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Thanks for being here this evening. We are live from coast to coast and several countries are with us this evening. Thank you

For those joining us for the first time



# Jonas Oware: Yale-Bound Scholar- Athlete

Long Beach Poly senior **Jonas Oware** has committed to **Yale University**, confirming his status as an elite student-athlete who successfully navigated both high-level collegiate athletics recruitment and competitive academic admissions.

## The Arc of Ambition: Jonas Oware and the Yale Blue

The squeak of Jonas Oware's size 16 sneakers was a constant soundtrack to life at Long Beach Poly High. At a statuesque six feet, nine inches, he dominated the Jackrabbits' court, his wingspan a defensive nightmare, his vertical leap an exclamation point on every alley-oop. He was a star, the kind of talent that had major Division I coaches from across the country calling the Poly offices weekly.

But today, the loudest sound was the gentle **thump** of an acceptance packet hitting the counseling desk.

Jonas folded his massive frame into the surprisingly small chair across from Ms. Chen, his college counselor. On the outside, he was all long, coiled muscle; inside, his mind was racing, analyzing probabilities like a complex offensive set. He wasn't nervous about playing basketball—that was instinct. He was nervous about committing to his future.

"Jonas," Ms. Chen said, pushing the Yale envelope toward him, "they didn't just want the 6'9" center who averages a double-double. They wanted the young man who placed top-ten in the state Science Olympiad, who aced AP Calc, and who wrote a brilliant essay on the economics of coastal erosion."

He took the thick envelope. The air in the quiet office was a world away from the humid intensity of the gym. For years, people had assumed his path: a Power Five conference, a one-and-done year, and the NBA draft. But Jonas—the son of two educators—saw

basketball as a means, not the end. He was driven by structural engineering, a field that demanded the same precision and foresight he used to read a pick-and-roll.

He tore the seal. The letter confirmed the news he'd already felt deep down: he had been admitted to **Yale University**. The commitment was official, a handshake deal that honored his dedication to both the hoop and the history books.

The reaction at Poly was immediate and immense.

Coach Lewis, a hard-nosed Poly legend, pulled Jonas aside after practice. "Look, kid, I knew you could go to the NBA one day. But going to **Yale**? That lasts longer than any career. You redefined what a student-athlete is for every single kid who walks into this gym."

The news sent a ripple through the national recruiting circuit. A 6'9" academic powerhouse choosing the Ivy League over the siren call of a major athletic scholarship was rare. Jonas hadn't gone for the flash; he'd chosen the foundation.

"I love basketball," Jonas told a local reporter, standing under the bright lights of the Poly gymnasium where he'd spent thousands of hours. "But Yale offers something deeper—a chance to learn alongside the best minds in the world, to challenge myself structurally, intellectually, and ethically. The court gave me discipline, but the classroom gives me purpose."

His commitment became a rallying cry for the school, a perfect symbol of the Poly spirit—unmatched athleticism paired with rigorous academic pursuit.

As the season wrapped, Jonas stood in the gym, feeling the familiar squeak of his sneakers on the polished wood. The court had been his proving ground, a place where his height was his advantage. But soon, he would trade the iconic green and yellow of the Jackrabbits for the historic blue of Yale.

Jonas Oware, 6'9", star athlete and future engineer, had built his own launchpad right there at Long Beach Poly, one perfect jump shot and one perfectly reasoned essay at a time. The echoes in the halls weren't just the bounce of the ball; they were the sound of possibility.



# Welcome to Our Wealth Building Journey.

Building wealth is a marathon, not a sprint. It takes time, effort, and discipline to save money, invest wisely, and make smart financial decisions.



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The "secrets" of wealth building aren't arcane knowledge held by a select few. They are, in fact, a collection of **fundamental principles and consistent habits** that, when diligently applied over time, lead to financial growth and security.

These principles aren't about finding a magic bullet or getting rich quick. Instead, they focus on:

**Discipline:** Consistently sticking to a financial plan, even when it's challenging.

**Patience:** Understanding that wealth accumulation is a long-term game, not an overnight sensation.

**Knowledge:** Continuously learning about personal finance, investing, and economic trends.

**Proactive Planning:** Taking deliberate steps to manage money, rather than letting it manage you.

Here's a breakdown of these "secrets," framed as well-established practices and strategies:

**The "Secrets" of Wealth Building: Proven Practices and Strategies**

### **1. Live Below Your Means (The Foundation):**

**The Concept:** Spend less money than you earn. This creates a surplus, which is the fuel for wealth building. It sounds simple, but many struggle with lifestyle creep.

\* **Strategy:** Create and stick to a budget. Track every dollar in and out. Differentiate between needs and wants. Regularly review and adjust spending to ensure a consistent surplus.

### **2. Save Consistently and Automatically (The Accumulation Engine):**

- **The Concept:** Make saving a non-negotiable expense, just like rent or a mortgage. Pay yourself first.

\* **Strategy:** Set up automatic transfers from your checking account to your savings or investment accounts immediately after payday. Start small if you must, but increase the amount as your income grows. Aim for at least 10-15% of your gross income, or more if possible.

### **3. Invest Early and Regularly (The Power of Compounding):**

\* **The Concept:** Make your money work for you. Investing allows your capital to grow over time, earning returns that then earn their own returns.

This "compound interest" is often called the 8th wonder of the world.

\* **Strategy:** \* **Start Early:** Time in the market beats timing the market. The longer your money is invested, the more it can compound.

- **Diversify:** Don't put all your eggs in one basket. Spread investments across different asset classes (stocks, bonds, real estate, etc.) and industries.

- **Invest Regularly (Dollar-Cost Averaging):** Invest a fixed amount at regular intervals (e.g., monthly), regardless of market fluctuations. This smooths out your purchase price over time.

\* **Understand Risk Tolerance:** Choose investments that align with your comfort level for risk and your long-term goals.

**Utilize Tax-Advantaged Accounts:** Maximize contributions to 401(k)s, IRAs, HSAs, and other retirement or tax-efficient accounts. Don't leave employer matching contributions on the table.

### **4. Minimize and Manage Debt Strategically (Freeing Up Capital):**

- **The Concept:** High-interest debt (especially credit card debt) erodes wealth. Every dollar paid in interest is a dollar not working for you.

- **Strategy:** \* **Avoid Bad Debt:** Stay away from high-interest, non-productive debt.

- **Pay Down High-Interest Debt First:** Prioritize paying off credit cards and personal loans aggressively using methods like the debt avalanche.

**Manage Good Debt:** Use productive debt (like mortgages or business loans) wisely and ensure it aligns with your financial goals.

## 5. Continuously Increase Your Income (Boosting Your Fuel Tank):

- **The Concept:** While cutting expenses is important, there's a limit to how much you can save. Increasing your earning potential has a much higher ceiling.
- **Strategy: \* Invest in Yourself:** Acquire new skills, pursue higher education, or get certifications that increase your market value.
- **Negotiate Salaries:** Regularly assess your worth and negotiate for higher compensation.

**Develop Multiple Income Streams:** Explore side hustles, freelance work, passive income (e.g., rental properties, dividends from investments), or starting a business.

## 6. Protect Your Assets and Plan for the Future (Guardrails for Your Journey):

- **The Concept:** Wealth isn't just about accumulating assets; it's about safeguarding them from unforeseen events and ensuring they serve your long-term goals.
- **Strategy: \* Insurance:** Have adequate health, life, disability, home, and auto insurance to protect against catastrophic financial losses.
- **Emergency Fund:** Build a cash reserve (3-6 months of living expenses) to cover unexpected expenses without derailing your financial plan or incurring debt.
- **Estate Planning:** Create a will, set up trusts if needed, and designate beneficiaries to ensure your assets are distributed according to your wishes.

\* **Tax Planning:** Understand tax laws and strategize to minimize your tax liability legally.

## 7. Practice Financial Literacy and Patience (The Mindset):

\* **The Concept:** Wealth building requires ongoing learning and the emotional fortitude to stick with your plan through market ups and downs.

\* **Strategy: \* Educate Yourself:** Read books, follow reputable financial news, listen to podcasts, and learn from financial experts.

- **Avoid Emotional Decisions:** Don't panic sell during market downturns or chase "hot" stocks. Stick to your long-term investment strategy.

\* **Seek Professional Advice:** Consider working with a fee-only financial **advisor (like Marie Deary)** who can provide objective guidance.





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We can help you get there.

## MARIE DEARY

Bachelor of Science in Electrical Engineering (BSEE)  
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## Financial Literacy Educator



# Congratulations! You Made It to your First Trade.

Before we dive into investing, let's affirm this essential defensive maneuver: If you owe income tax to the IRS or your state, you must **file on time and pay what you can. If you**

### [Still Need to File Your Taxes? We're Here to Help.](#)

Dealing with taxes shouldn't be a source of dread. Whether you've tackling a complex return, or just need expert guidance, we simplify the process so you can get back to what matters.

#### **We offer personalized help for:**

- ✓ **Late Filers:** Catch up quickly and navigate any penalties.
- ✓ **Small Business Owners & Freelancers:** Maximizing deductions and managing self-employment tax.
- ✓ **Amendments & Corrections:** Fixing past returns with confidence.

***Stop Stressing, Start Saving. Call us today 562-427-8877***



### **Congratulations! You Have Made Your First Trade.**

**Result:** You now own a tiny piece of over 3,500 U.S. companies, including Apple, Microsoft, Amazon, and Tesla.

# Stop Feeling Confused About Money: 10 Simple Steps to Making Your First Confident Trade.

## 1. Eliminate Financial Stress and Anxiety 🧘

Confusion about money is the root cause of **financial anxiety**. When you don't know where your money goes or how much you should be saving, the feeling of being out of control leads to constant stress, sleepless nights, and arguments.

**Clarity = Calm:** Learning a few simple rules (like the 50/30/20 budget or how to use index funds) immediately gives you a sense of **control and competence**. When you have a plan, you replace panic with purpose.

## 2. Harness the Power of Compounding 🚀

The biggest cost of confusion is **time**. Every month you delay investing because you feel "confused" is a month of missed opportunities for compound interest to work its magic.

**Compound Interest:** This is interest earning interest. It's the most powerful force in finance, but it requires **time** to accelerate.

**The Cost of Delay:** Delaying your start by just five years can easily cost you tens of thousands of dollars in potential growth by the time you retire. You need to stop being confused to simply start, and starting is the hardest, yet most rewarding, part.

## 3. Protect Yourself from High-Cost Debt 🛡️

Confusion keeps you vulnerable to costly financial mistakes. When you don't understand interest rates or cash flow, you're more likely to fall into the trap of high-interest debt (like credit cards).

**Defense is Key:** Getting clear on your money allows you to quickly identify your **high-interest threats** (anything over 8-10% APR) and eliminate them. By killing toxic debt, you guarantee yourself a high financial return and free up cash flow for investing.

#### 4. Know Your Options for Financial Freedom 🏠

If you're confused, your default option is often "work longer." Financial clarity opens your eyes to the various paths to early or comfortable retirement.

**Understanding Tools:** Clarity helps you understand powerful tools like the **Roth IRA** and the **401(k)**. These tax-advantaged accounts are specifically designed by the government to help you save more, faster.

**Building a Future:** You move from passively *hoping* you'll retire to actively *building* a retirement plan with specific goals and achievable steps.

#### 5. Gain Confidence and Share Your Success 🧑

The final, and most rewarding, reason is the boost to your personal confidence and your ability to help others (the "tell a friend" factor).

**Empowerment:** Once you understand the few core concepts of saving and simple investing, you'll feel profoundly **empowered**.

**Legacy:** You can confidently teach your children, friends, and family the simple rules, setting up a positive financial legacy and breaking the cycle of financial confusion for good.

BUILDING WEALTH, INVESTING 101 FOR BEGINNERS: FINANCIAL READINESS AND INVESTMENT ACTION



# INVESTING 101: FINANCIAL READINESS AND INVESTMENT ACTION

**WEEK 3**

Here are the **10 essential steps** for a beginner to build wealth, culminating in **Making Your First Trade**.

The process of building wealth is divided into two phases: **Financial Readiness** (Steps 1-5) and **Investment Action** (Steps 6-10).

**BUILDING WEALTH, INVESTING 101 FOR BEGINNERS: FINANCIAL READINESS AND INVESTMENT ACTION**

# **PHASE I: FINANCIAL READINESS**

Before you invest a single dollar, your personal financial house must be in order.

**WEEK 3**

# Step 1:

# Master Financial Literacy

**WEEK 3**

**What to Do:** Understand the basics: compound interest, net worth (Assets minus Liabilities), inflation, and the difference between **needs** and **wants**. Read books, follow reputable financial blogs, and use online calculators.

**Why It Matters:** Knowledge is your defense against high-interest debt and get-rich-quick scams.



**BUILDING WEALTH, INVESTING 101 FOR BEGINNERS: FINANCIAL READINESS AND INVESTMENT ACTION**

# Step 2:

# Create a Budget and Control Cash Flow

**WEEK 3**

**What to Do:** Track every dollar coming in and going out. Use a simple budget rule like the **50/30/20 Rule** (50% Needs, 30% Wants, 20% Savings/Debt).

**Why It Matters:** This step identifies the money you have available to invest and allows you to "pay yourself first" (Step 4).

BUILDING WEALTH, INVESTING 101 FOR BEGINNERS: FINANCIAL READINESS AND INVESTMENT ACTION

# Step 3:

# Eliminate High-Interest Debt

**WEEK 3**

**What to Do:** Prioritize paying off all high-interest consumer debt (Credit Cards, high-interest personal loans). Use the **Debt Avalanche** method (pay the highest interest rate first) for maximum savings.

**Why It Matters:** High-interest debt (20%+) is a guaranteed negative return that is mathematically impossible for most investments to beat. Paying it off is your highest-return investment.

BUILDING WEALTH, INVESTING 101 FOR BEGINNERS: FINANCIAL READINESS AND INVESTMENT ACTION

# Step 4:

# Build Your Emergency Fund

**WEEK 3**

**What to Do:** Save and set aside 3 to 6 months' worth of essential living expenses in a **High-Yield Savings Account (HYSA)**. This fund must be separate from your checking account and your investments.

**Why It Matters:** It provides a necessary financial shield, preventing you from being forced to sell your investments at a loss during a sudden job loss or unexpected expense.

BUILDING WEALTH, INVESTING 101 FOR BEGINNERS: FINANCIAL READINESS AND INVESTMENT ACTION

# Step 5:

# Maximize Employer Match (If Applicable)

**WEEK 3**

**What to Do:** If your employer offers a 401(k) match, contribute at least enough to get the full match.

**Why It Matters:** This is **free money** and often the highest-guaranteed return you will ever receive on an investment (typically a 50% or 100% immediate return).

**BUILDING WEALTH, INVESTING 101 FOR BEGINNERS: FINANCIAL READINESS AND INVESTMENT ACTION**

# **PHASE II:**

# **INVESTMENT ACTION**

# **(THE WEALTH ENGINE)**

## **WEEK 3**

With your foundation secure, you are ready to begin investing.

BUILDING WEALTH, INVESTING 101 FOR BEGINNERS: FINANCIAL READINESS AND INVESTMENT ACTION

# Step 6:

# Define Investment Goals

**WEEK 3**

**What to Do:** Determine what you are investing for (e.g., Retirement in 40 years) to set your **time horizon**. Use this horizon to define your **Risk Tolerance** (e.g., Aggressive for a long horizon).

**Why It Matters:** Your goals define your strategy and prevent you from making emotional decisions.

BUILDING WEALTH, INVESTING 101 FOR BEGINNERS: FINANCIAL READINESS AND INVESTMENT ACTION

# Step 7:

# Open a Brokerage Account

**WEEK 3**

**What to Do:** Open an account with a reputable broker (like Vanguard, Fidelity, Schwab, etc.). Choose a tax-advantaged account first, such as a **Roth IRA** (if eligible) or a workplace 401(k).

**Why It Matters:** The account provides the necessary legal structure and platform to buy and sell investments.

# Step 8:

# Select a Diversified Investment

**WEEK 3**

**What to Do:** For your first trade, choose a **low-cost Exchange-Traded Fund (ETF)** or Index Fund that gives you instant diversification.

**Recommendation:** A **Total Stock Market ETF** (like VTI or ITOT) or an **S&P 500 ETF** (like VOO or IVV).

**Why It Matters:** This Passive Strategy minimizes risk, maximizes long-term returns, and eliminates the stress of trying to pick individual winning stocks.



# Step 9:

# MAKE YOUR FIRST TRADE

**WEEK 3**

**What to Do:** Log into your brokerage account, search for the Ticker Symbol (e.g., VOO), select "Buy," and place a **Market Order** for the dollar amount you wish to invest.

**Why It Matters:** This is the moment your money officially starts working for you, harnessing the power of compounding.

| Fund Name   | Ticker Symbol | What it Tracks    | Expense Ratio (Approx) |
|-------------|---------------|-------------------|------------------------|
| Vanguard    | VTI           | over 3,500 stocks | 0                      |
| Total Stock |               |                   |                        |
| Market ETF  |               |                   |                        |

# Step 10:

# Automate and Stay Consistent

**WEEK 3**

 **Congratulations! You Have Made Your First Trade.**

**Result:** You now own a tiny piece of over 3,500 U.S. companies, including Apple, Microsoft, Amazon, and Tesla.

**Next Step (Step 10):** Set up an **automatic monthly investment** to buy more shares of VTI (or your chosen index fund). This automates the powerful strategy of **Dollar-Cost Averaging**.

# Q&A: Foundation Hurdles



**Debt vs. Investing:** "Why should I pay off my 5% student loan before investing when the market returns more?"

You should pay off all **high-interest debt** (over 8–10% APR) first, as that's a guaranteed loss. Low-interest debt (like a 5% student loan) can often wait while you invest, but you should at least pay the minimums.

**Emergency Fund Size:** "Is 6 months of expenses necessary? Isn't that money losing value due to inflation?"

Yes, **6 months is necessary** for financial security. Its purpose is **risk mitigation**, not growth. It's your financial protection shield, ensuring you never have to sell investments at a loss during an emergency.

**Fear of the First Trade:** "How do I know the market isn't about to crash right after I buy?"



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