

QUESTIONS FOR SUZIE ORMAN

She's So Money

Interview By DEBORAH SOLOMON
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Q: As one of the most widely read financial gurus of our time, why would you write a book like "Women and Money," which is based on the regressive premise that women are birdbrains when it comes to managing money? I would think women are better at saving than men. No, they save and then they give it to their best friends, who need it. They give it to their children, who need it. They give it all away once they've saved it.



Colby Katz

Isn't that admirable? That depends on what it leaves them with. It's not admirable when it leaves them with nothing. I want to change women from savers to investors. I do think eventually they should all have Roth I.R.A.'s. You don't want an I.R.A. You want a Roth I.R.A., if you qualify.

I know. I read the book. Did you like it?

I found it a little basic. I can't believe you thought it was simplistic. You are in denial. For instance, do you have a will and a living revocable trust in place?

No. Oh, my God! Actuarially speaking, your husband will die before you. That's actuarially speaking. Your husband, let's say, has just died. You now are by yourself. You have a stroke. You're totally incapacitated. It's reality. It happens. Who is going to be able to write your bills for you and take care of the money you have?

Do we have to decide this right now? Girlfriend, you don't have a healthy relationship with yourself or your money. You put yourself on sale. You have shame, and you have blame. You view money differently because you are a woman.

Is this what feminism has bestowed upon women? The right to berate other women? Women don't understand money. They will go into debt to pay for this and that.

Are you married? I'm in a relationship with life. My life is just out there. I'm on the road every day. I love my life.

Meaning what? Do you live with anyone? K.T. is my life partner. K.T. stands for Kathy Travis. We're going on seven years. I have never been with a man in my whole life. I'm still a 55-year-old virgin.

Would you like to get married to K.T.? Yes. Absolutely. Both of us have millions of dollars in our name. It's killing me that upon my death, K.T. is going to lose 50 percent of everything I have to estate taxes. Or vice versa.

How much are you worth these days? One journalist estimated my liquid net worth at \$25 million. That's pretty close. My houses are worth another \$7 million.

What are your qualifications for giving financial advice, which you do in your books, your column in Oprah's magazine and your CNBC television show? For seven years after college, I was a waitress at the Buttercup Bakery in Berkeley, and from there I got a job at Merrill Lynch as an account executive, from where I went to vice

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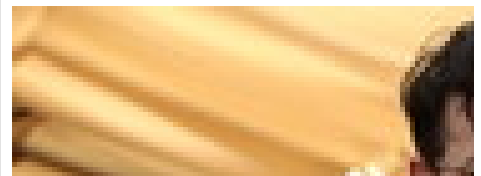
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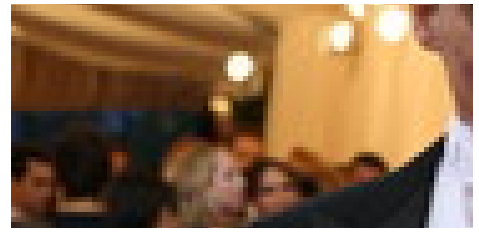


president of investments for Prudential-Bache Securities. I started my own firm in 1987.

Do you enjoy spending money? Oh, yes. My greatest pleasure is still flying private. I spend between \$300,000 to \$500,000, depending on my year, on flying private.

What do you do with the rest of your money? Save it and build it in municipal bonds. I buy zero-coupon municipal bonds, and all the bonds I buy are triple-A-rated and insured so that even if the city goes under, I get my money. I take a little lower interest rate to make sure my bonds are 100 percent safe and sound.

Do you play the stock market at all? I have a million dollars in the stock market, because if I lose a million dollars, I don't personally care.



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