Dr. Brandy Baxter:

00:11

Rachael. Oh my God. I can see you. Can you see me?

Rachael DeLeon:

00:18

I see you, Brandy.

Dr. Brandy Baxter:

00:20

This is so exciting. Our very first live recording episode with like cameras and all the things. I hope our audience is ready for this. Let the shenanigans begin.

Rachael DeLeon:

00:32

Let them begin. The bloopers are here. We can't edit out as much as we used to. Reality sets in.

Dr. Brandy Baxter:

00:40

Yeah, this is so exciting. This is going to be such a great year, not only for our audience, but I think you and I, we're ready for this challenge. And I just hope that our audience is ready to go on this ride with us. So let's not waste any more time chit-chatting and catching up. Let's get ready for our first guest.

Rachael DeLeon:

00:58

Yes, and we have a good one for you today. We're inviting back uh Dr. Jessica Limbrick. For regular listeners of the podcast, she was on the show last year, um, episode 128. If you want to check that, we'll put it in the show notes, um, where she talked about teaching real life financial lessons. Um, but we decided to kick off the new year with her because she was actually a presenter at AFCPE Symposium. And the title of her presentation was Will AI Take My Job? Which is a question I think a lot of us are asking. And Jessica is a professor, a researcher, and she a really phenomenal teacher. And her session received brave reviews. And we wanted to bring her to all of our listeners today. So let's invite Dr. Jessica Limbrick to the show. All righty. Hi. Hey, Jessica, how are you?

Dr. Jessica Limbrick:

01:58

Long time no see.

Rachael DeLeon:

01:60

So, like I said, uh Jessica has been on the show before. So we won't go into maybe all the introductory get to know you, although I encourage everyone to listen to our previous episode, which is incredible. Um, Jessica is also one of our current AFCP board members and our 2026 treasurer. But today we're gonna talk about a topic that is on everyone's mind. AI. Um, Jessica, I'm curious what initially sparked your interest in blending finance with innovation like AI?

Dr. Jessica Limbrick:

02:38

Um, that's a great question. So I think first I have to ask what got me interested in AI. And I think because everybody was talking about it and I didn't want to be like the old millennial that didn't know how to use it. So actually, one of my friends, um, she was introducing to me, and she's like, Oh, you gotta try this. And it just felt so scandalous. And I was like, Oh my gosh, this is like a genius, it's so smart. And then over time, like I would, you know, I'd just ask goofy things, and then over time I was like, wait, this thing can make budgets, we can we can do finance stuff too, right? And then I started just started asking questions, and

then um suddenly you realize the students are familiar with it, and therefore, yeah, I mean I'm saying familiar in code, and then so therefore you have to start keeping up with them. Um, and then over time, I uh I guess 2025 was the year of like AI training. I received some AI trainings, and it really got me thinking about how to use it to design lesson plans and how to use it to um answer questions that people always have about money. And then over time, I would identify some of the stuff as not necessarily incorrect, but not comprehensive, not entirely accurate. And then over time that taught me well, the students are gonna go to this first. I'm not gonna Google things anymore. We're gonna Google Gemini things because it like just pops up, even though you're asking Google Gemini did butt seeing. I was just like, but I was like, I'm gonna answer for my mom. Thank you. And so over time, I I I'm starting to develop these skills of okay, Jennifer AI said this. How do you explain to them that this is not entirely accurate? And then over time I started using it for myself. Um, and so I I think I don't know, just the fact that it was scandalous and a dear colleague said, Hey, you gotta try this. So peer pressure.

Dr. Brandy Baxter:

 04:37

Peer pressure. I love it. Well, you know, Jessica, you've given kind of a little bit about how you got into it. But for our for our audience, you know, when people hear AI in finance, it can feel intimidating. You mentioned you can use it for budgeting and lesson plans, but how do you explain the role of AI and financial counseling and planning in a way that feels like it's more empowering versus overwhelming?

Dr. Jessica Limbrick:

05:03

I think um think of it as an assistant. So even a human assistant is going to sometimes be incorrect or or make mistakes. So when you frame it from the assistant, not this is God's truth, that helps provide some context here. So if um, like let's say you're a person who's not a financial planning expert and you're wanting to get advice, again, remember this is your assistant. It may not entirely be correct, it might just be a starting off point. But again, you need to kind of go verify and ask questions. Um, I'm I think I was the first generation to have Wikipedia. And so, of course, we weren't we weren't using the real encyclopedias. We were using Wikipedia, and then all the time we learned that Wikipedia is not accurate, even though it it that it's all accurate if we, you know. So we were taught, hey, you need to go

verify the things that Wikipedia says. So same thing. Um, you need to verify the the things that AI says, but if you don't know that it might be false, then you don't know to verify it. Like if I don't know that you're not supposed to put ketchup in chocolate chip cookies, I I might have used got a chocolate chip cookie recipe. If you don't know not to put ketchup in there, then you don't even know to question it. So um, so I would say use it as a starting point and then uh uh develop from there and accept that it can be wrong. And I think that's hard because we kind of want this lazy, quick solution for me, and it doesn't happen. And then um, maybe on the other end, so for a professional, it's an assistant, so it helps you brainstorm ideas. Um, so for instance, when I was lecturing on life insurance, I might ask in front of the students, generate a list of 50 reasons why people don't have life insurance. And then we well, not all 50, but we go through some of the main ones so that students can maybe better connect to it. Um, good, very good at brainstorming, very good at doing uh the like the menial task, like formatting, put this in a table, um uh little thing, little tasks like that. I don't want to say anymore and incriminate myself.

Dr. Brandy Baxter:

07:23

You want to give all of the tray secrets away?

Dr. Jessica Limbrick:

07:26

We can write an APA, you know, reference page just saying that that does not necessarily mean that I have done it. Because again, you have to verify. Um, yeah. So um, again, it's an assistant technology, um, it's a machine, it's technology, won't be perfect. Just check it. But of course, we don't always want to do that.

Rachael DeLeon:

07:50

So, Jessica, amongst the larger financial counseling and financial uh planning community, are there other ways that you're seeing it used effectively by counselors and coaches and planners? Um, what are some of the ways professionals, you know, someone listening to this show, you gave a few examples. Where do you see there's most opportunity with AI?

Dr. Jessica Limbrick:

08:14

Some of the um the like the apps, like not Mitt, Mitt Mitt's no longer here, but but Met adjacents are incorporating AI as ways to help clients analyze their spending patterns. Um, I'll say that that can be effective up to a certain point. Um for instance, if I put my spending patterns in there, it might say, hey, an opportunity is to stop going to Starbucks. Well, that's literally the only fun I get to have in the winter, so leave me alone. I'm not gonna stop. But you know, so you have to kind of take it with a grain of salt and align it with your values. Um, you we you you you might be able to use generative AI to help you summarize tax code, but that is very risky because I remember um I was asking it to generate the tax numbers like standard deduction and all of that for 2025. But we also have to remember that one big beautiful bill came out um July, 4th of July. And so, of course, Gen AI may not have caught up to that. And so now you're using the wrong standard deduction numbers, and heaven forbid you're making major tax decisions based on incorrect numbers. Um, so then I see I see now that it has updated in quotation marks because it's not entirely accurate, has updated for one big beautiful bill. But of course, again, so it can be effective again in getting ideas generated and getting started, but have to fat check.

Rachael DeLeon:

09:49

Well, that's I think is an important AI lesson too. It's only as smart as the questions you ask it or the parameters you provide it. So you, you know, working in this space, know that there's been a lot of changes or upcoming changes to the tax code. And so you know how to ask those questions to ensure that is an answer you get. Well, if you don't have that knowledge, sometimes there's risk in what it's going to return.

Dr. Jessica Limbrick:

10:16

Yeah. And then, like, for instance, I think a while back, it seemed like it had confused backdoor with mega backdoor. It seemed like it was kind of convoluting the two together. Um, so those are those are some examples. If you don't know that those two are intuitively

different, then you might think that you go to your employer to do backdoor, but you don't. You it's mega. So you it might get confused in that way. Those are examples. Yeah. Yeah.

Dr. Brandy Baxter:

10:47

Oh my God, Jessica, you are just like so full of knowledge. So I have a question. I know that your research is around poverty simulations, especially with students and how they react to poverty. So when we think about how AI can help or potentially harm, what are some ways or some efforts that AI can be used to create more equitable financial systems?

Dr. Jessica Limbrick:

11:11

Um, so when I think of equitable, because I know that that word has deep meaning, especially in the context of DEI, um, it means making things equal. So uh Gen AI, of course, if everyone has access to Gemini, then of course, in theory, everyone now has access to the same information. Um, however, someone having access to incorrect information does not necessarily mean that that system is equitable. Um, for instance, if someone who maybe is lower income is being told financial advice that's maybe reserved for upper income folk, and then they're maybe doing those strategies that aren't best for them, then that's not necessarily equitable per se. That's not necessarily in their, or maybe I should say it's not necessarily in their best interest. So again, it does level the playing field. Um, potentially now uh certain demographics who would not would not ever have access to a financial advisor or who would never even go now have a mini financial advisor either in their pocket. Yeah, putting quotation marks because it, you know, you have to. I still think maybe talking to someone is better, but you have a mini digital financial advisor. Um, but it doesn't necessarily mean that's in their best interest. So you have to kind of navigate those things. Got it.

Rachael DeLeon:

12:42

Jessica, what ethical consideration should financial counselors be thinking about when they're incorporating AI into their practice?

Dr. Jessica Limbrick:

12:51

Um, I think over-reliance is probably the bigger problem. Um, I even in myself, even when I want to, I would say that myself, maybe as compared to my mom, who's a baby boomer, I over-rely on Google. Like Google, how long should should Turkey cook for? And she's like, well, my grandma's cooking book said, you know, the thing already that goes on. And then furthermore, now I'm finding myself potentially being reliant on Gen AI versus maybe just Google. So you could imagine that that could cause problems. Um, I would assume that if something is in a textbook, it has been reviewed by several other um professionals versus Gen AI, it you really have no idea what could come out. And so I think that that could be a problem. Um, in um, I think FPA put out a report um essentially saying, hey, if we ask Gen AI, generate a list of ways I can um save for my child's future. I think they were mentioning that at that point, um, it may not mention able accounts because the bias is there's a bias towards um able-bodied children, essentially. And so now that that has repercussions, someone could potentially open a 529 and they didn't know and they weren't thinking, and maybe their child has no intention of going to college, and that could cause problems. So there's biases, um, there's over reliance. Um, I want to like demystify bias because I think when people hear that word, they think that they're a-ist, like I'm classists because I have biases. Everyone has biases, and therefore, technology that we create is going to have biases. So biases are not necessarily a bad thing as long as we're checking them and we're asking questions about what's going on. So I want to make that very clear. I don't want that word to be um a trigger for anybody. Right. Or I appreciate it. Yeah. Of course, uh, and the environmental concerns are a problem, um, the amount of water it takes to cool AI centers. And then also I teach a crypto class. So just the and and adjacent with that, we have AI data centers and we also have Bitcoin mining centers, both taking up a lot of electricity and water. Um, and I think another issue is just the lack of personalized attention. Like when you when you work with a client, you get to see them face to face. You you they they feel that there's a human that cares about them. Um versus I'm telling, I'm telling co-pilot all my business, and it's just not a human. It it maybe doesn't have the ability to have empathy in the way that trained financial counselors do. Um, and so I think that those are some challenges to be mindful of. I I don't think that we should ever go away because of the human element that is is needed.

Dr. Brandy Baxter:

15:55

Uh Jessica, you know, thank you for sharing all of those ethical considerations. I have to admit, I often forget the environmental concerns of using AI. Um we're so far removed from that. And it's similar when we're thinking about financial professionals. You know, there are pieces of what we do that we're so far removed from our client experience. And so, what are some of the conversations you think that are happening right now around AI professional standards and the future of financial counseling, especially when we look at how sometimes we can be far removed from it all?

Dr. Jessica Limbrick:

16:37

Um, I see that the CFP board um has an AI working group, and I also see that they produced a report called Uh Leading the Future, Harnessing AI in the Financial Planning Profession. And uh, what I liked about the report um is that it kind of um created four potential realities. So, in two of the realities, there's a high level of trust in AI. So everybody's asking Gemini everything medical advice, food, whatever, or low level of trust. Maybe we have um gotten burned with using AI. Like I've seen even attorneys using AI to write their court briefings, and the AI is making up court cases, and one poor guy in Australia was on trial for murder, and it's just bad. So there's either high or low level of trust, and then they also created other, they were trying to describe a reality where um financial planning, counseling, advising, whatever phrase you want to use, is more traditional, so it's more human, versus maybe on the other spectrum it's entirely AI. And so, kind of based on those realities, um they were trying to paint what that would look like and where do we fit in. So I found that interesting. Um, it would be nice to fantasize that everybody's gonna eventually hate AI and everybody's gonna want to run to financial advisors, but that may not happen, just like there are people who prior to Gen AI were using Wikipedia and Google to identify tax advice and not necessarily asking a tax planner. Um, so I don't I I don't entirely see that being the reality. Um, but they they painted the paper out. Um, I haven't seen a lot of, hey, people should invest 20% of their portfolios in AI stock. I haven't seen a lot of that per se. And that could be because um we we we a lot a lot of investing advisors are predicting that an AI bubble will soon pop. So um, so that's kind of where it at, where it is. I think um it just it's just gonna take time to develop a lot because like maybe nobody wants to say anything wrong. Now we could ask AI how to deal with it.

Rachael DeLeon:

19:05

Jessica, what are some common challenges that AFCs might face as they start to integrate AI in their practices?

Dr. Jessica Limbrick:

19:14

Um, I think over reliance again will always be a challenge. Um accuracy, because if over time all the fact-checking places that we go to are using AI, then it's just and what do you you're fact-checking against itself? Um, and then maybe another um um issue uh might just be slowly our our desire to just want things to come easy. That could be it. And then I would say maybe a standardization of recommendations, meaning hey, if over time everything I'm reading is GAI generated. And that's the knowledge that I'm learning, maybe as a student over time, I'm going to start recommending this cookie cutter template of advice when I'm not really going to look and try to dig deeper because I was told that this is the correct answer. I'm not going to go be creative.

Rachael DeLeon:

20:21

Yeah. So what's some what are what are some words of advice you would give to AFCs as they're starting to use AI to overcome some of those concerns? Is it just not letting go of the sources that we once used and becoming over-reliant? Or what are some other suggestions you might have?

Dr. Jessica Limbrick:

20:48

So, but I guess maybe one tool would be to ask who does who how can this advice go wrong? Who does this advice not apply to? Because yeah, you're you're gonna run into an exception. Um for instance, for that, um for instance, if if if Gen AI were to start saying everybody should wait until they're 70 to take Social Security, well, one question might be well, who should not wait to 70?

Dr. Brandy Baxter:

21:20

Yeah, that's a great point. Jessica, during symposium, your session was entitled, Will AI Take My Job? So kind of coming back full circle, what do you say when your students or other financial professionals present that question to you?

Dr. Jessica Limbrick:

21:37

Only if you let it.

Dr. Brandy Baxter:

21:38

Oh, I love it. Oh, I love that. Only if you let it. Say more about that.

Dr. Jessica Limbrick:

 21:44

All right. So in my session, I used the metaphor of the blockbuster worker who was selling the VHS or renting the VHS tapes out. Okay, I'm uh I'm a 90s kid. Thank you very much. Um, and make sure you rewind those tapes. That's right. I think I used the metaphor of he probably had the opportunity to attend the DVD training. And he probably was like, oh, you know, everybody's gonna need VHS tapes. It's like very dismissive, like, oh, everybody's always gonna need this career. And then slowly over time, Netflix came, DVDs came and Hulu and all of that. And then slowly this person started to become when I say irrelevant, I don't mean him as a person. I mean his career skills have slowly became irrelevant. And so when I when I say only if you let it, only if you're not keeping up with trends, only if you're not willing to learn how to use it and integrate it.

Dr. Brandy Baxter:

22:41

Um, so that's what I mean by only if you let it. I love that. And and you know what, that's so true because how many of us can think of other technologies, not even as far back as the VHS, but the radio, the telephone, so many technologies which were dominant at the time, you know, they've been kind of obsolete now because someone did not keep up with the trends. So, Jessica, one of the things that Rachel and I like to do here on our podcast is we're building a knowledge bank. And so each episode is like a deposit into that bank. So we ask our guests to give their two cents. What would be your two cents that you would want the audience to take away from today's uh interview? Uh check it and give it a try.

Dr. Jessica Limbrick:

23:29

Or give it a try and check it and check it, double check it. Give it a try for those who are scared to use it. Um, because at some point you have to join the cold. I mean, yeah. And of course, double check what you're getting so that you don't get in trouble and become your worst nightmare.

Rachael DeLeon:

23:47

Well, Jessica, thank you so much for coming on today and talking about this important conversation. And it's always such a joy to see you.

Dr. Jessica Limbrick:

23:55

Thank you. Thank you guys for having me again.

Dr. Brandy Baxter:

23:58

And Jessica, thank you for being our guest on our uh uh video podcast. We're so excited to have you. Yes. Wonderful. Thank you guys. Rachel, we have just successfully completed our very first video podcast. How does it feel?

Rachael DeLeon:

24:15

It feels great and wasn't as stressful as I imagined. And uh, I think what I love most about our guests is I think our listeners are just excited as we are to dig in. Uh, you have an amazing community and so much information to share. So it's always like talking with old friends.

Dr. Brandy Baxter:

24:32

Absolutely. And I think Jessica made it easy for us because she's such a great guest to have on the show. And her insights are always so good. But this topic, I found myself like, okay, wait, if I were not doing the show, I would be taking notes because I needed to know all these things, especially her comment about um some of the ethical, cons ethical concerns with AI. And and I you you all heard me say that. Like, I'm still thinking about the environmental concerns, like, oh my God, my children would be so disappointed in me if I didn't take that into consideration. And so when we think about um just using this technology and not being afraid of it and and really leaning into it, but fact-checking, right? That is such a key. And I think that really applies to everything, whether it's AI or any other sources, we always want to make sure that the information we use is valuable. And I appreciate Jessica for reminding us of that.

Rachael DeLeon:

25:27

Yeah, and I think as a generation, or you know, all of us that are starting that dip our toe into AI because it is a necessity in the world that we live in. I think the better you get with the questions you're asking, the more accuracy you get from the responses. But I think what really was that aw moment for me was asking what the exception is. Flipping it on its head is a really smart way to get to those uh, to overcome some of the biases that AI might have.

Another area I've been thinking about a lot with AI is, you know, I think there's this idea of is it replacing me? Because now would I go to a financial counselor? But I think where it actually could do a lot of good is now the people that are reaching out have they started to do some exploration. And so they might have smarter questions to ask a financial counselor. You know, they have a little, it's like opening up a little bit of access to financial education, but how do we continue to educate and communicate the value of any kind of technology with a human being and that personal touch?

Dr. Brandy Baxter:

26:38

Yeah, yes, indeed. Well, as always, audience, we are just thankful for you joining us with this uh session and look forward to many more in the future.

Rachael DeLeon:

26:49

Yeah. And as we share this, this will be on YouTube at any place you get podcasts, but drop us a line, tell us who you want to see, the types of topics that are important to you. We're really excited for another great season of Real Money Real Experts. The opinions of our podcast guests are their own, which means that their stories, views, or lived experiences may differ from yours or mine. We encourage you to tune in to Real Money Real Experts with open curiosity. Why? Because it's oftentimes in the conversations where viewpoints or stories differ from our own that we learn the most.