

# Ep #32: Money Modeling (How to Fun Money for Your Kids, Clients & Everyone Who's Watching You)



**Full Episode Transcript**

**With Your Host**

**Jess McKinley Uyeno**

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## **Ep #32: Money Modeling (How to Fun Money for Your Kids, Clients & Everyone Who's Watching You)**

More is caught than taught. That's my parenting mantra, and basically, I believe that my most important job as a mom is to be the values that I'm teaching my kids. Not just tell them what to do, but to do it. And by living the life that I believe is most righteous, I guess, the life that I think is the most valuable way to move through the world, that they're going to pick up on some of those habits.

And whether you're a parent or not, this principle is at work, especially when it comes to your money behaviors. I'll repeat it. More is caught than taught. I'm always reminded of how important it is when a client tells me that they hired me, not from an email or a post or a stage speech that I meticulously prepared, but because of how casually and lovingly they watch me handle maybe a literal explosion, like the one that happened last June, and how I was able to stay focused on the people instead of the pending tens of thousands of dollars that I had invested. Or how I continue to take risks and change my mind and invest bigger publicly.

But I'm still new money, and I didn't grow up with the same money that my kids are experiencing. And you better believe that I am being conscious about what I'm saying and doing now.

What is my money modeling? You're listening to Fun Money, and this is your host, life and money mentor to the most interesting women in the world. Jess McKinley Uyeno, and this is episode number 32.

I'm recording this episode just hours before my husband and I are about to take our kids and my mother-in-law on a business class flight to Argentina. And I keep having the thought, this is not normal. And then I'm like, what a weird thought. Because normal is, of course, relative.

In fact, there are very few ways in which I'm raising my children to actually be normal at all. We speak Spanish at home. My son's favorite food is grilled octopus, which is rarely on a kid's menu. My daughter wakes up and

## **Ep #32: Money Modeling (How to Fun Money for Your Kids, Clients & Everyone Who's Watching You)**

asks me, "Are you going to work out, mama? Or did you already work out?" I'm pretty sure she thinks my husband and I run for a living at this point.

We don't have a normal looking family. We've got a blended family. My daughter calls my son's dad Uncle Dusty and his stepmom Aunt Mandy. And most abnormally, I talk about money with my kids. Not because I think it's the most important thing, but because it's one of the most important games. I grew up playing lots of games as a kid, and I was taught how to play competitively, how to have fun even when you lose, and to value both the experience and the outcome.

So I want to take an episode to talk to you about the very real thing that is happening, whether you're conscious about it or not, which is money modeling. And if you're not a parent, don't worry, you're not excluded from this. You are modeling what's normal to the people that you spend the most time with. This can be your friends, your partner, even your community, your social media audience, and of course, your clients. You're subconsciously always training people how to behave and how to speak about, how to approach, well, you in general, but money when they're around you.

And you get to be one of the people who knocks people off of their autopilot and makes them question, wait, could I do that too? Wait, is this the normal that I want when it comes to my money? I love being that for other people. I love hearing random other people, not my clients, just other people who I've met. Maybe they're other friends or parents of my kids' friends, or however I meet these people out in the world. And they're like, you said this one thing, or I watched you in the behind-the-scenes of something, and it really got me thinking. And I'm like, boom, my job is done here.

It's socially acceptable to learn how to get money. We're all on the same page with that, right? We want more wealth. We celebrate people getting raises, people winning the lottery, people striving for more money. But what about when we have the wealth? We're taught how to get money, but not

[Fun Money with Jessica McKinley Uyeno](#)

## Ep #32: Money Modeling (How to Fun Money for Your Kids, Clients & Everyone Who's Watching You)

how to be once we have it. Especially for women, especially for girls. Am I right? Once you're wealthy, you better be proper about it. Don't be too much. Don't show off. Don't celebrate the thing that you worked so hard to get to. Don't talk about it. Hide it, water it down.

I even heard a psychologist say once that she doesn't see the upside in talking about money. That was wild to me. And I know what she means, though. This particular psychologist was Angela Duckworth, and she was really saying, if you have less money, what's the upside here in this conversation? If you have more money than the other person you're talking to, what's the upside? But ironically, being that she hosts one of my favorite podcasts, which is called *No Stupid Questions*, she's not asking a very high-quality question here. It's not specific enough.

What's the upside? Well, is there an upside if the conversation is just about how much you each have presently? How much we each earn, what your salary is, or what you have as a net worth? Maybe not. But this is assuming that your net worth, the wealth mindset, the economic status of the people having the conversation is fixed.

Which brings me to the first thing that I model for my kids when it comes to money, which is that we don't underestimate anyone. Because human beings are not fixed. Just because you are at a certain number of income right now, that you have a certain amount of debt, or you live in a certain neighborhood, you can afford certain types of shoes, does not mean that you don't have a ton of value or potential.

I spent most of my life being underestimated. It's probably because I'm so cute. But that also is what makes me so keenly aware that we shouldn't judge a book by its cover. I am way more interested in hanging out with, having conversations with, spending time with wealth-minded people than I am rich people. And there's a big difference. I love a lot of my rich friends, but I love a lot of my friends who don't have as much money, and what I'll

## **Ep #32: Money Modeling (How to Fun Money for Your Kids, Clients & Everyone Who's Watching You)**

tell you that these friends of mine that I keep have in common is that they are wealth-minded.

Wealth-minded, in my book, might as well be synonymous with growth-minded. Someone who is interested in going places, someone who is interested in creating value, in doing things, in squeezing the juice out of life, in betting on themselves, in growing, in evolving.

And I told the kids about how we came to pay for our very first business class flight to Japan. If you want that whole story, that's in episode number seven. I told them how it's not normal. I made them look around when we were sitting in there in the seats and see that they were the only kids there. But that it was indeed awesome. And that if they wanted to have this life as an adult, they'd just have to be wealth-minded too.

Because you don't happen upon this level of money by being average, by thinking average thoughts, and by certainly not by modeling those average thoughts and perpetuating them to the other people you spend most time with, right? Creating this groupthink of what is normal. If you don't want it to be normal, if you want to be above average, you cannot continue to make decisions based on the average.

I'm not going to go on a rant here. I do just want to tell you this one thing that I was coaching one of my clients in the mastermind the other day, and she has an incredible business, and she has a product that really attracts a unique consumer. She has such a unique audience and clientele. And she was asking me about the psychology and the statistics of who would buy this price point or this discount, and she can be about the numbers and analytical thinker. She was an engineer.

And I was like, listen, here's my thought about it, is that, yes, those statistics may help you attract, push the average person over the edge to buy, but when your consumers aren't average, this doesn't really apply. You have to really test it, and you have to trust that you know what's best

## Ep #32: Money Modeling (How to Fun Money for Your Kids, Clients & Everyone Who's Watching You)

because you and your brand and your company's brand is going to attract the right people.

So I just wanted to mention that. If we're trying to think about our wealth and we want to create above average wealth, we have to stop looking around and saying, well, what is the average way of doing things? Well, that's not how it's going to work.

The second thing that I model when it comes to my money is to be absolutely effervescent about the life that you have, especially the things that you spend money on. I mentioned earlier, I'm still a new money millionaire. I am just coming into this world, and so it wasn't that long ago that the money that I was celebrating was really not that much.

I mean, I've cried over getting a paycheck of \$632 in one week. It literally exploded my brain. I was like, I'm the richest person ever. Right? And I was celebrating that, right? And it's not just earning. I love to celebrate what I've spent on. I still every night when I go to bed, I say to my husband, who's probably so sick of it at this point, I'm like, oh, I just can't believe that there are people that don't sleep on mattresses. I'm so grateful for the money that we spent on this mattress. I love it. I love going to sleep in this bed.

And while I've made the decision to be rich forever, episodes, gosh, I don't know the number, maybe like eight and nine, something around there. Go listen to those episodes, *Deciding to Be Rich Forever*. While I've made this decision, and this is my norm, I've also committed to never getting used to it.

The same way I'll never get used to sunrises when we're at the lake house, or how cute it is when my son says non-possible instead of impossible. I have no chill about the Executive Platinum lounge at JFK. We act like it's our first time. It's not. Every time I spend \$23 on a 10-minute massage with my favorite girl, Brenda, I find a new way to express my overflowing gratitude that this is the best money I spent today.

## **Ep #32: Money Modeling (How to Fun Money for Your Kids, Clients & Everyone Who's Watching You)**

Today, I had one of those massages, and I told her in Spanish, she speaks Spanish, that if I had a genie, one of my wishes would be for her to get to experience a massage from herself because I could almost cry thinking about the fact that no matter how much money she makes, she will never get to experience how awesome it is. Money is awesome.

Whether it's \$1 of quarters that my kids scrounged up and rolled their quarters into this \$10 like roll, right? And bring it to the bank or the net worth number that is creeping closer to \$2 million for us this year. Why would I ever not have a dance party about it?

There was going to be a time when \$2 million doesn't actually feel like a lot to us, and I know that, but right now it feels like a lot. Just that same way that \$639 felt a lot. And I feel the same joy in my body because I choose to. If you are too cool to celebrate, you are missing out.

Being in awe and wonder and confetti mode about your money, the exact amount that you have right now, and the dollars that you're inevitably going to have because you're a growth-minded baller, this is the assignment. This decision to be enthusiastic about all of the money games, it breeds more money. It breeds more joy.

The next thing I consciously model, and at this point kind of unconsciously because it was conscious for a while, and then eventually it becomes unconscious, is that hard work and lots of money are not mutually exclusive. I absolutely believe in the value of hard work. I believe in doing things no one else wants to do. I like a cold plunge. I like untangling 17 necklaces. Yes, everybody in my house knows to hand that my way. Challenge accepted is one of my favorite phrases, and I say it as often as possible.

I like to work 24 hours on a project just to show myself what I can accomplish in a new edge. We are the family, we're that family that they make memes about that does 5Ks on Thanksgiving, and often we place.

## **Ep #32: Money Modeling (How to Fun Money for Your Kids, Clients & Everyone Who's Watching You)**

Well, I've never personally placed, but my mom and my dad and my brother and my husband have, and I just became a runner, so I'm coming for you.

All of that, and yet, you will never hear me telling my kids or my clients that if they work really hard, they too can have a lot of money. It's just not the A to B road that I'm interested in drawing a correlation to. It doesn't mean that hard work can't create money. It just means that you don't necessarily have to work harder than the person next to you in order to create more money.

I have a friend who I will not name, but she is one of the hardest-working people I know. She is always going the extra mile in every area of her life. She has made it a part of her identity, really. She's a hard worker. She doesn't prompt herself to make things easier. She doesn't ask "how can I work smarter, not harder," and it shows. She's always busy. She's even begun to accumulate some decent wealth at this point. She's an incredible friend. She's a killer mom. She's a great wife, but you know what she also is? Tired.

Your kids are watching how much you work to get your money, how many hours you clock, how much pressure you put on yourself, how much sacrificing you're doing. And while the reality was that generations before us had to do this, that you really did have to labor from sunup to sundown, it's 2025. We have the internet. We have higher education. We have the stock market. Have you heard of it? A little thing called compound interest?

Anyone who thinks that I'm speaking out of privilege and that not everyone has the luxury of just doing whatever they want for a career and creating wealth, I want to share a real, sobering statistic that shows the danger of perpetuating this lie that hard work is the most important value when it comes to trying to create wealth and essentially freedom for your family.

So here's this tangible example of this work hard and then escape into wealth mentality at play. The average households that are earning \$30K or less, which is well below the average income for Americans, spend roughly

## Ep #32: Money Modeling (How to Fun Money for Your Kids, Clients & Everyone Who's Watching You)

\$412 annually on lottery tickets. Some reports even indicate that for the lowest income, this can be even higher, with the poorest 1% of zip codes spending up to 5%, that's \$600 plus dollars of their income on lottery tickets, okay? About 40 million US households are considered habitual lottery players, with many in the lowest income quartile spending roughly \$2,500 annually on lottery tickets.

Now, if we rewired our society to see ease as a long-term game, instead of this thing that you just had to luckily happen upon, this next stat would also shift. This next stat is that 62% of Americans own stocks in some capacity, but lower-income households are significantly less likely to hold investments. Only 21% of families, broadly, directly hold stocks.

So let's just see what this swap would look like. I'm going to give you a very simple way to visualize this. If a person earning \$30,000 a year swapped a \$25 a month habit of playing the lottery, that's that \$300 a year that we were talking about, for an S&P 500 index fund with a 10% average annual return, that money could grow to over \$5,000 after 10 years and more than \$56,000 after 30 years.

I know that was a rant, but these stats make me mad. This is what happens when we value hard work over smart, long gameplay. And so I will not be the one telling my kids that if they want this, they just have to work hard, because it sounds so innocent. It sounds so great, like moral. It sounds morally right to say if you just work hard, then you can be wealthy.

But this is the lesson that I learned by reading that book, *Rich Dad, Poor Dad*, back in the day, by Robert Kiyosaki, blew my mind. It was like, Oh, yeah, this is the poor dad mentality of like you just work hard your life and you will be able to be wealthy, versus doing the things and putting yourself in situations in which you know how to play the money games at the highest level, where you are thinking and playing smarter instead of harder.

## Ep #32: Money Modeling (How to Fun Money for Your Kids, Clients & Everyone Who's Watching You)

And finally, when it comes to money modeling, we praise effort, attitude, and relationships over money. When I was a kid, anytime something really stressful happened that was out of our control, maybe a flight was canceled due to snow, something broke, my dad would say, "Things are replaceable. This is why I make money."

If a friend was in need, my dad was the first to take out cash and loan money or literally drop everything and fly to a friend's house to work on their roof that had a leak or help cheer them up from a breakup. I mean, I can count it would be off the number of fingers I have on my hand to count the number of times that my parents, my dad specifically, would drop what they were doing and hop on a flight and pay to go and show up for people.

I found out on multiple occasions that he'd also silently donated the max amount at an auction or a charity. If anyone that we knew had an acquaintance that died, we would take a day off of work or school and often pay lots of money and take lots of time to fly somewhere to show up for people in their time of grief. Because we knew that effort and our relationships was what mattered most. He would say, "This is what money is for."

And I find myself saying this often to my kids and to my clients. If a client or someone I know is coming to me saying they feel really burnt out, but you feel like you should be able to figure it out on your own, right? This is my client to a T. This may be you listening to this. You're like, Oh, gosh, it would be so much more fun to be building this business inside of a mastermind. I know it would happen faster. I'd be able to get the results faster. However, I just feel like I should be able to figure it out on myself. Bitch, this is what money is for. It's so that you can have more joy, more peace, and more community, and more speed towards your freedom.

When my husband got stuck in Vegas because of a snowstorm a couple of weeks ago, he was in literal tears. My poor baby. He was in tears because he found out that he wouldn't be there in the morning when my daughter

## Ep #32: Money Modeling (How to Fun Money for Your Kids, Clients & Everyone Who's Watching You)

woke up to bring her to school like he had promised her. And the only flight available, if he didn't want to be stuck there for three days, was a \$2,100, maybe more than that, flight that was first class. It was the only ticket available.

And I said, without hesitation, "This is what money is for." He was like worried that I was going to be mad that he wanted to take this. No, this is what money is for. I'm not saying to use this expression as a free pass to just spend on whatever you fancy in the moment, like a YOLO, mindless, unaligned shopping spree. I'm saying to get honest with yourself. What is your money for? Because whether you're saying it out loud or not, we're watching you, and we can read you like a book.

I'll see you next week. Un besito. I'm going to go use my money and spend it well in Argentina with my family, and I can't wait to chat with you next week when I get back.

That's it for today's episode of *Fun Money*. But if your brain is buzzing and you want more, come hang out with me over on Instagram, @JessMcKinleyUyeno or visit us at FunMoneyPod.com because that's where the real magic happens. Until next time, stay bold, stay interesting, and for the love of God, go do something fun with your money!