-end and didn't even quite realize it. Yeah, that will kill your returns! That's when I started to become a little bit more educated on investing and finding different ways to invest my money.

**PT:** Was that just a traditional brokerage account, IRAs or some kind of company 401k?

**Whitney:** It was a Roth IRA.

**PT:** Roth IRA. And how did you find out about this company to start with them?

**Whitney:** I can't remember exactly. It was probably a T.V. commercial or just driving by or with someone suggesting I go talk to that company. It wasn't a referral or anything like that.

**PT:** So you had extra cash in your checking account or savings account and decided to start

investing. You heard you should invest, saw the commercial and thought it would be a good company and said, "Let's get this started." They suggested the Roth IRA to you at the time?

**Whitney:** That's correct. I knew enough about the IRA piece, that I knew I needed—and this is kind of where the Dave Ramsey stuff came in. I initially thought, "Okay, mutual funds, 100 percent," so that's what I was doing. I don't really do mutual funds anymore. I don't use them at all, actually.

**PT:** I'm just curious... Before you decided to go after the student loan debt and pause for 10 months on the investing, do you mind sharing how much you had saved up to that point? A round-about figure, percentage or something like that?

**Whitney:** Before the student loans I was paying on?

**PT:** Yeah.

**Whitney:** I was doing everything I could to stay afloat. I was saving—I want to say it was about \$150 to \$200 a month. It wasn't much but it was as much as I could do at that time.

**PT:** You were young doing this. How old were you when you first started investing?

**Whitney:** When I first started investing I was 19. I bought the house and started investing.

**PT:** Unreal! Most 19-year-olds would never think to do that.

**Whitney:** Yeah, I was that nerdy 19-year-old though. I had always been into personal development so that piece was always so interesting to me. I remember in high school, I would write down all of my goals on a little piece of paper. My teacher had a laminator—this is awesome! I would laminate all of my goals and do career planning, and that was my little book. That was just the kind of kid I was. I was just into that stuff.

**PT:** Sweet! Love that.

**Whitney:** Totally nerdy.

**PT:** Do you still have some of those goals?

**Whitney:** I do, actually. Some are the same exact ones as I had in high school. I was looking at my goals and they were still so lame. They were really not great goals. One of was to make sure you paint your nails every single week. And I wonder now, what kind of goal is that? But, at the time that was important to me, I guess.

**PT:** Habits of professionalism [*laughs*]. Is there an area of personal finance you know you're just not good at yet?

**Whitney:** Is there an area that I'm not good at? You know, honestly, for me personally it would probably be credit building. My credit is okay but I don't use credit cards so it definitely could be improved in that capacity. It's something that I don't care about right now. So I guess that's kind of why I don't prioritize it, but that would definitely be an area I could improve on.

**PT:** It didn't stop you from getting a home at 19 years old.

**Whitney:** No, no. I did have a credit card at one point. When I turned 18 I got a credit card in the mail with a \$250 limit. I knew I could handle a \$250 limit. That's great. That's what I started

with and how I started building my credit. It didn't stop me, surprisingly. But, I also had the car loan too, that my mom had co-signed on.

**PT:** Gotcha. It's kind of amazing you were able to get that house.

**Whitney:** In hindsight, I'm shocked. I'm not kidding. I mean, realistically, based on the economy of the market at that time, 10 percent is a good down payment, but it's not good enough to really overcome some of those other barriers. Yeah, I don't know how that happened, but it worked out just fine, thank goodness, because I love my home.

**PT:** Did you bring your laminated goals to the loan interview?

**Whitney:** [Laughs] No, they would have told me to get out of their office!

**PT:** So credit is something you're just not worried about yet. It doesn't sound like it has necessarily held you back, and it's not something you feel like you need for the future, why?

**Whitney:** Honestly, it's comes down to contentment for me. I'm very, very, content in my home. It's literally everything I need. It is 1,600 hundred square feet. I have three bedrooms. It's beautiful. I remodel all the time so realistically, the worst thing— If it came down to it and this was the “house that I died in,” I would be content with that. I'm totally fine. I don't plan on financing a car so I don't need to do that. At this stage of my life, I will literally cash-flow everything I need, except if I wanted to buy a bigger home. But, I'd have a nice chunk of change down.

**PT:** Yeah. I can't imagine your credit score being bad, though. It's just more or less a lack of credit history, right?

**Whitney:** Yeah, I'm sure that's what it is. I actually haven't even run my credit score. I run my credit report every year but my credit score—I just don't even care right now.

**PT:** Where do you run your credit report?

**Whitney:** AnnualCreditReport.com.

**PT:** That's the free place to get your report from three bureaus, right?

**Whitney:** Yeah.

**PT:** Is that still once a year?

**Whitney:** Yeah, I think they let you do more than that, but anything more than that for me is a little bit of overkill.

**PT:** What do you look for on your credit report when you do that?

**Whitney:** Identity theft. I'm warding off the bad guys. I started looking at the balances on my student loans to see if they are correct. Are there any new accounts that were opened that I definitely know I didn't open? That kind of stuff is what I'm really looking for at this point.

**PT:** So you're looking for zeroes across the board on the student loan stuff?

**Whitney:** That and house payment stuff too. I'm looking to see if they marked a house payment late when it wasn't, that kind of stuff. I'm just trying to make sure that everything's kosher there.

**PT:** Doesn't sound like you're bad at credit to me. It sounds like you're excellent at it. [Laughs]

**Whitney:** I know it can definitely be improved by using a credit card but it's not for me right now.

**PT:** Right. I get it. Thanks for explaining that. I think those are good practices people could implement for themselves without taking up too much time or any expense, right?

**Whitney:** And it's completely free.

**PT:** Let's cover a little more ground before we get to the future. Were there any other goals you knocked out financially before today? Did you pay off the car note and have you made advance payments on the mortgage, things like that?

**Whitney:** I pay about an extra \$200 a month on my mortgage. I'm actually working now to have it paid off in 4 years. That's my big goal. I'm starting to ramp up big time with extra payments now. That would be the dream, to have it completely paid and be 100 percent debt-free. That would be sweet because I could travel the world big-time. Other than that, my other financial accomplishment I thought was pretty sweet was, after paying off all the debt and going back to grad school I didn't take on any debt for grad school at all. It cost me \$472. That was a pretty great accomplishment for me too, to find a different option to pay for school and not immediately go back to that same situation I busted my butt to get out of.

**PT:** How did you do that?

**Whitney:** Working for the university. That's really it. It's that kind of thing that I don't know why people don't look at more because, if you work for a university full-time or sometimes even in a part-time position, they will give you discounted tuition. For me it was \$5 a credit. I did a part-time program. It took me 3 years to get my MBA but it was so worth the price tag.

**PT:** Sweet! What university?

**Whitney:** Boise State.

**PT:** Nice, nice! Yeah, I just interviewed Brandon, from madfientist. He did the same thing and got his Master's degree for free because he worked there.

**Whitney:** Amazing!

**PT:** Yeah, very nice. That's impressive. I must have missed it, but the car was paid off at the same time the student loans were?

**Whitney:** The car was paid off quite a bit before. It was a 3-year loan and I paid it off in 1 ½ years.

**PT:** This is fantastic! You're a master of your money.

**Whitney:** You learn the hard way.

**PT:** You're teaching me right now. Let's talk about the shift in investing mindset after you paid off the loans and sort of wising up to investing. What was your plan going forward after that point?

**Whitney:** After I realized that I was actually paying that 7 percent on the back-end that I didn't even know about, that's when I started learning about different investment accounts, what my

options were. I know this may sound cheesy, but a lot of it was having confidence in myself and being able to see that I could do this on my own. I didn't necessarily have to know all the crazy details and all the back-end stuff. I just had to know enough to make a decision. Ultimately, I know I'm going to mess up on occasion with investing. That's kind of the nature of the game, but I can mess up and it's going to be a lot cheaper for me to mess up on my own than for somebody else to mess up what I'm paying for with fees as well. That's sort of where it all started. I started digging into all the different stuff and finding mentors that were very, very, wealthy men that were retired. I would chat with them asking about what they invested in and what their portfolio actually looked like. And they would sit down with me and literally open their doors to show me exactly what kinds of things they were investing in. As a whole, it turned out (for most of the people that I was talking with) it was index funds and a little bit of bonds. So that's the strategy that I am following myself.

**PT:** Nice. Sort of a John Bogle— Boglehead, Vanguard investing mentality of focusing on keeping costs low using the passive investing approach.

**Whitney:** Yep, that's exactly the case.

**PT:** Very good. How much a month did you start throwing into that method?

**Whitney:** At that time it was a little weird because working for a university they require you to invest so they automatically pull it out of your account. You don't have to say in it. That kind of bothers me but it is what it is. They would put that into a TIAA Cref or Percy, depending on what your status was. Percy is just a pension fund. It's one of the few left, really. That was part of it. And that was automatically taken out of my check. Then, on top of that I would put \$500 away into a Betterment account. I use Betterment now which is kind of weird and different, but I love it. That's where I do most of my investing today. I will say it has evolved a little bit. Since I've been growing my business and focusing more on that, cash is better for my business right now, so I'm pushing 'pause' a little bit on my investing. I'm still putting money in there but now I'm only doing about \$300 a month on top of the normal amount I have to contribute with my employer. The rest of that is going into my business because that cash-flow is going to produce a lot bigger returns.

**PT:** Yeah, I've heard that from a few folks who I've interviewed on the show, business owners who feel like there's some cash that needs to be put back into the business to diversify their overall portfolio. It's smart to reinvest. It sounds like you're investing in your personal real estate as well, with your house. How do you balance that—the idea of getting rid of your home loan versus maybe putting more in Betterment or into the business?

**Whitney:** It's a decision I make kind of on a real-time basis almost. I'll look at my budget and my business income, all these different things and figure out what's coming up in the next month and where that money needs to go. For example, if I'm ramping up for a new course and I'm running some webinar ads on Facebook to drive up traffic for the webinar, I'm going to need that money for that specific advertising piece. That's when I'll look at it and say, "Oh, you know, I'm actually going to need a little bit more cash for that." And it's that's the case, then I will pull back a little bit on either extra house payments or extra in my retirement account, but I do my very, very best to always fund my retirement accounts 100 percent. I think that's the smart thing to do,

really. Other than that, it's just looking at what other business decisions I have to make and whether or not it needs a little bit more cash.

**PT:** When you say 100 percent, you mean 100 percent of the annual maximum, right?

**Whitney:** Yes.

**PT:** For the Roth IRA are you trying to reach \$5,500 and do you have a solo 401k for the business?

**Whitney:** I don't, no. It's just the Roth right now.

**PT:** Okay. What about any other tools you're using these days to manage your money? You mentioned Betterment. Are there any other budgeting tools or cash-flow tools?

**Whitney:** No.

**PT:** Who do you bank with?

**Whitney:** A local bank called, D.L. Evans.

**PT:** Okay.

**Whitney:** They're pretty great. They have a good rewards program. I do that and Ally Bank for my emergency funds. Their savings account pays 1 percent last time I checked, which is pretty great for an emergency fund. And that's pretty much it. My budget is in Excel. I have used Fresh Books before for my business stuff. I think I'm actually going to be switching to Quick Books Online because it's just what I was trained with so I understand Quick Books a lot more. But yeah, those are the tools I use.

**PT:** It's the old accountant in you, right?

**Whitney:** The old accountant.

**PT:** I have another question for you about emergency funds. You mentioned emergency funds. Talk to us about why you have an emergency fund, how big it has been through the years and how you decide how big it should be?

**Whitney:** I have a really weird philosophy on emergency funds. Currently, I have \$10,000 in my bank account for my personal emergency fund. I'm actually very risk-averse. Risk scares the crap out of me. Since financial security is probably one of my biggest priorities as I make the transition from working two jobs into sole entrepreneurship (which is one of my big goals for this year) one of the things I'm doing to help mitigate that is, I'm starting to ramp up a business savings account. It sounds really, really weird but basically it's a business emergency fund. I was looking at it and I know for me personally, looking at my financial situation, I could survive just off of my emergency fund. That's great, but I couldn't necessarily do those weird business experiments where I wanted to put a little extra cash into something. That was really important to me too so now I'm starting to ramp that up as well so that I can still fund my business without hurting my personal life.

**PT:** Right. So right now in Ally, it's \$10,000?

**Whitney:** Yes.

**PT:** But then, won't you create a separate business one?

**Whitney:** Yeah, I actually have one through my D.L. Evans account. For right now it works pretty well. It's just building it up because I know some day with business, you're going to need that cash.

**PT:** That's smart. Now, that's with the local bank?

**Whitney:** That's with the local bank, yes.

**PT:** So you've got a local checking for everyday spending rewards, then you ship it off to Ally for personal savings to get the 1 percent and keep it separate from your checking. But, you decided for the business to just stay local and put the cash over there. Is the money that goes into those accounts automated or you just kind of manually drag money over as needed?

**Whitney:** No, it's pretty automated. For the Ally one, I'm done. I don't fund that account anymore because I've reached what I need so that just sits there. But, for the travel account, it's definitely automated. There are months where I look at it and I might drop a little bit extra into the travel fund, but typically I try to automate as much as possible.

**PT:** Cool. Talk to us about the business. What is the business?

**Whitney:** Yes. The business is financial coaching. That's what it started off as. It has since evolved into courses, webinars and just helping people with that really crappy sense of their life. Sometimes it's not a fun thing to chat about so I try to bring a little bit of fun and entertainment into the industry. That's what it is now. It's primarily courses.

**PT:** Nice, nice. So you're trying to reach more people versus just the one-on-one coaching?

**Whitney:** Yeah. You probably did one-on-one as well. I think it's a great place to start because you learn so much about the psychology of people; what they are struggling with and what their actual budgets look like. So, for that reason it's amazing to get to know your customers on a very, very, deep level. But time is valuable. Every hour I spend with somebody— it may seem like an hour but it's actually 30 minutes of prep time and 30 minutes of trying to prepare extra notes and make notes for myself to review, so it's never just one hour. I started realizing really quickly, that I don't have enough time to do that kind of stuff. I love it, and I still do that on occasion, but I had to figure out a way to scale.

**PT:** That's smart. Fantastic. You mentioned 4 years, the house—trying to knock that out potentially. Are there any other big financial goals looking forward?

**Whitney:** The biggest one for right now is getting my business to a place where I'm very, very, confident I can survive off of it. That's the big goal. In 2017 I'm hoping to just focus on one thing which will be so great.

**PT:** Yeah. So you're looking for that to replace your full-time income or reach a certain percentage of it?

**Whitney:** It's pretty much on a numerical level. It's reached the same amount I'm making in my job before taxes. But, as a self-employed person, you pay a lot more. You have to pay quite a bit and because of that I'm trying to get it to a point where I can afford the health insurance. With

working for a university, health insurance is dirt cheap. It's super, super cheap. I pay \$80 a month for amazing insurance but I've got to be able to cover that on my own if I'm not working for the university. It's little things like that, that you don't always think about that I'm trying to get my income to a higher level where it would make sense for me to quit.

**PT:** Where are you going to go for insurance?

**Whitney:** I don't even know yet.

**PT:** That's still up in the air, right? I mean, with the Affordable Care Act, Obama-care about to potentially be repealed—

**Whitney:** Yeah, it's an interesting time.

**PT:** Yeah, and that's unfortunate for a business owner, to find themselves potentially ready to take off and that suddenly become a hurdle. I hate that. It was a hurdle for me too. We worked out but we reiterated and did some different things through the years to try to make sure that was not a major issue but I'm sure you are smart enough to figure it out and find something that works for you.

**Whitney:** I definitely have to.

**PT:** Well, this has been good. I have a real quick question though. I always like to ask about the fiancée and how money plays into relationships? How do you plan to manage some of that?

**Whitney:** It's so funny, opposites always attract and I don't know why is, but I am such a great saver and so good about my money and budgeting. My fiancé's is not bad with money but it's taken some training to get him to a point where he is actually doing better. He would kick my butt for saying this, but he's just very different. He has no problem spending money on clothes or Amazon.com. That tends to be his thing. He will buy random things all the time, whereas I don't buy random things. I'll spend very heavily on travel or big remodel projects, so trying to find that level ground is really weird. We don't combine our income, so at this point whatever he does with this money is his choice. Eventually, when we do combine it will have to change a little bit.

**PT:** Do you think you'll do a combined fund and then a separate fund for each thing?

**Whitney:** I think that's probably what we're going to do primarily because I don't want to be that person that has to look through every single transaction and criticize that he went out to eat and I brought my lunch. I don't want it to be that kind of relationship. It's like, if you have \$200 in your account—I don't care what the heck you spend that money on. That's your choice. And the \$200 I have in my account, I'll do whatever the heck I want with it too. I don't think you have to always be spending money on the exact same things. I think that's a hard thing to understand, but we do try to do sort of a combined budget. He's an entrepreneur himself so he's got his business full-time in his thing. That's okay. I don't need to see all of his income and he doesn't need to see all of mine, but we do try to do some little budgets here and there where it's totally fictitious. We'll put it all together and just see how would life might be if money was combined so we have a better idea of what that looks like.

**PT:** Do you have a wedding date set?

**Whitney:** No, we don't.

**PT:** Okay.

**Whitney:** We have been dating since high-school which is a long, long, time. We've been engaged for about 4 years. The more I look at the financial piece of weddings, the more I think eloping is for me.

**PT:** Yeah, I don't blame you there. Ours was pretty expensive.

**Whitney:** They are!

**PT:** Was there anything we didn't cover that we should have?

**Whitney:** I think we got it. The only other thing is I think it's so important for people to know that reading is a great way to get education. So, if you can't afford to buy courses or work with somebody, pick up books and read them consistently. Find books that are different than what you normally would read. If you are a Dave Ramsey fan, find a book that is contrary to Dave Ramsey. Go read Suze Orman. Go get those different opinions and find out what you agree with and what works for you in your life. I think that's super important for people.

**PT:** What are some your favorite personal finance books?

**Whitney:** My favorite personal finance book is probably, *Rich Dad, Poor Dad*. I love it. I think it's amazing. Right now, I'm actually reading a book called, *Narcenomics*. It's about the economics of the drug industry and it is fascinating. It's really interesting so that one I've been really enjoying lately.

**PT:** Cool. I always ask folks to look back, back to when you decided to become a master of your own money. There have been some ups and downs along the way but you've made some fantastic choices. It's so impressive. How do you feel about your journey so far? How do you feel about it all now?

**Whitney:** Great, actually. I'm very, very, happy with the way my life has been turning out and I'm super blessed—just crazy blessed.

**PT:** You are! And it's been a blessing to have you on the show.

**Whitney:** Thank you.

**PT:** How can folks find out more about you and all the fantastic things you have going on?

**Whitney:** I hang out at WhitneyHansen.com. That's where you can find me.

**PT:** Cool. I know you're on iTunes with a fantastic podcast so be sure to subscribe to that.

**Whitney:** Thank you.

**PT:** Well, Whitney, thank you so much for being on the show.

**Whitney:** No problem. This was so much fun. Thank you.