

1 (6s):

Pleasure to welcome you here to the Clark Howard show are mission to serve an empowering youth so that you make better financial decisions in your life. Today's episode. Everyone's favorite part of our Podcast week Clark Stinks. I'll also get to the news for anyone who has a Venmo Zelle or cash app account. So we do Clark Stinks because this is different than a lot of content you might hear. This is all about us learning together. We all learn from each other as members of team Clark and I'm just a guy and I've been doing this a long time.

1 (52s):

And one thing I've learned over time is I'm not as smart as I think, you know, I, I will give an opinion, give advice, give information, and I'll have miss part of the picture or in your opinion, I may be just plain wrong. So that's why we have Clark dot com slash Clark Stinks where if you hear me say something and you feel that it doesn't ring true for you, you post it on Clark Stinks and then we CLI producer Christa goes through your posts and shares her favorites right here.

0 (1m 29s):

I should've never been encouraged to, to speak English. Think I'm pretty stupid. You shouldn't be ashamed of yourself. Well, maybe I'm wrong. Maybe I'm a mom.

1 (1m 50s):

So Christa why are you pointing at me? Oh, I thought you were gonna say you stank at something at the beginning. You tells me you had your own Clark Stinks Oh, that's right. Okay. So on yesterday's podcast, I was a harsh hand on you, pretty bad about your Starbucks addiction and how much money you waste there each year. And you pointed out my hypocrisy, just like you were one of my kids pointing out how hypocritical I can be. So my wife lane does go to Starbucks and I think that Starbucks is an inefficient use of money.

1 (2m 32s):

So what I do is, you know, those Coinstar machines, they have it places where you can turn your coins sitting in drawers into money. But if you convert it to money, they charge a ripoff like 13% conversion where you can turn it into different gift cards at no fee. So I get her Starbucks money at the Coinstar it's like found money. Cause these are coins, just sitting there, unloved in a cup. I, and then when I fill the cup, it's a huge cup. I go to Coinstar dump it and get her a Starbucks card.

1 (3m 12s):

And then I feel a lot.

2 (3m 14s):

That's very sweet of you. Just like I just suggested, because the way it was someone asked the question said his wife loves Starbucks. Didn't want to spend the money on it. Of course. And so I said, there they do Valentine's day gift cards. And you're like, why wouldn't he buys her a card from a cheaper coffee shop, but

that's a great way to do it. Clark that's a great compromise. So you don't stink. You're a romantic. All right.

1 (3m 39s):

I see. I still think it's better with these a huge convenience store outfits that are growing around the country that offer a really great fresh coffee, like a YY and Sheetz and quick trip. And people like that, that you get somebody addicted to drinking their coffee at a much lower price or make it at home. Right. Well, make it a home. Yes. But a lot of people, coffee, something they grab on the go. I don't know. I've never had a cup of coffee in my life and I don't understand the fixation, but if it's something you really love, then you'll love it. Just love it cheaper.

2 (4m 17s):

Okay. Debbie says, she loves you. And to please stop recommending Amazon Kindle, they are a waste of money. The extra storage cards, the Amazon recommended also do not work. I gave up and ran over my last one with my semi-truck a better option would be a second hand iPad.

1 (4m 35s):

That is a potentially good solution. I also really like Walmart's private label tablets. The private label that Walmart uses for its electronics is O N N should, I guess they pronounce on. And so they sell these tablets that don't come with any of the bloat where you have on an Amazon tablet and you can buy them really cheap depending on which version you buy. 82, a a hundred bucks somewhere in that range. And I've got one of they're a 10 inch ones and it's great. I use it when I'm watching football during the NFL season, I have seven months without NFL football now, seven months.

1 (5m 21s):

Anyway, I use that tablet is part of my watching football. I have three televisions all on NFL football, and then I have the tablet as well. I think I'm a little addicted to NFL football.

2 (5m 38s):

Okay. And then related, Paul says, I love your show Clark, but you almost always miss one of the best money savings tips ever. The public library. Occasionally you'll mention the library, but you really need to tell your listeners more about the wonderful selection of music, television shows and movies, all at the best possible price free. Your quick to mention streaming shows as a replacement for cutting the cord. But please remember to mention the library as well. Right?

1 (6m 8s):

Thank you for that suggestion. And I just was giving a friend advice who was dealing with a, a personal family matter. And I recommended a particular book and told her what it was going to cost her. And then she sent me a text just a few minutes ago that she went to the library and got it for free. And so there's the point again, I keep overlooking the library

2 (6m 36s):

Clark and Christa you boasting like a tire fire and the middle of a skunk farm. You promote Tesla. Like it's a great company. Meanwhile, Elon Musk denies his workers' a 401k match for a third straight year and dangerous their livelihood by threatening to move at the plant in California. If California doesn't allow them to work during the height of the pandemic, all will spending \$1.5 billion on Bitcoin and polluting the night sky with thousands of satellites. You should think twice about all of the free advertising. You give this guy, Brian,

1 (7m 8s):

Brian, thank you. And I agree Musk is he's a difficult human being and he, he doesn't have anybody telling him that he's not the greatest guy ever. And he is in most situations. He's the brightest guy in the room. He's done some amazing things and all of us have flaws. And he is a very complicated man with a lot of wonderful talents and a lot of flaws as for how he treats his workers. He does have a tendency to burn out and burn through workers where he expects loyalty from them.

1 (7m 53s):

But historically, unfortunately he has not shown enough oil LT back. And if I got a chance to be one-on-one with Elon Musk, I would tell him some of the things that he doesn't want to hear, but I think could make them a better employer and a better person. In addition to being a brilliant mind,

2 (8m 15s):

Clark needs to use word his words more precisely. Recently, he said that stores were bribing employees to get a COVID vaccination. Wrong bribery is paying someone to do something illegal or to get political and or unfair advantages. The stores are offering an incentive, not a bribe Clark needs to clarify this potentially dangerous error by dangerous. I mean that if someone chose not to get vaccinated, because they think an employer is bribing them and they are at risk for possibly getting COVID and dying or passing it on to others, Clark should encourage vaccinations and congratulate stores for providing incentives to help keep us all healthy. Thank

1 (8m 54s):

You for that post and apologize for the use of that word. In that case, I was making a point and incentivizing employees to get vaccinated is good for the store. Good for the stores customers, the most important it's good for that employee. There are a percent of Americans that have said they're not comfortable getting the vaccine. I strongly encourage people to get it. This is a case where not only are you protecting yourself, you're protecting your fellow human, being your fellow American by getting the vaccine. And there are also people been waiting to see if there were any, a large adverse health consequences to getting any of the vaccines and so far so good.

1 (9m 43s):

I have been vaccinated and it's a real relief to me to have gotten the vaccination.

2 (9m 52s):

You mentioned that going over seas to Costa Rica or Mexico is a good idea for medical procedures and dental procedures. I think you should not encourage such behavior because my mom went to Mexico. City was actually referred to a doctor from her sister who lives there and her teeth were destroyed. Many were trimmed down to the bone. And she's now in full dentures. Several dentists here in the United States mentioned how they botched her teeth there she's from Mexico and we love Mexico. And we love Latin people. In general, whoever extreme caution must be used researching the doctor. And I would say several references checked before saving money to have an overseas procedure done. Jack,

1 (10m 30s):

Jack, thank you. And I am so sorry about that circumstance. And I'd say that checking out a medical professional applies on our own shores to in the United States, that the quality of care varies a lot from one individual provider to another and checking somebody out every possible way is great with medical tourism, not dental with medical tourism, there are a specific steps you can go through to vet, particularly a facility you're considering using that. We have information for you on at Clark dot com and guy sets terrible about what happened in this case.

2 (11m 12s):

Clark you stink worse than, yeah, I can't think of anything clever right now regarding your recent podcast where you talk about home alarm systems. I think you do yourself a disservice and not telling your listeners about police response to these alarms. I've heard through multiple channels. I could have sworn through you yourself as well, that the vast majority are false alarms and the police don't take them seriously. If they respond, they typically slow down as they drive past only stopping. If they see something obvious, sure. There is a value of the audible alarm scaring someone off, but what's the value of the monitoring service. And that's from,

1 (11m 47s):

I like Mike a year or right, 99 plus percent, a burglar alarms are false alarms. In fact, in a number of jurisdictions now with the police require that there's verification, that there's an incident occurring before they will even dispatch an officer and my jurisdiction, I get fined if I have a false alarm and it's a \$125 for having a false alarm. What people are now doing is they're using cameras in conjunction with the alarm in order to have a visual on whether or not there is a perpetrator at a property.

1 (12m 27s):

I'm not talking about interior cameras that come with their own privacy issues. I'm talking about exterior cameras where you can see whether or not there is a crime in progress. I appreciate all your posts on Clark Stinks. And I want you to know that we really want this from you. That when you hear something for me, that

you just feel I'm not giving the whole story, I'm missing the story, I'm wrong, whatever it is, please go to Clark dot com slash Clark Stinks and post it and coming up next. I want to tell you something that Stinks these apps that you can use to send money to people don't have good safety and security and mind.

1 (13m 15s):

And you're the one who suffers the consequences.

3 (13m 20s):

This episode is brought to you by progressive saving money on your car. Insurance is easy with progressive. It's an average savings of over \$750 for customers who switch. And Save in fact, customers can qualify for an average of six discounts on their auto policy with progressive including discounts, just for starting a quote online, or having multiple vehicles on their policy. Get your quote online@progressive.com and see how much you could be saving national annual average auto insurance savings by new customers surveyed in 2019 potential savings will vary discounts, vary and are not available in all States and situations.

4 (14m 5s):

This podcast is sponsored by visible wireless service phone service should be simple and visible makes that happen. One plan with more of what you want and less of what you don't powered by Verizon with no surprise fees or annual contracts simple, right? And with party pay sharing, the savings is just as simple. Create a party invite as many strangers friends or relatives as you want. And watch the cost of service go down legit, unlimited data messages and minutes can be all yours for \$25 a month. When you join a group of four or more, learn more@visible.com forward slash plan forward slash party hyphen pay that's V I S I B L e.com forward slash plan forward slash party hyphen pay, spread the word and share the savings with party pay by visible terms apply.

1 (15m 8s):

I can't even tell you how many TV stories I've done about people having problems with Venmo cash app or Zelle. These things are so convenient, but they are so dangerous to your financial wellbeing. It's shocking. The laws that have been written governing a bank security consumer protections, none of them anticipated these payment apps that you can very quickly download on your smartphone and you use to send money to another individual. And the case of Zelle, there is a despicable practice in excusable practice happening from several banks where they are now, when you open an account with them, a checking account or savings account, without telling you activate Zelle in conjunction with that account.

1 (16m 12s):

I recently did a TV story about someone who didn't even know what Zelle was. Didn't know, it existed. All of the money disappeared from their bank account. And the bank said, well, that's on you. You have the Zelle app. And they were like, I don't even know what that is. They didn't have it on their phone, anything, but somebody used Zelle as a way to steal all their money. In the case of Venmo Venmo has gotten a real black

eye on all of the theft. That's happened from people's accounts through Venmo and then Venmo is going after them with debt collectors.

1 (16m 52s):

They are being investigated by the consumer financial protection Bureau for their behavior. And it is inexcusable. First of all, that the Congress and the federal regulators have not instituted any consumer protections at all. With this new form of financial transaction. It is the wild West and not in a good way. Now, if you do want to use any of these apps and you want to use the cash app, you want to use Venmo, I don't know when you'd ever want to use a cell, but anyway, if you want to use one of these, you want to set up a separate bank account, either checking or savings with a bank or credit union, different than the one you normally do business.

1 (17m 48s):

I'll tell you why. That's important to know. The second only put in that account, the money you think you're going to need to be able to access to fund. When you use Venmo or cash app, the reason you never opened that second account at the same place is you have your existing banking relationship or credit union relationship is they all have mice type in the banks that are essentially cross default clauses. If somebody gets into there and start stealing money from you through Venmo or through cash out the bank will then turn around when that account's emptied out and they'll take money out of other accounts.

1 (18m 35s):

So you have with them and keep doing that all day long before you even know that all your checks are balancing. This is a really convenient thing using Venmo or cash app. You should only use these in a circumstance where you're paying somebody, you know, like a friend or relative, some money setting up a bill or whatever, do not pay a stranger that way, because there's too much risk is a stranger. Who's a service provider, and they've already delivered the service to you. And you want to pay with Venmo or cash app.

1 (19m 18s):

Okay. That would be all right, but what's not okay is to have a Venmo or cash app or Zelle tied into your main banking relationship. Because again, the amount of money you can lose is every single penny you have in that financial institution. If your Venmo cash app or Zelle or compromised and shame on all three providers, shame, shame, shame on Venmo, cash app and Zelle for failing completely and entirely, totally to get any meaningful consumer protections in place.

1 (20m 4s):

You say you don't want the government coming down on you and coming up with all kinds of red tape and rules, so said, do it right yourselves. It's time for your questions. I'm sorry. I'm not passionate about that. Christa at all. I'm telling you, I am so frustrated. You're fired up, man, doing T V story after TB story with people who have put the camera in their face, a microphone in front of them. And I can't do anything for

them other than what they're doing to help other people, because their money is gone, gone, gone, and Venmo Zell Cash app.

1 (20m 46s):

They don't care. Sorry.

2 (20m 49s):

It's fine. How about I lightened your mood? A little Jeff and Texas. Okay.

1 (20m 53s):

I'm taking, I'm taking deep breaths like I do in yoga.

2 (20m 57s):

There you go. Jeff and Texas wants to know about your mattress. He says, Clark I heard on your recent Podcast that you bought a mattress that your wife says is the most comfortable. She has ever slept on any chance you can let me in which mattress you purchased.

1 (21m 12s):

Okay? It's not on sale any more Debbie downer to say, but it was from Costco, of course, and Nova form, Nova form 14 inch comfort Grande plus memory foam mattress. It was on sale for 400 is at four 79, four 99 and King. And so Costco rotates sales on their mattresses. You'll just have to wait until the next time they have this on sale or pay them an extra \$80 and buy it now for \$599.

1 (21m 54s):

Yeah, I think I paid four 79. Retail was five 99. And it's like, let me tell you what I like about it is it has this cooling gel on the top of it, like the top three inches. So a lot of times with a mattress, particularly in the hotter weather time, a year mattress can sleep hot and you become a restless sleeper. And this one has this layer of this cooling gel. The keeps it cooler while you sleep. It is a very firm mattress. If you don't like firm, it's not for you. But the good news with mattresses as I shared recently is the mattress industry is overstocked to many manufacturers, too many models.

1 (22m 43s):

And the prices just keep going down, down, down, and all these bad in a box kind of things typically come with a three month or so period that you can try them. Risk-free if you don't like, 'em you get all your money back,

2 (23m 2s):

But how do you send them back? That's what I always worry about.

1 (23m 6s):

Okay. So like the people at Casper pounds, yeah. Kasper the originator of the compressed mattress in a box. And I read a story about what they go through when somebody calls him and says they don't want it. And it costs them serious money to come pick it up from you. And then depending on the jurisdiction, it may not be able to be reconditioned, to be made available to someone. It may have to go to either a charity or a landfill.

2 (23m 37s):

Bob in New Mexico says Clark has always bragging that he's the dullest Mann in the world. That's true. Sorry, Bucko, but your a one to be, as you're not included in the 2021 dove men's club calendar. And there actually there's a link to the calendar time to lobby for your position on next year's calendar. I would suggest February the same month that year Atlanta Falcons will be celebrating the Superbowl at home.

1 (24m 3s):

Oh, I wish Pre-season prediction for the Falcons is not very good. They're looked at as a and the power rankings. It's like, they're going to be one of the worst team's in the NFL. This coming fall. Let's hope that's not true.

2 (24m 21s):

Okay. And Jocelyn, Josh in Pennsylvania says I wanted to share a quick story of how you helped me deal with our local cable company. Back in December, we were having problems with our internet connection dropping down to unusable speeds. During peak hours, I contacted the company and was told that they were aware of the problem, but was not provided further information on when it would be resolved it persisted over days and repeated cost to the company yielded the same. Non-response having gotten nowhere with customer, no service. I called out the company on social media per year advice to other listeners. The next day, I received a call from a supervisor who profusely apologize for the problems we are having. Explain the comfort, how the company is going to fix the problem issue to a credit to our bill and provided me with this per his personal extension.

2 (25m 7s):

Subsequently he has called me every week to check in and make sure where you are no longer having problems. The company is the only viable internet provider in our area. And I could not believe the response elicited by reaching out via social media. Thank you for all of your fantastic advice and helping empower us as consumers.

1 (25m 25s):

Well, that is very impressive to hear. And I'm so glad the social media angle worked one to mention one other thing I've been negligent in mentioning, and that is feasible. Verizon's discount brand visible.com has improved their product, offering a lot and now includes unlimited hotspot. I don't know how long they're going

to keep this up with a visible phone service. And if you live alone, you may be able to find that that becomes a viable substitute for home internet for you running hot spot off your cell phone. Instead of having a traditional home internet service, obviously that wouldn't work for a family, but could work for an individual visible for one person is \$40 a month unlimited everything.

1 (26m 17s):

And I want to thank you so much for joining us on today's podcast. And when you need consumer advice and want you to know we are here to serve you with free off the Podcast advice, something we've done for 28 years, where you can talk one on one with a member of team Clark. If you go to Clark dot com slash CAC, you'll see how that works.