



## Merry Money Round-Up – Holiday Savings Ideas from Leading Personal Finance Experts

Here's a quick look around the Internet to see what some of the leading personal finance experts are talking about when it comes to helping you save money this shopping season!



### Jean Chatzky

TODAY Show financial editor **Jean Chatzky** offers advice on how to be **smart about spending this time of year**, including using balances on gift cards to buy holiday presents. Some numbers Jean shared:

**\$1 billion** – That's the amount left on gift cards annually. Gather them up and use balances for your holiday shopping. Also, there are websites like *cardpool.com* to trade and sell gift cards. Bottom line: Don't leave the cards in the junk drawer. Use up the balances before they possibly expire.

**\$47 billion** – That's the value of old iPhones gathering dust, that you should be selling, when you get a new one. Websites like *gazelle.com* are a great place to sell your old iPhones and other electronics.

**56%** – According to a new study, that is percentage of parents willing to go into debt for the holidays. While you may have a merry holiday now, come January you may experience some buyer's remorse, when the credit card bills come in.



### Suze Orman

As the annual shopping season kicks into high gear, are you wondering if that gift for your loved one is a smart one to buy? **You can ask Personal Finance Guru Suze Orman!** Log on to *suzeorman.com*

and follow the link to the guest page. She talks to her guests via Skype every night on her show.



### Terry Savage

**Terry Savage**, personal finance columnist, discusses the annual dilemma of **what to give your children or grandchildren for the holiday season**. Once you get past the popular holiday toys (think Frozen

anything!), or clothes (not very exciting), there are some real opportunities to make your gift a rewarding money experience for the young people in your life.

Terry suggests some simple money-saving gifts, including: **The Money-Savvy Piggy Bank** (*msgen.com*, \$18.99) — This four-chambered, see-through plastic piggy bank is designed to teach even very young children that they should set aside money for different reasons: saving, spending, donating and investing.

**OMG Official Money Guide for Teens** (*msgen.com*, \$12.95) — Written by Susan and Michael Beacham, founders of the MoneySavvy Generation website, this guide for young teens is easy to read but not patronizing. It focuses on money choices ranging from saving and spending, to how to pay for the things you buy.



### Kelli Grant

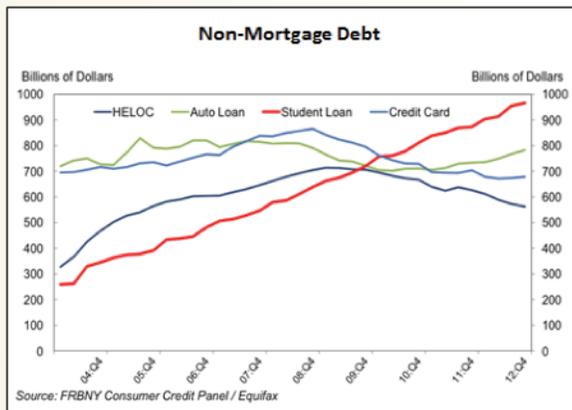
Personal finance columnist **Kelli Grant** is helping people **hit the slopes for a cheaper rate!** Skiers, like airline passengers and amusement park goers, are increasingly finding that there's an advantage in planning

ahead. "Regardless of where you're going skiing, it's very straightforward: If you buy it now, you're going to pay less than if you buy it later," said Evan Reece, co-founder and chief executive of Liftopia.

## Free Student Loan Counseling Available

Are you or someone you know struggling with student loan debt? GreenPath/Accel can help.

The cost of college has increased over the years, so more students have taken out loans to help finance their education. And the amount of those loans has steadily increased. Student loan debt now exceeds \$1.1 trillion — significantly more than credit card debt or auto loan debt.



As more students borrow money without a plan to repay the loans, delinquencies and defaults have risen at an alarming rate. Excluding borrowers not yet in repayment, more than

30 percent of national borrowers are 90+ days delinquent. And, excluding accounts in deferment or forbearance, delinquency rates exceed 50 percent!

The problem is not limited to young people. Of students at four-year universities, entering repayment in 2002, only 44 percent paid off their student loans within 10 years. This is saddling people with student loan debt well into their 30s, 40s and beyond.

### Accel Offers Student Loan Assistance

OK, so how can GreenPath/Accel help with student loan debt? We can:

- Audit your student loans to help you figure out the loan terms and payment requirements.
- Help you explore federal student loan repayment options.
- Assess debt management options for credit cards or other unsecured debt.
- Develop a customized budget and spending plan.

Call Accel at (877) 332-2235 for a free student loan debt consultation.

## What do credit union members think about Accel?

Credit union members have the opportunity to let us know the most important benefit they received from completing a financial assessment with an Accel counselor. Here is a comment from a member who spoke with an Accel counselor:

*"I loved speaking with both Gabriel S. And Steve...They were both very courteous and helpful. It made the transition to a better life much easier than I expected."*

## GreenPath/Accel Reviews on ConsumerAffairs.com

If Accel has helped you, consider sharing your story on *ConsumerAffairs.com*. Here's a recent submission:

From Brian: *"The GreenPath team helped my family and I pay off over \$109,000 worth of consumer debt. The staff was always friendly and helpful. They were able to work with my creditors to reduce interest rates and ensure my monthly payments were helping to pay down more of my debt. I would recommend their services to anyone looking for help. They are simply the best."*

Log on to [www.consumeraffairs.com/debt\\_counsel/greenpath.html](http://www.consumeraffairs.com/debt_counsel/greenpath.html) to tell us your story!

As a member of SECU, you can take advantage of the **Accel**, a program of GreenPath, Inc. Accel is a **free** financial education and counseling service. For more information, call 1-877-33ACCEL (332-2235) or visit us on the web at [www.accelservices.org](http://www.accelservices.org).

