



VALUES FIRST PLANNING

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John

More than Money

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Getting Great Reviews

If you have been with us any time at all, you know we occasionally reach out and ask you to come in for a review. In case you're curious, we do about 150 or more of these meetings a year. Over the years I have developed a pretty good sense for what goes on in a productive review. This month's article is about making the most of your review – and it may surprise you to hear that we can't do this alone.

Why do we do reviews? The review is a lot like checking your navigation system while you are on a long trip. You don't just look at the map to find out where you are – you look at the map to see how you are progressing. We want to be sure that we haven't missed our turn, are running late, or missing out on some side adventure that we might regret later.

So many of life's changes happen slowly - slowly enough that we don't always perceive the change until we look back in our rear-view mirror. The review gives us a chance to reflect on what has happened and then think about how to adjust or plan for the next leg of our journey.

What makes a great review?

A great review is a team effort. At our end, we review our notes from the previous year. This reminds us what we discussed last time. This gives us a reasonable place to start as we catch up on the progress being made or situations you are dealing with. We also review the accounts; the distributions made, any required distributions remaining (RMD's), and the cash



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or liquidity available should you need immediate cash.

But the real star of the show is **YOU!** Imagine going to your doctor for your check-up and not having a single question, update, or concern. The doctor can look at your previous records, check your vitals, and make you stick your tongue out (never really understood that), and ask a few probing questions. But he/she is just shooting in the dark.

I have a few clients that take a very deliberate and thoughtful approach to their part of our reviews. They come with a sheet of questions that they have been thinking about. A few clients take the extra step of emailing those questions to me a day or so before the review so I can be prepared to address them more completely.

What are the types of things you might be thinking about before we get together?

Changes in expenses	New purchases or loans	Changes or questions about taxes
Beneficiary changes	Estate plan concerns	Banking changes
Health changes	Charitable giving changes	Pictures of grandchildren
Travel plans	Potential moves	Job changes

The list could go on for quite a while. The main thing is to have some time before the review to review your own situation and think about what has changed, what might change, and what you would like to change. Write down your questions, your plans, and your concerns. Sharing these things let's us help you navigate your future and work towards achieving the goals that matter to you most!



Debt as a Tool, Not a Toy

There are very few people who can buy a home, or a brand new car, or pay for a college education without paying them off over time. These things are also rarely discretionary - but the amount we spend might be. In this episode, Jeff and John discuss how to use debt as a tool, not a toy.

Click [here](#) to listen.

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