READY FOR RETIREMENT?

IT'S NOT TOO LATE

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Making ends meet, with or without a family, seems to be more and more difficult each year. Even if you are careful about your spending, it just costs money to "live". Housing, transportation, food, health care, taxes, and just plain ordinary living expenses take a huge chunk out of your income.

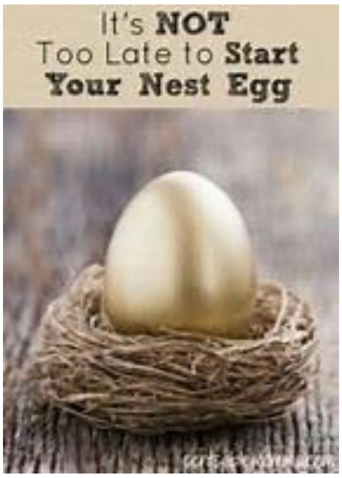
Now days it takes both spouses to bring home a paycheck, especially for those who are just starting out with their family. If you are tired of struggling to make ends meet or trying to live on your "budget", you don't have time or the desire to get a 2nd job, what do you do?

If you are like me, finding a way to work on your terms and your time is not always easy to find. You don't want to get sucked into a make money quick scheme or invest money in a company which may have ethical issues. You want to make sure you work with top notch, proven winners in making money.

This is what I have done and am happy about my decision and invite you to check out a very exciting opportunity to participate with people from all over the world who have changed their lives and the lives of their families.

Mary Gibbins

DID YOU PREPARE (ADEQUATELY) FOR RETIREMENT?



When you started out as a young adult, in the workforce, did you think about saving for retirement? Who does at that age?

A few years later you find yourself married with a couple children, car payments, house payment, doctor bills, etc. – are you thinking about saving for retirement? Gee, you are only 30 years old, plenty of time before you retire.

Experts recommend you start saving as early as possible – if you wish to build up an amount to live a comfortable and fun retirement.

If you already have a nice "nest egg" for retirement, kudos to you. But I am guessing that you might be like many people and get to retirement years and discover you must work, or roll back plans and dreams that you had planned for, because you cannot afford to retire – not enough money saved.

You probably had a plan to start saving and investing, but some "urgent" need always got in the way and you never got started.

It is important to have a plan for your retirement. By that I mean, know how much money you are going to need each month. Most financial consultants figure you need to have at least 80% of your current income coming in each month when you retire to live somewhat like you have been living.

However, if your income is fairly low, you may require 85% - 90% of your current income monthly to sustain yourself and your family in retirement.

When trying to calculate how much money you will need monthly, look at 1) needs; 2) wants; and 3) reality. We would like to win the lottery but the chances of that are slim to non-existent. So a plan needs to be put together that will work for you and your family.

A "plan" for retirement is similar to a "budget" – in that you set goals and timeframes to reach those goals. It is like a living document and will need to be changed or modified occasionally – as life changes, we change, life happens.

Next we will discuss how to get started.

[Procrastination is the Grave When Opportunity is Missed]

HOW DO I BEGIN?

In my way of thinking, it is probably best to sit down with paper and pencil and just brainstorm. By that I mean, think about your future – where you are now and where you want to be when you decide it is time to retire.

You have heard the old adage "If you fail to plan, you plan to fail". OUCH! We live in an uncertain world today, technology is revolving so fast it can make your head spin (it does mine).

Your biggest worry might be, "Will I have enough money saved up to retire?" or "Will I outlive my retirement funds"? "If I die before my spouse, will he/she have enough to live on"?

So, one of the first things in your plan is to know how much you need each month to live on – to satisfy both needs and wants – and reality. How much income do you live on now? How much are you able to save, how much debt do you have? This information will give you an idea of where to start.

You can call this your retirement plan or your wealth plan (that sounds better doesn't it?). Connecting with an expert is a great place to start – whether it be a financial consultant, a senior advisor, your attorney or even CPA. Find someone who really has an understanding of investing your money, in what ways and formats, return on your investment (ROI) and so much more. You may wish to check referrals, just to be safe.

An expert can help you to set goals, know how much to save, choose what to invest in, help balance your needs, wants and reality. How much you need to save will depend on your age, your lifestyle and your benefits you receive via your employer.

Keep in mind possibilities of higher health costs, or you may require a long-term care plan. The uncertainties in life can cause havoc, but a good plan can minimize those uncertainties.

You may have resources of income you might not think about, such as, social security, pension, part-time employment, a 401k retirement fund; an IRA or Roth IRA, mutual funds, assets of value to sell, e.g. real estate rentals or antiques of value, life insurance, annuities, & other options the expert can assist you with.

When thinking of investing, you need to play the "long" game, meaning allow your investments to accrue interest or value. Just because a stock falls in value, generally, if it is a high quality stock (like those in the S&P Index) be prepared to ride it out. The long game is usually more productive than short term moving of investments. However, maintain a diverse portfolio – meaning do not invest all your funds in one thing – like, just stocks, or just bonds, or just real estate, etc. Also, be wary of overestimating the value of "cash" – inflation erodes it.

Once you know where you are (financially) and where you want to be when you retire, you can put a plan in motion to begin your retirement savings in whatever vehicle you decide on.

Procrastination is the Grave When Opportunity is Missed

SAVING: THE DO'S AND DON'TS

If you are ready to save money for a big vacation or you are planning on just renovating your home, it is important to know the important saving do's and don'ts so that you can ensure that your plans are made possible. Below, we will go over the most effective do's and don'ts so that you feel confident in your saving money strategy.

Give Your Money a Reason

One of the best ways to save is to give your money a reason. If you want your money to mean a vacation, then make it vacation money. When you do give your money a purpose, you are able to find a reason to save and as the money pile grows, you will feel closer to your goal.

Don't Check Your Account Every Day

It can be difficult to refrain from checking your bank account on an hourly basis to see if something has changed, but more than likely it hasn't. If you need to, check your account once a day to ensure it is still in good standing. Otherwise, avoid checking your account and balance watching as this may only discourage you.

Handle Your Debt First

If you have a large amount of debt, take care of that first before you begin going on vacations. By doing this, you will help alleviate the stress you feel from the debt and you will be able to enjoy your vacation without feeling guilty.

Create a Budget for Yourself

If you are going on vacation, you want to know how much you are spending and you want to know how much money is going where. To understand this properly, you want to create a budget for yourself to use so that you stay on track and you can plan for your spending.

Don't Overdo It

One mistake people make when it comes to their saving is that they overdue it and then they give up. You need to be able to save properly and do not place yourself into debt trying to save. Be smart about your decisions and make sure that you are only setting aside the amount you feel comfortable tossing into an untouchable account.

Saving money may seem difficult and it can be, especially if you are not used to saving. Although it will be hard at first, it is essential that you begin creating an account so that you are able to handle any problems that arise and take a vacation when you want to. Even if you can only set aside a couple of bucks a week, do it– it will add up.

Some money experts advise having a “rainy day” fund. A “rainy day” fund is not your “vacation” fund. Life happens, and having a rainy day fund helps because the car can break down, or the refrigerator quits, or you need to make an unexpected trip to the dentist. etc.

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THE RIDICULOUSLY SIMPLE WAY TO RECOUP FINANCIAL SETBACKS

The simplest way to recoup a small financial setback isn't always easy.

Then again, there is no pleasant way to get around a speeding ticket, a lost phone, dumping Sprite in your computer, or any of the other stupid, quick, and frustrating ways you can find yourself a couple of hundred in the hole. It all stings. (and sucks).

But the simple way to reduce the sting—and the guilt—does not involve dwelling on your loss, or accepting that your savings will be reduced this month.

Unless you're so strapped that you probably don't have a computer or a car to screw up with, everyone has some fat in their budget. The hurdle here is to recognize what is an essential expenditure, and what isn't. Let me explain.

Whenever I hit an unexpected financial setback, I'm already on it with my backup plan: I usually know what I'm spending in every area of my life, so I know exactly how many things I have to cut and for how long before the loss is patched over.

For example, a fifty-dollar annoyance is pretty easy to recoup simply by modifying your idea of what constitutes a lunch necessity. You have to eat. That's non-negotiable.

But the means by which you get nutrition into your body are completely flexible. Many of us eat breakfast, lunch, and sometimes dinner on the go at work. And often that means buying food from a restaurant. However low you try to go, restaurant food is never cheap, including the chains and sandwich shops in city centers that prey on the captive audience of office and construction workers.

So if you just got a fifty-dollar fine and you know you spend ten dollars a day buying lunch at work, pack your lunch for six days.

I know, five times ten is fifty; the extra day is for the money you'll spend on the groceries. (Food from home isn't free—this is one of those nagging little personal finance details that are too easy to forget.)

Yeah, it's nicer to have an excuse to leave the office and get a nice fresh salad than it is

to munch on peanut butter and cold cuts at your desk. But now your finances have self-healed in a relatively short period of time, and your boss is happy because you haven't been taking such long lunch breaks. The nice thing about financial frugality is that it often lends itself to other virtues as well! Of course, eating peanut butter sandwiches every day for lunch isn't such a good nutritional strategy over the long run. But if you want to keep pace on your savings plans, you must always have a cheaper plan B for meeting your needs.

Negotiable necessities aren't always a question of food. You can put off shoe purchases by going back to old pairs that aren't worn out and which you haven't sported in a while; if they're old enough they feel new.

Same goes for clothes. If the kids lose their iPad, they might have to settle for an Android replacement tablet. After a speeding ticket, have your friends or coworkers come and drink at your home instead of at the bar for a few weekends; you might find this leads to more intimate conversations.

In the same vein, instead of the distractions of family outings, a couple of weeks of intimate nights at home could benefit your kids as well as your marriage. Even a "game night" with the kids can be a great deal of fun – providing good memories for all. With a bit of flexibility and thinking on your toes, most minor and moderate setbacks can be recouped with minimal pain—and perhaps even gain.

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FINANCIAL ADVICE FOR BABY BOOMERS

Baby boomers have a bit of a unique circumstance, as most of the generation is retiring or in the process of retiring. With some proper financial planning, retirement can be a breeze with the least amount of stress possible. It does take some effort and thought to properly plan out a retirement, but baby boomers have more options available to them than generations before them.

There are dozens of ways that baby boomers can ensure that they leave a positive financial legacy and enjoy their retirement but here are some of the most important tips to consider:

1. **Know your finances like the back of your hand. You should never be surprised by your finances. Realistic, proper planning is key in spending, saving, paying off debt, and everything in between.**
2. **Differentiate between necessities and temptations. If you're struggling to pay your mortgage you don't need a $5 mocha. While impulse buys and window shopping can call our names, racking up debt kills your budget this month, next month, and into your restless retirement.**
3. **Avoid using credit. Using any kind of credit card, payday loan, etc., always wastes**  **money. Your money should be actively working to make you more money. Cut up that credit card, learn to live happily within your means, and you will truly reap the rewards.**
4. **Save. Save. Save. Save. Save some more. Bonus? Keeping your money in an interest compounding savings account actually puts your money to work for you. By socking away what you can whenever you can you'll slowly grow a solid base. By making a plan for your savings you can retire early, live fabulously, and feel at peace knowing everything you have is yours.**
5. **Learn about self-sustainability. Learning to grow your own food, build an energy efficient home that suits your needs, and to feel happy without buying a new smartphone every week isn't just good for the environment: it's amazing for your wallet.**
6. **Plan ahead for future costs. Realize that in your life, you are going to spend money; and not just on bills. If your kids are growing up you might wish to set a chunk of money aside for wedding gifts, baby showers, college graduation parties, etc.**
7. **Let your family in on your financial wishes. Drawing up a will and planning uncomfortable family conversations certainly don't seem like the best ways to spend a day; financially, they can be. You will rest easier knowing if you're ever hospitalized, rendered unfit to speak for yourself, or anything else, your assets will be taken care of.**

How Much Should You Save a Month?

One of the most important things that you can do for your financial health and your future security is to save money. Many people today rely on credit cards and other forms of credit to get them through tough times and they don't even bother with saving any longer. This is the worst way to go through life and it will make you feel dependent on others to keep you going. Take life into your hands and start saving today for financial prosperity in the future.

How Much to Save

The amount of money you should be saving every month depends on how much income you spend on bills and how much is left over after everything is paid. In general it's important to save at least 10 percent of your earnings each month to help you protect against future problems and to help you prepare for your retirement. If you can afford more than 10 percent you should shoot for as much as you can afford while still living comfortably until you hit up to 20 percent of your income. By staying within this range you can set aside enough money for retirement and you can stay prepared for any possible issues you'll encounter throughout life.

Where to Save Your Money

First and foremost you need some money put into a savings account at your bank. You should shoot for around 6 months of living expenses when you are building up this fund. This is your emergency fund and will cover things like losing your job or major repairs that need to be performed on your home. After you build this fund up you can worry about other locations to put your money instead.

It's also a good idea to start putting cash into your 401(K) if you want to prepare for retirement. Many workplaces will take the money out of your paycheck automatically for you if you'd like. By contributing to his fund and taking advantage of an employer match you'll do a lot to prepare for retirement later on.

After you've made your annual retirement fund contribution you should consider investments into stocks, bonds, CD's or mutual funds. Putting money into one of these things gives you the potential to build up your money over time and will help you amass wealth without relying specifically on the amount of money you make at your job. Over time this account will grow very large and will be a major share of your earnings throughout the year. However, remember not to put all your investments into one basket!

Now that you have an idea of how much you should be saving each month, and where the money should go, you can get started. Get some money set aside for an emergency right away (rainy day fund) and start working to secure your future right away.

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CRUCIAL STEPS WHEN PLANNING FOR RETIREMENT

Do you want to retire at an early age? Me too. However, this just doesn't happen on its own. You have to be proactive and take the right steps early on in life. Thanks to these steps, retiring at an early age is definitely a possibility.

Step 1) Start Saving

In order to have enough money for retirement, you need to start saving your money as early as possible. As soon as you get your first job or career, start putting away money for your retirement. This also means avoid spending your money on things you don't need.

Whether it's a brand new car or some extraordinary electronic device, try to avoid buying things you simply don't need. This helps you save money quickly, and you won't have buyer's remorse later down the road.

Step 2) Start a Roth IRA

In order to save money correctly for your retirement, you need to start a Roth IRA, (a good suggestion, check with your financial advisor) otherwise known as individual retirement account. You can open one of these accounts on your own. Each time you get paid, put a little bit of your money into this account.

A great thing about Roth IRAs is that you can take y our money out whenever you want. There isn't a penalty, so you don't have to worry about using the IRA to pay for some type of emergency. However, you need to make sure it's a true emergency, such as a medical bill or to avoid missing your monthly payment on your mortgage.

Step 3) Get Help from a Financial Advisor

Like many individuals in America, you are not a financial expert. There are going to be times where you simply don't know what to do in terms of investing and saving money for retirement.

That's where a financial advisor comes in handy. This professional will oversee all of your income and monthly spending habits. They can show you how to budget better, and can help you create the right retirement funds. They can also help you invest in the stock market, helping you save a lot of money for the day that you retire.

Thanks to these simple steps, your financial future is going to be more stable.

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WAYS TO BE HAPPIER IN RETIREMENT

Focus on the things that bring you happiness – time with family, close friends and relationships, less stress in life, more free time to pursue activities you enjoy.

Use your money to purchase experiences, not possessions – so much more important and fulfilling. It is a time to build your relationships and enjoy family and friends.

Take time to take care of yourself. Too easy to stretch ourselves too thin with trying to take care of everyone or trying to make everyone else happy.

Get involved in an activity that makes you want to get out of bed in the morning, something you enjoy, something you want to learn more about or become more proficient at; focus on things that are interesting and challenging, making the most of your time and talent; don't let others usurp your time and efforts for themselves.

To enjoy your retirement do the things you planned or desire to do, you must have your health. Do what you need to do to stay healthy if at all possible. That includes staying sharp mentally. Things you can do to help sharpen your mind – work crossword puzzles or Sudoku; learn a new language or activity – anything that makes you "think" or stretch your mind. Learn new programs on the computer, expand your horizons, travel to places, close or far where you have never been but want to see or experience.

When planning for retirement, don't plan to stay home and just rest – that can result in boredom or even depression. Find activities that will keep you busy (to a point) and motivated to stay active. It is important to stay in touch with people, you can stay socially active for little to no cost financially, do not isolate yourself – too easy to get lonely and create more solitude for yourself – a little is good, a lot, not so much. There are many places you can volunteer – schools, hospitals, boys and girls clubs, scouts, retirement homes and many more.

Before you retire, think of who you would like to spend more time with – family, extended family, friends, etc. Will you need to relocate? Or move into a senior retirement home? Or buy a vacation home? You will have several options and it is never too late to plan and dream.

Yes, it is important to have money to retire on – the more money you have the more

choices you will have. But you can still be happy in retirement without having a lot of money – your lifestyle needs to match with the money you have for retirement. Instead of traveling all over the world and staying in the finest hotels and eating at expensive restaurants, why not have a few friends over for a potluck dinner, or go to a park or new location with family and friends. Your outlook and mindset is important – remember, money does not buy happiness. Maybe you know people who are wealthy but not happy, money does make life easier but it is not the most important part of life.

However, if you really do not have enough money to live comfortably or even for the bare necessities, there are many ways to rectify that situation. If you are like me, you do not want to go out and find a new job, but maybe invest in a home business that can generate income for you where you do not have to work 40+ hours a week. This is what I have done. I've learned many new things, met many wonderful people from all over the world, done a little traveling (that I can legitimately deduct on my taxes), and earned income to make my life easier and given me freedom to go and do instead of staying home and counting my pennies, nickels and dimes to see if I have the money I need to go and do whatever.

If this idea interests you, check it out. It might interest you or might not, but you won't know unless you check it out! Click on to [this link](#) to get the information.