

2018 is Half Way Over - How Are We Doing?



In the Heat of Summer, Remember Your New Year's Resolutions?

Now is a good time to check-in and see how you're really doing

Amid the draining heat of mid-summer, do you remember your New Year's resolutions regarding your personal financial planning? How are you coming with your to-do list?

Time passes. Our children grow up and we get older. Sand keeps passing through the hourglass of our earthly sojourn. The year 2018 is over half gone. In about a month children will start back to school and traffic will worsen. The summer break for most will be over. So, it's high time to get done what you need to get done.

As a financial planner, it's amazing to see the number of number of people with no wills or obsolete wills. Such a lapse in planning is especially critical in a marriage with minor children in the mix. An old will is better than no will, but it carries potential problems for minors, especially if both parents die at once, or a single parent passes on.

Often the bulk of a couple's savings, or that of a single parent, resides in retirement plans. There too, money passing to a minor presents problems. Have you checked both the primary and contingent beneficiary designations on retirement accounts, and personal and group insurance policies?

For those with young children, have you funded a 529 college savings plan for 2018? Anyone, a parent or a grandparent, annually may gift to such a college plan. Gifts are made with after-tax dollars but the money grows tax-free and may be spent tax-free to meet qualified college and graduate school expenses.

How are you coming with plans to pay down debt and build savings outside of your retirement plans? Think about creating a Freedom Fund – a pool of liquid capital equal to at least one-year's worth of living expenses. Living paycheck to paycheck is motivation-draining stress. Liquid and available capital creates peace of mind and freedom to roll with the punches or pursue opportunities.

If you are a key breadwinner in a family or household, are you adequately insured against the consequences of disability or death? The same question goes for key persons of an enterprise, including business owners. Is there a succession plan? Is it up to date?

August is almost upon us. In slightly over three short months, Christmas and holiday decorations will pop up in your local mall.

And if you haven't made progress on your New Year's Resolutions, don't worry – you still have time.