

Planning is power.

A TRULY COMPREHENSIVE FINANCIAL PLAN IS A RARE AND BEAUTIFUL THING.

What exactly is financial planning, anyway? The term has been used in so many different ways that it's basically lost its meaning. But the practice of in-depth, personal financial planning—as rare as it may have become—is a game-changer. Here's some basic background to help you separate wheat from chaff and discover the power of true financial planning.

Financial planning is not a commodity

It's a specialty. In its pure form, it allows you to maximize the potential of your assets and live life on your own personal terms. The experience should be creative, liberating and empowering.

Your wealth should be working hard for you

Most people would live a life that reflects their deepest values if they could. Most affluent people actually can. Your assets have an untapped power to close the gap between your actual situation and your ideal life. True financial planning can create that alignment.

If you're talking more than listening, that's financial planning

There is absolutely no formula for creating a financial plan. A great plan is unique, multi-faceted and dynamic, like you are. It flows from a candid, in-depth, free-flowing discussion in which the planner asks penetrating questions then spends most of the time listening and learning about you.

True personal financial planning is not the norm

Most of what gets pitched as financial planning is superficial: Take a look at your various investment statements. Ask some rote questions. Plug a bunch of numbers into a calculator. Spit out a "financial plan." Calculators and evaluating your financial particulars are definitely part of the process. But they are far from its essence. Ask planners what their process entails and what the benefits are. If it sounds mechanistic and compartmentalized rather than intimate and holistic, it probably is.

Your financial plan creates the context for your investments

A well thought-out plan considers your goals, values, what's important to you, how you got here, where you want to go. Then it translates that personal portrait into financial terms. You're investing within personal parameters with the objective of creating your ideal life.

Financial planning is not a once-and-done kind of thing

Once you appreciate how financial planning connects the dots and turns your assets into a dynamic, versatile tool, you'll begin to see it as an ongoing process. When your goals and priorities evolve over time, you'll instinctively look to evolve your financial plan, too. Knowing how to drive that process is a powerful feeling.

In summary

True financial planning provides you with invigorating clarity and freedom. It's much, much more than the rote, mechanical process most firms deliver. Instead, it's nuanced, deeply personal and liberating, illuminating the path from your actual situation to your ideal life. Financial planning defines a meaningful context for your unique investment strategy. It aligns your assets in support of your personal vision, both today and as that vision evolves over time.



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