

EPISODE 1747**[0:00:00]**

FT: So Money episode 1747. Reasonably happy in finding humor and meaning in money with Paul Ollinger.

*“**PO:** When we're broken, we make additional money. That additional money relieves real pain. It gives us the opportunity to pay \$20 for Novocain, something that would be the best \$20 you could invest in anything, right? But as you climb the economic ladder and you start buying luxuries, those things don't really relieve pain so much as they do, it just add a new layer of comfort to your life.”*

[INTRODUCTION]

[0:00:08]

ANNOUNCER: You're listening to So Money with award-winning money guru, Farnoosh Torabi. Each day, you get a 30-minute dose of financial inspiration from the world's top business minds, authors, influencers, and from Farnoosh herself. Looking for ways to save on gas or double your double coupons? Sorry, you're in the wrong place. Seeking profound ways to live a richer, happier life? Welcome to So Money.

[INTERVIEW]

[0:00:56]

FT: Welcome to So Money, everybody. I'm Farnoosh Torabi. Before we bring on today's gas, I want to take a minute to explain some phenomenon that's happened on this podcast over the last few days. We are trying to get a handle on it. Some of you have reached out about it. Thank you. But apparently there are some advertisements that are being dynamically inserted into the show that are not congruent with my beliefs or the values that we uplift on this show.

These were not handpicked ads. Just to give you a little behind the scenes of how ads work around here. There are some sponsorships that I vet and then I will read those ads for our audience. In some other cases, there are ads like that get dynamically inserted. They're not read by me. Our team does go through a process of reviewing the different ad categories and blocking some, for example, ones that are promoting firearms or their ads that I've blocked off that pertain to sensitive topics like politics, religion.

Even with these ad blockers, there have been some ads that have filtered their way through, because they get creative with how they are categorized. All this to say, we are being vigilant about this and I would love to hear from you. If you hear something, wherever you're hearing this podcast, an ad that seems a little questionable, given the nature of this show, please let me know. You can email me Farnoosh@somoneypodcast.com. It's worth mentioning that this didn't start until after the election. I'm not going to draw conclusions, but here we are. As we get a handle on this, I appreciate your patience and your understanding.

On today's show, I'm thrilled to welcome back one of our favorite voices in the world of money and humor, Paul Ollinger. Paul is a comedian and an author. He has a unique take on wealth and happiness that's made him a standout in the finance space. He's here to talk about his latest book of essays called, *Reasonably Happy*. A collection that balances sharp wit with deep reflections on money, purpose, and what it means to live a meaningful life. From Paul's first beat up car, that was a – what he calls an unintended announcement of his financial struggles, to exploring the Danish approach to happiness.

Paul's got insights that are both relatable and thought-provoking. He shares the challenges he faced in writing this book, his first book, including essays that did not make the cut, and what it's been like to move his family from Georgia to New York recently, where he's gaining fresh perspective on money, lifestyle, and culture. Here's Paul Ollinger.

Our favorite funny finance guy is back on So Money. Paul Ollinger, welcome.

[0:03:21]

PO: Hi, Farnoosh.

[0:03:23]

FT: Hi, Paul. Tell us where you're at, because since we last spoke, we're going to talk about your new book, but you're also in a new location.

[0:03:30]

PO: I am. My wife and I relocated ourselves and our children and our two French Bulldogs who are sitting behind me, because she's in Phoenix right now. We move to the Upper West Side of Manhattan, because we are hopeless romantics who make terrible financial decisions.

[0:03:48]

FT: Well, that's my old hood. Where – you have to tell me your coordinates in case we have stoppers listening.

[0:03:53]

PO: I'll tell you that we patronized the West 86th Street subway station.

[0:04:01]

FT: Yes. Okay. I was the West 79th Street subway station, and then I also lived on 90th for a while. Tim Gunn lived in our building. We shared an elevator with Tim Gunn. That was fun. That was always fun.

[0:04:14]

PO: I bet you – did you feel pressure to be dressed up all the time when Tim –

[0:04:17]

FT: Always. Although, I will say, he was always dressed. He was 90% of the time he was dressed to the nines, but occasionally we would see him in his weekend gear, which was usually a white t-shirt and white shorts and white tennis shoes.

[0:04:32]

PO: This is what our friends told us about choosing West versus East Side. He said, ask your wife if she wants to put her makeup on to walk the dog.

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FT: Oh, yeah.

[0:04:42]

PO: That would be the stereotypical East Side dog walker.

[0:04:48]

FT: Well, I would also wonder, I would also ask, do you want to ever be able to walk to a grocery store or take a subway somewhere? Because East Side is vast, and I feel like it's a food desert for groceries and commuting-wise. On the West Side, you have so many options.

[0:05:06]

PO: Yeah. You can buy like \$90 cookies on the East Side.

[0:05:09]

FT: Well, yeah.

[0:05:10]

PO: But not actual food.

[0:05:11]

FT: No. You can't get like broccoli and whatever. A box of Cheerios. More on that maybe later. I'm so like impressed with this move that you have done in midlife to New York. I kind of want to go back to Brooklyn as a retiree at some point. I think there's a lot to benefit from living in the city, but you mentioned you're bad with money, and I don't think that's true.

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PO: No. We're relatively prudent people, but this was – what I mean is there's really if you view this kind of life choice through the lens of finances, you would never do this, because everything in Manhattan is two to three times as expensive.

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FT: Potentially, but also, let's be honest, you are pursuing a comedy career. You are a comedy careerist, and New York is great for that.

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PO: It is. It is. So, the thought was, it was multi-variable, multi-variant. The thought was, if I really want to find out what I'm capable of as a comedian, the place to do that is New York or LA. I think that's true. However, I think the venue to really dominate in these days is the social media sphere. So, regardless of where you live, if you're killing it on Facebook – sorry, if you're killing it on Instagram or TikTok, clubs will book you, because you can bring people to your shows.

[0:06:29]

FT: Exactly.

[0:06:31]

PO: I think it's a little bit – the New York-centric comedy thing is a little bit dated, but still true. The best comics in the country live here, or LA, for the most part, or they did live here, then they moved back home once they achieved that level of – like Nate Bargatze lives in Nashville, but he lived in Manhattan, or he lived in the New York area for eight or nine years, and that's where he really cut his teeth.

[0:06:57]

FT: Yeah. All right, *Reasonably Happy*. This is the title of your book of essays, a collection of essays, hilarious blend of humor and financial reflections. You go through the ages. I wanted to just start with a question about the inspiration for this type of book, too, right? You didn't want to write like a how-to money book that is the traditional book, like chapter one, how to budget, chapter two, how to buy a car. You really took us through your life as a lens through which you share some profound stuff about money, and we'll get into it. But what drew you to this project?

[0:07:35]

PO: Well, the truth of the matter is that I've submitted, I don't want to brag, Farnoosh, but I've had manuscripts rejected by the best publishers in all of North America. So, I wrote a manuscript about money. It was about my story of growing up middle-class and always wanting to make money, always aspiring to make money, and then making it as an early employee at Facebook and how weird that experience was.

I think we didn't do – a book is a product, and we didn't do a good enough job of representing the product and why it would be a compelling thing for people to buy. I spent years on this project. Some of the topics that are addressed in that manuscript showed up in this book of essays. But what I really decided a few years ago was like I can't wait for the publishing industry to catch up with me. I'm just going to write every week or as much as I can and start putting out these things in the form of sub-1000-word essays.

I started doing that on medium a few years ago and then moved to sub-stack probably two years ago. If you keep writing for a decade, you look back and go, “Oh, I've got a lot here.” So, this book is a collection of 46 of my favorite essays from the last decade. They are reflections on money success and where we find fulfillment in life. Those are often in places where you don't expect to find them.

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FT: How did you choose which 46 to share? I'm sure there were 460.

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PO: There were 47. No, I'm just kidding. You know, you're a writer. The 46 are disproportionately recent. The reason for that is because I've gotten better as a writer. I mean, over the last however many years you've been writing, haven't you gotten better? Haven't you become – hasn't the facility as a writer improved over time and what you thought was good 10 years ago? You'd look at and go, “Gosh, I'm just better than this now.”

[0:09:37]

FT: Yeah, for sure. Yeah, so the process of elimination is based on the quality of the work, but I think too, you do a nice job of although you say they're recent, but the stories aren't like Paul from 1999 and forward. You go all the way back. Your first story, your first essay is called, *In Money, Pain, and New Cars*. You talk about your first experience buying a car. Tell us about that experience and why you wanted to include that as your first opening to the book.

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PO: Well, I opened the book with a story about the first time I got a cavity filled. This will give you some insight into the household where I was raised. My father, who was the kindest gentleman, most humble, true man I've ever known, took me to get my cavity filled when I was 11 years old. Right before I walked into the dentist office, he said, “Wait a second, don't get the Novocain. It's \$20.” So, my father was such a non-materialistic person that he might have had

trouble seeing why other people might need little luxuries, like I don't know, anesthesia. So – and that was the frugal, the frugality of the household that I was raised in. Six kids, we had all we needed, but it was just a pretty Spartan life.

I always fantasized about having luxury goods. What I learned over time is that we all know the study about there's no additional happiness beyond \$75,000 a year. Whether that's true or not, we can think about it as, well, what happens to us as money? What happens to the ability of money to make us happier as we climb the economic ladder? So, I view that theory through the lens of cars in this essay.

What I want to say is that, or what I'm trying to point out is that when we're broken, we make additional money. That additional money relieves real pain. It gives us the opportunity to pay \$20 for Novocain, something that would be the best \$20 you could invest in anything, right? But as you climb the economic ladder and you start buying luxuries, those things don't really relieve pain so much as they do, just add a new layer of comfort to your life.

[0:11:58]

FT: Yeah. It gets rid of friction.

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PO: Yeah. It's good, but it's not like – and the lens of I just bought a new – I think I had traded in my Tesla for a Mercedes, and I'm very fortunate. I want to say that I'm very fortunate to be privileged. I've been able to buy nice luxury cars since I was in my mid 30s when I started making money in the digital media business. I don't ever want to forget that, because the – but that Mercedes purchase wasn't anything as ecstatic as the purchase I made when I replaced my beater Honda in Memphis, Tennessee that didn't have air conditioning and only started once in a while with a 1994 Saturn SL2, which was technically like a moped with like a steering wheel.

It's a tin can with a tiny engine and, but you know what, it was glorious because I got air conditioning for the first time as a 25-year-old, and it changed my life. When you go out to your

car every morning and try to start it, you don't know if it'll start. When you're sweating through, you're just sweating bullets on a date with some girl who's like, "This loser doesn't even have air conditioning in your car." Even a Saturn SL2 feels like a Rolls Royce.

[0:13:13]

FT: Yeah.

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PO: Whereas trading a Tesla infirm Mercedes is just one kind of a really good car for another slightly newer car.

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FT: Americans in their cars, right? It's very cultural here where you write that a car is often an outward sign of how its owner's life is going. You write that as a tee up to a joke about how like your Honda was sort of like, it did not enhance your dating life back then, but –

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PO: It was my financial life was a wreck back then. The car was an outward stumble thereof.

[0:13:45]

FT: The person with a Mercedes might be taking out like a 15% loan for that and not has other bills stacking up. It's hard to know anymore what's real of story.

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PO: This is true. There've been studies that people in luxury cars are more rude and less conscientious to their other drivers. The author, I can't remember who. It was some guy at University of California, I think, Paul Piff, maybe. He concluded that rich people are more selfish

drivers. Well, I don't think the ownership of luxury cars or the driving of a luxury car is necessarily proof that somebody has more money. It's proof that they prioritize driving a new car, a nicer car, whatever they have to do to get into it.

[0:14:31]

FT: Yeah. Why do you call them a reasonably happy, as supposed to crazy, ridiculously happy? Is it enough to be reasonably happy? Should that be the new goalpost?

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PO: I believe, so as you know I started my podcast five years ago and it's called Crazy Money.

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FT: Right.

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PO: My partner at the time, Mike Carano and I, we just picked that name, he was my producer. It's still a good friend. We just picked it, because we couldn't think of anything else. But I had been writing these essays about money and happiness. We just like, "Let's call it Crazy Money and we'll find something better later." Of course, we never changed the name, even though Crazy Money sounds like some podcast about how to make millions in real estate while you sleep or like it's some investing show or something like that.

It's never been about that. It's never been about finding the lowest rate credit card or anything like that. It's never been a personal finance show. It's been about how to find things in life that are going to be true sources of content and an analysis of money that concludes that money is only one part of a happy life. So, when it came time to rebrand, I thought of all different kinds of names, like now what or all kinds of things.

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FT: Is it, it?

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PO: Is this – is that all? Those kinds of things. So, what you find is it's very difficult with five million plus podcasts. It's very difficult to find a name that hasn't already been taken. We were going to take so money, but that one was taken as well.

[0:16:02]

FT: Someone has your So Money.

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PO: Yeah. Well, that's right. So, that's –

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FT: I play off of my podcast. Yeah.

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PO: Yeah. Anyway, so I was thinking about what am I trying to say? What I'm trying to say is that if you think that money, or fame, or some exogenous variable that has eluded you in life is going to make you happy, then you're deluding yourself, like happiness starts from within and that it's a choice almost as much as it is a happenstance. The fact of the matter is no matter how much you have, we've seen the studies, you're always going to want more. So, even very, very wealthy people are still wanting. So, we all have to say, I'm going to decide to be happy. I'm going to decide to be satisfied with the things that I have. If I'm lacking something else, I'll work hard to go get it or I'll be okay without it.

What says *Reasonably Happy* to me is a choice of serenity in life. The choice that like even though there's a lot of things that can be annoying, even when everything is arguably perfect in your life, you just have to accept being reasonably happy. You can see this resigned look on my face that my graphic designer chose to represent what that is. It starts with me being kind of a grump. I've always been kind of a grump. I've always been –

In eighth grade, my classmates voted me most school spirit and biggest complainer. I've got these two sides of my personality where I really do care and yet I'm a curmudgeon at heart. But I choose to, despite my curmudgeonness I choose to say that everything is okay. That being reasonably happy is a good goal. That we shouldn't sit there and try to believe that we're going to be ecstatic every moment of every day. If we're not, then there's something that's missing in life. We either need to go to dedicate our life to getting it or blame the world for not providing it to us.

[0:18:00]

FT: Coming up, we're going to explore what financial values we can learn from the Danes. Paul talks about the dilemma of being so rich that you don't have to work. That's a problem. Stay tuned. Yeah, we are living in a world where happiness, industrial complex, you know like –

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PO: Totally.

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FT: Seriously, it's like if you're not in it, you've not in this club, you're doing it wrong. That being said, you do dedicate a whole essay to the Danes and the Danish approach to happiness. The happiest country in the world, Denmark. How do the Danes use their money to – what's their relationship with money as it pertains to their happiness and what aspects of their culture? Do you think we can realistically adopt? I hate when people compare us to Europeans sometimes. Because I'm like, it's not, it's like apples and oranges. I mean I don't want to get into that, but it's

just really not fair sometimes to feel, make yourself feel bad, because you're not completely living a Parisian in Nebraska.

[0:19:02]

PO: Right. Well, so this came from an interview I did with Mike Wiking, W-I-K-I-N-G, who is the author of a book called *A Little Book of Hygge*, H-Y-G-G-E, which is roughly translated as good, warm feeling or a good, warm life. I apologize to your Danish listeners for both the horrible mispronunciation and probably an overgeneralization of the term. But this book became, it's the Danish book of happy living or whatever. I don't have the book with me right in front of me, but it's basically like, why do the Danes and other Scandinavian countries always come out at the top of those world happiness surveys that are done every year?

His theory is that they make choices to optimize quality of life over quantity of possessions, maximization of income or things like that. What does that mean? It means they work reasonable hours, that they have a strong social safety net. We're not going to get political, but we'll talk a little bit about why he believes that is helpful. Because if you're not worried, if you have the government paying for all your medicine, he believes that people aren't existentially scared when they have to go to the doctor, because they don't have to – they don't know if it's going to be a \$1,500 or \$15,000 bill when they go see the doctor. That makes them feel safe.

If you get fired from your job, there is some income there provided by the government. It's very difficult to fire people from their job. So, there's just more of a social safety net that he believes saves people from financial existential threats. Also, that they prioritize things like the outdoors, like exercise. When they get together, they do it right. They put out a big smorgasbord of meats and cheeses and soups. They light a fire. They light candles.

So, they really focus on atmosphere and togetherness. That's what he – those are some of the bullet points in the why Danes are happier than us Americans who work 80 hours a week. We commute, whatever, on average 90 minutes a day. These things are things that lead us away from happiness as opposed to toward them.

[0:21:22]

FT: You read about Norway is the richest country in the world. Would they also be clumped into this happiness group, which they're geographically close? I don't know. So, I just wonder what's going on there. They seem to have figured it all out, like how to be rich and happy.

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PO: Well, if you have tons of oil under your land, and you have a very –

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FT: It's like Saudi Arabia, I don't know.

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PO: Yeah, but you have a very small population that is homogeneous, which is the case in Saudi Arabia, which has been governed by an oppressive regime for a long time. It's different than I would guess the Norway is probably social democratic or something, like socialist democratic or something like that. But they also have a very small population relative to their resources. We'll see what happens over the next few decades as these countries as immigration changes the nature of the population of those countries. It'll be interesting to see if that changes.

[0:22:17]

FT: Yeah. So, the last time you were on the show, I think, at least a couple times and you've discussed it already just your earlier years at Facebook and benefiting from the tech media boom and cashing out. Then from there, figuring what's going to be next for Paul, and you've done really well. You've really, you have found a lot of ambition. You've pursued greatness, but you write about how having the ability not to work, which was your case. You could have maybe not worked. It distorts your relationship with work. What's your relationship with work today and also money, how have you evolved since Facebook?

[0:23:00]

PO: From a money perspective I was very fortunate to be an early employee at Facebook. I did have the right skills and the right resume at the right time, but nobody deserves the sweepstakes windfall that many of us received. So, I have had the option to not work for, I don't know, 12 years now or something like that. My relationship with work is – and the article you mentioned is one of the points of that article is just because you can walk away from work doesn't mean that you need to do it in a way that expresses a lack of appreciation for work. That when you have FU money, that doesn't mean you should say it to your to your boss, to your spouse, to your old enemies.

People have told me that that real wealth doesn't change who you are, it just amplifies who you are. So, understanding that it's a good thing to get your value straight to be really tight on who you are and what you want before the money comes. That was one lesson. My relationship to work today is that for a few years after I left Facebook, I didn't really, I didn't – I had done comedy for two years full time in Los Angeles before I started Facebook. It was always my dream to do comedy since business school.

I had told jokes at a talent show one night. I got bit by the comedy bug and I was like, “Oh, my gosh. What is this? I borrowed the equivalent of \$150,000 in today's money to go to business school to find out I want to be a stand-up comedian.” That's weird. But I always wanted to do it. So, after Facebook, I just goofed off for a few years. I'd been in – I was moved back to Atlanta, my hometown, and I didn't know where to start. I was afraid of failing at comedy again. But at a certain point, I realized that if you have the option to do anything and you're not chasing your dream, to me, that's a dereliction of opportunity.

So, I was like okay, I don't know where this is going to go, but I'm going to start going to open mics. I'm going to write every day and see what happens. When you start doing that, as I mentioned up top, like over a decade, you get better and your body of work, you build up a body of work. You build up contacts in the industry. So, my work today is a choice. I get to do stand-up comedy, because I can't think of anything better to do every day.

I can't think of anything I'd rather do than write, do stand up, do the podcast and do some corporate speaking. All those things together are, they're the four prongs of the things I do. It's a total blast. You know, interestingly, the speaking thing is really starting to happen. It funds a lot of the expenses, the non-trivial expenses of producing a podcast that you know very well.

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FT: Tell us an economic secret of the financials of comedy, like I've – I mean –

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PO: What do you want to know?

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FT: Well, so for example, and maybe you can corroborate, I have a friend who's a stand-up comedian. She says there's a lot of money in like corporate gigs or private events. How do you get those and what are we – how much money are we talking about?

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PO: I mean, it all depends. I think, they talk about the long, the head and the tail of distribution of things. If you think about the distribution of comedians based on how much money they are in every year, it is the ugliest, steepest head and the longest ugliest tail you've ever seen in your life. Say there's a thousand comedians in New York City, like 10% of them are making a living doing comedy. Yes. Then the rest of them are making 30 bucks a show. So, it is a winner take all industry where the guys at the top and the women at the top are getting 10 or \$20 million for a Netflix special.

Everybody else is paying for their own special to get it on YouTube, so they have a shot of being discovered by the Netflixes of the world and building a social media following, as I was saying before, so that they can create their own economic autonomy. What's interesting is that social

media has democratized it a little bit. Most powerful entity in comedy today, isn't the person who books The Tonight Show. Hi, Michael Cox – but it's the algorithm.

[0:27:31]

FT: Yeah.

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PO: You build up a half a million and followers, half a million followers on Instagram or TikTok, you can sell out all over the country. I've seen it happen. There's a woman I interviewed on my show, Leah Rudick.

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FT: Yeah.

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PO: Oh, you know – have you interviewed her?

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FT: I had her on my show? Because I thought she was so hilarious. Because she talks a lot about well, she does like parodies of like the wealthy –

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PO: The wealthy woman character and she's a great improv actress who created this thing on TikTok and on Instagram during the pandemic. She's got a giant following. She's selling out all over the country. She's hilarious.

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FT: It's funny.

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PO: Andrew is also a comedian.

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FT: Yeah.

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PO: Yeah. So, the economics are it's a grind until you can get to a place where you can sell tickets. I mean, I'm at this place where I'm a headline and comedian, but I don't have a huge following. I go to Dallas and there's 55 people in the crowd, but it's people I used to work with Yahoo. It's people I went to college with. Things like that. Now, I've got a show in the New York Comedy Festival on Friday. We've sold 125 tickets or something like that. Great turnout. But I can't do that every month in New York City. It's going to be like a once-a-year thing. I'm going to hopefully sell out.

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FT: You will. You will.

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PO: Thank you.

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FT: You will. Your essay about the streaming services cluster. I felt that one in my bones, because I am currently subscribed to so many streamers. My father is like, "Oh, all you got to do

is get a YouTube subscription.” I'm like, “No, because can you get HBO Max with YouTube? Can you get Netflix with YouTube? Can you get Hulu with You? No.” I don't want – it is just a cluster, as you say. So, what's your advice for those of us who want to create some simplicity in our day-to-day financial life? Now, maybe we're getting into like boring budgeting advice, but I think you're right about just we create this chaos and we get used to the chaos. We like feed off the chaos.

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PO: Yeah. I mean, we're in a new world where – we all cut the cord. We were like, I'm finally going to take control of –

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FT: Yeah. Now, we can retire –

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PO: And getting what I'm going to pay for. You know, you cut the cord and so you don't get the one-time Warner cable bill with HBO, Cinemax, and whatever on it. You've got 37 different bills that are coming from – you don't even know where you signed up. Did I get this for free when I got when I signed up for Verizon Wireless? Did my wife sign up for this on her Apple, on her Apple App Store? All these things are all over the place. I've realized that we were paying for like multiple subscriptions for the same service that we were using my brother's login for Paramount Plus.

[0:30:16]

FT: Yeah.

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PO: The illusion subscriptions and direct subscriptions to these different services create the illusion of control, but it really creates an atmosphere of chaos. That's also, you've got subscriptions to audible and Amazon Prime. God knows what's going on the Xbox that my son's using every day. At a certain point, you've got to decide how much of your life, how much those subscriptions in the extra 50 bucks you're paying every month is worth the hours of your life. It's going to necessitate, to simplify the problem.

Maybe once a year, try to do a cleanup on those things or subscribe to one of the apps that will, will streamline all these different subscriptions and guess how you pay for that through a monthly subscription, which is ironic.

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FT: I have a similar conundrum with all of the content new sites and all the online magazines that I'm subscribed to. Someone's like, "You just have an Apple new subscription." I was like, "Okay, maybe that's what I should do."

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PO: Not to mention all the Substacks. The other creators out there who are great. You want to give them – you want to vote with your dollars, speaking of which my Substack is words.paulollinger.com.

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FT: Yes.

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PO: I think we're in a new world and it's not going to change anytime soon. It will be interesting to see how these things evolve over the next few years.

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FT: Well, someone just said a great idea I heard on NPR. I was like, why don't we just – I would just love to pay a dollar for everything I want to read, because then I'm paying \$12 a month for that one article that I have to sign up for a whole year. I just want to read that one article. It's the first time I've been on this site. I probably won't go back in months.

[0:31:59]

PO: Well, that's why Netflix and Hulu and all they put so much money into their tentpole programs, because you're not going to not watch the Menendez Brothers story.

[0:32:08]

FT: Oh, my gosh.

[0:32:10]

PO: You're not going to –

[0:32:10]

FT: You come back for that, because I have thoughts. I'm so – I watched the documentary. I was in Menendez Brother withdrawal after I watched everything I could. I was playing Millie Vanilly in my house for days. I'm not kidding you. Siri play Millie Vanilly.

[0:32:27]

PO: I'm watching that show and I'm looking at Jose Menendez. Javier Bardem is the greatest, scariest actor in the planet. I'm watching him, I'm like, "I'm the greatest dad." I'm so much better of a dad than this guy.

[0:32:39]

FT: For real. Yeah. Well, maybe I should have them on So Money when they're free in 2025 and they're doing their whole media tour for their book.

[0:32:49]

PO: Oh, my gosh. Yeah, we'll see. We'll see.

[0:32:53]

FT: All right. *Reasonably Happy*, everybody. I had so many more questions for you. I wanted to talk about why we shouldn't invest in having eight toilets in our home. I think it was Seth Godin who came on the podcast and said, "Did you know that if you buy a home with a living room separate from the family room, that is like over the lifetime of owning that home." You've wasted like hundreds of thousands of dollars for that extra square footage for the furnishings for the cleaning of that room that you probably use once a year. Like in my home growing up, you were not all even allowed to step foot into the living room.

[0:33:28]

PO: Hilarious. Did your parents have like plastic –

[0:33:31]

FT: Plastic?

[0:33:31]

PO: On the furniture?

[0:33:32]

FT: I think for a while they did. Then they realized the absurdity of it, but that cost, that wasn't expensive. Do you know like getting a spot clean is much cheaper than wrapping this room in Saran wrap?

[0:33:43]

PO: But that even presumes, even pointing that out, presumes that you can get a house without a living room, because builders build what people – they don't sit there and ask what's practical. They build what people will buy. They're every incentive points to adding square footage and extra bathrooms and golf simulators in the basement and blah, blah, blah, because there's margin and all that. That's why they do it.

[0:34:05]

FT: Paul, tell us about where to find you in all the places. You've also rebranded your podcast. It was Crazy Money. Now, it's Reasonably Happy, right? Plus, you've got the Substack. Tell us all the things.

[0:34:16]

PO: [Words.paulollinger.com](https://www.paulollinger.com). That's P-A-U-L-O-L-L-I-N-G-E-R. That will take you to my Substack. From there, I'll point you to all the directions you need to go.

[0:34:28]

FT: Congratulations, Paul. Really, on so many fronts. The book, moving to New York, building your common career, coming on So Money. Congratulations.

[0:34:38]

PO: You know. I'm delighted to be closer. We have to have coffee the next time you're in the city.

[0:34:41]

FT: I know. I owe you. I had to take a rain check. This is election week, everybody, when we're recording. My kids are – well, yeah, actually election day. I voted this morning. I feel like I've been awake for 24 hours. It's been a long day and it's only 12:35 PM. I'm tired, because I took my kids to the polls and that's a whole exercise. I'm glad I did. They need to see this in action. They need to see democracy in action. By the way, did you vote in Georgia or New York?

[0:35:09]

PO: I voted in New York. I registered here. I'm going to vote here. My presidential vote would have been more impactful there. Well, yeah, I'll just leave it at that.

[0:35:22]

FT: Okay. Well, we're just glad you voted.

[0:35:24]

PO: Thank you.

[0:35:24]

FT: Thank you. Thanks, Paul.

[0:35:26]

PO: Thank you, Farnoosh.

[OUTRO]

[0:35:29]

FT: Thanks so much to Paul Ollinger for joining us. We have links to his book and his Substack in our show notes. I'll see you back here on Wednesday. We'll be talking to Kristin Wong, a New York Times journalist and personal finance writer who is going to be talking about how to manage money when it gets awkward amongst friends. If you have a friend who makes more or less than you and it's starting to impact the relationship, she's got insights and advice. Stay tuned. I hope your day is so money.

[END]