

11 Costly Tax, Investment, And Estate Planning Mistakes That Affect Almost All Retirees - While Costing Many Thousands

by Alan Schmidt
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“Eleven Costly Tax, Investment, and Estate Planning Mistakes That Affect Almost All Retirees—While Costing Many Thousands”

Retirement Facts Revealed

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Table of Contents

Introduction.....	3
1. Listening to the Wrong People.....	5
2. Not Understanding the Tax Consequences of Investments, IRA's, Etc.....	6
3. Choosing the Wrong Pension Option.....	7
4. Misunderstanding What Medicare and Social Security Does and Doesn't Pay For.....	8
5. Getting Caught By the Relatively New 20% Withholding Penalty for Lump Sum Distributions.....	9
6. Incorrect Ownership of Assets.....	10
7. Misunderstanding, Or Not Knowing All the Tax and Other Traps That Surround Your Stock Options Like Sharks Circling Their Prey.....	11
8. Thinking "Risk" Just Involves Losing Principle.....	12
9. Paying For the Wrong Kinds, And Wrong Amounts, Of Insurance.....	13
10. Planning For Your Retirement When You Are Already Retired.....	14
11. Not Doing Consistent, Careful, Ongoing Planning.....	15
About the Author.....	16

Introduction

As you can see, we have taken the liberty to share with you a free report that could literally improve your financial knowledge more than anything else you may have ever read. Why have we done this? The answer is simple. After years of watching folks unknowingly place themselves and their families in compromising financial positions, and seeing first hand the agony of financial headaches trying to be cleaned up when it's nearly too late—we decided we'd try to do something about it. Our thought process was very simple: "If we can show people some simple solutions to the seemingly difficult and unknown financial mistakes that exist, then we could help thousands of people from the comfort of their own home while they read our free information-packed reports." Now is the time to get started.

But first, let me ask you a question:

Do You Know If You Are Going To Make Any Of The 11 Biggest Retirement Mistakes Many Retirees May Make...That Could Cost You A Fortune?

Because if you're not sure, don't worry, you aren't alone!

I don't know if you know this or not, *but according to the Social Security Administration 96% of Americans are not able to fund a retirement that will last for their lifetime...allowing them to live the lifestyle they wish to live.* This is the case for highly compensated people as well as average wage earners.

Pretty scary stuff, when you think about it! Do you know why this is? Well, in our opinion, it's because people simply aren't given the proper knowledge of how to correctly handle their finances when they retire from the company, or when they change jobs. This is true, even though most retirees have accountants, lawyers, stockbrokers, company provided assistance, etc.

It's frightening when you think about it, but your retirement doesn't leave much room for ANY mistakes. Right? I mean, this IS NOT A DRILL! This is your one shot at retirement, and you...

Cannot Afford To Make Mistakes! Period.

See, do you *really know*, (and I want you to be honest with yourself), EXACTLY how to make the RIGHT decisions on issues like:

- With the price of the stocks all over the place, how do you decide if you should sell some or wait? If you want to diversify, which shares should you sell? *What about the tax consequences? How should you handle your company benefits?* Do you know how to decide what to do with your stock, and stock options?
- *Should you take a lump sum distribution? If so, how? What should you do with it? How much in cash, how much elsewhere? Who should be the new trustee or custodian? Will your retirement distribution money be subject to IRS penalties you've never heard of?* Should you receive money now or wait until later?

- Are you protected from traps the IRS has set, *as well as from other retirement financial disasters that can actually cause you to lose much more than the IRS ever could take?*
- What would happen if someone became ill and needed long term nursing care? Who pays? How much? What if you don't have enough money? What does the government do?
- Do you know how to avoid having as much as half of your money being grabbed by the taxman?
- *Are your assets titled in the absolute, most dangerous way?* (Hint- Most retirees make this enormous mistake!) Have you set up a virtually bullet proof asset protection plan?
- What kind of insurance should you now have? *Do you keep what you had, or change it?* Are you going to be over insured and waste money on needless coverage? *Do you know how to figure out which choices will best suit your family's new situation?* And most important...

DO YOU KNOW IF YOU WILL BE LIKELY TO HAVE ENOUGH MONEY, AFTER TAXES, TO LIVE YOUR LIFE THE WAY YOU WISH TO...FOR AS LONG AS YOU LIVE?

Have you analyzed all the options and choices available to you so you can make educated decisions from a fully informed standpoint?

These are just a few of the questions you must have answers to. If you don't... you're likely to be the next victim of the IRS, or to run out of money. If you make even one big mistake... look out! After all, you only retire once, so you cannot afford any mistakes! You must make the right decisions the first time.

These issues demonstrate how retirees are constantly at risk to see their retirement security and peace of mind diminish, or disappear all together. The world is a much tougher and unforgiving place than it was years ago. There are so many things to know. So many rules and regulations. So many pitfalls and traps.

The government wants as much of your retirement nest egg as they can tax their way into! Some retirees will get hit with income taxes they've never even heard of! We've seen some get soaked with tens, or even *hundreds* of thousands of needless and completely avoidable taxes. (Yes, even with a CPA "helping".)

Inflation, recession and the crazy markets are always lurking out there, inevitably waiting to gobble up more of your estate. Then there are the kids, or grandchildren, and their demands on your resources.

There's a lot to deal with.

And, let's face it. Who has the time to sit and read every tax law, investment option, insurance issue, and so forth? And, even if you had the time to read all this stuff, *would you really understand what it means?*

That's why we've prepared this step-by-step, down-to-earth report for you.

We wanted you to have an easy to understand set of facts that cut right through all the baloney, and tell you the biggest mistakes retirees make...and more importantly, ***how to avoid them!***

You Need To Know How To Avoid The Traps That Are Set For You.

So let's get into these important issues, and see if you're making any (or all) of these mistakes!

1. Listening To the Wrong People!

It never ceases to amaze us how many intelligent people take advice about their retirement from people who are totally unqualified to give you this critical advice!

For example, when we see retirement messes, (which we see virtually every day) and we ask where they got this information that has screwed them up so badly, we inevitably hear things like:

"My brother-in-law told me to do that. He used to be an accountant at Westrand Corporation, you know!"

"I asked the guy who's office was next to mine for all these years. I figured he must know what he's doing, since he's friends with the boss."

"I read an article by June Brant Queen in Newstime, that said all retirees should do..."

And so on. Everyone's got an opinion about what **you** should do with your retirement. Unfortunately, just because they are your relative, or are involved in some area of finance unrelated to retirement planning, (like the person at the bank who takes applications for checking accounts and CD's) or write articles for national magazines, ***doesn't mean they know the answers to your retirement problems and questions!***

I cannot stress enough how important it is for you to work with a specialist in retirement planning that knows this area backwards and forwards, inside and out! Someone who knows how to ***integrate and coordinate ALL areas of your complicated financial situation and sort it all out for you!***

After all, how many times are you going to retire? Shouldn't you be sure that the advice you're getting is right for **you**, and not generic, not given in the context of your ENTIRE financial situation...or just plain wrong?

Be sure to find a retirement specialist, just like you would look for a cardiologist if you had a heart problem.

Would you ask your brother-in-law or another executive to analyze your electrocardiogram? If not, why would you ask him to analyze your entire financial situation?

Doesn't that make a lot of sense?

2. Not Understanding The Tax Consequences For Investments, IRA's, Pensions, Etc.

Another true story. Our clients, Perry and Edie, found out too late that the IRS demands you remove certain amounts out of your IRA once you reach age 70 1/2. (This happened BEFORE they became our clients.) Anyway, they were totally devastated when they were hit with all the penalties and interest when they didn't take money out of their IRA the right way. They had received information from the company's human resources department that was close, but not EXACTLY right. And, when they did what they were told, they got hammered. Over \$21,000 in penalties and interest, all because they missed the correct amount required, even though they thought they did it right!

Their story is just one of many problems that retirees run into because of a lack of the proper knowledge about qualified retirement plans.

"Uncle Sam" Is A Relative You Should Give As Little As Possible To!

Other tax issues that retirees frequently get messed up on are:

- ✓ How much should you withdraw from retirement plans?
- ✓ When should you withdraw from the plans?
- ✓ Should you let qualified plan money sit inside the plan, and use other money to live off of?
- ✓ Is living off the income generated by investments one of the worst things you can do?
- ✓ Should you take a withdrawal from your IRA to pay off your car or vacation home, so you'll have lower monthly payments?
- ✓ Should you stop working at a certain time to collect Social Security now?
- ✓ Should you wait to apply for Social Security? Or, should you work part time? And, how does that affect your Social Security payments?
- ✓ What about the taxes on your Social Security income? Are there legal and safe ways to reduce it?
- ✓ What about the taxes on the interest in CD's or other bank accounts? Is there a better way to invest to reduce those taxes? Or, will living off interest, and leaving your capital untouched cause you to lose money because of inflation?

Or,....

I think you get my point.

There are literally dozens and dozens of tax decisions you must make, whether you want to deal with them or not!

Let's think about a simple example here. If you were to save \$400 a month in taxes, simply by knowing the laws, and how to legally reduce your taxes, that's \$4,800 a year you'd have that you didn't have before.

What could you do with an extra \$4,800?

What about saving even more off of your income taxes? We show people how to do it all the time.

How Would You Enjoy A Few Hundred (Or A Few Thousand) Dollars Extra Cash Each Month?

If you want to make sure your income, estate and gift taxes are as low as legally possible, you need to work with a qualified retirement specialist, who can lay out all your options for you...allowing you to make an informed decision, as opposed to an emotional decision!

Or, worse, not even *knowing* you had to make a decision, like Perry and Edie who found out the hard way. Now, you may be thinking, "Well, I know about the required withdrawals and all that. And that's fine". But, what *don't* you know, that someone else does know?

When it comes to tax planning, there is little room for making mistakes. Don't try to know it all yourself, or depend on others who don't study these things every single day for a living

Did you know that each and every year, there are thousands and thousands of tax rule changes? Some of them don't affect you, and others do! In the last few years, some of the most complicated, ridiculous tax laws we've ever seen passed, and they changed over 1,000 Code Sections! In fact, the new law is so complex that you have a great chance of messing up your financial situation by overpaying your taxes without even knowing it! Recent laws have added even more complications and confusion. Think Alternative Minimum Tax!

The tax law is no place for amateur night. You **HAVE** to do proper tax planning **BEFORE** you make even a single financial decision. Why? Because **EVERY FINANCIAL DECISION HAS A GOOD CHANCE OF BEING AFFECTED BY NEW COMPLEX TAX LAWS!!**

So don't play tax roulette, and hope your numbers hit. Make sure you are as sensible about your tax planning as you are about your health!

3. Choosing the Wrong Pension Option

Let me illustrate this mistake with a real life example from a client of ours who was an executive at a company.

The client Louis, had retired a few years ago, and his wife, Janet, had not worked outside the home, and had no pension of her own. When Louis left the company, he was given a range of choices of how to handle his pension pay out if he were to die before Janet.

The choices were quite confusing, and they both decided to take the higher payout now, counting on the life insurance Louis had to cover Janet if he died. (With the help of Janet's sister's husband's brother, who used to be an accountant, of course.)

Anyway, Louis died just one year after retirement in a tragic accident. Janet was left with no pension income, but did Janet get Louis' life insurance proceeds?

She Had To Go To Work, Because She Outlived Her Retirement Money.

In a matter of only four years, Janet had to get a job because the amount of insurance money was way too low for her needs. See, what seemed like a fortune to them, isn't really a fortune in dollars and expenses.

What did they do wrong?

They made a critical decision like this from the seat of their pants, without having someone prepare a detailed financial projection of which option would best meet their needs, *before making the irrevocable election!*

If Louis and Janet had done this, she would be receiving a much higher income, and have the insurance proceeds to boot!

Now, does this mean that all retirees should take the lower pay outs and have the survivor get some sort of a pay out? No, not at all. There is no such thing as any strategy that applies to some or all retirees!

Your situation, is your situation. It is as unique as your fingerprints.

And just like no two fingerprints are alike, no two retirements are alike.

Please promise us you'll not take "canned" advice, particularly when it comes to monumental decisions like choosing a retirement pay out!

4. Misunderstanding What Medicare and Social Security Does and Doesn't Pay For

We see it all the time.

One spouse telling us how shocked they were that the \$4,000 a month nursing home expense for their very ill spouse, isn't covered by Medicare or Social Security.

"But I thought Medicare covered medical expenses!" they exclaim.

The Government Cannot Always Take Care Of You!

Yes, Medicare does cover medical expenses. But, it only covers certain ones, and only after you have paid a deductible!

Many, many medical expenses aren't covered by Medicare, and are usually picked up by a Medicare Supplement policy, or out of your pocket.

But, those supplements still don't cover extended nursing home care. Not a penny. Zilch. Nada. Zero.

Here again, we have an un-planned for situation that can literally wipe out a family's retirement nest egg, that nine out of ten retirees don't have any clue about.

Warning! (By the way, did you know that in order to qualify for state support from Medicaid, you literally have to spend your net worth almost down to zero first? You have to clean out all of your estate, assets, investments, and so forth until you are worth around \$2,000! It's only when you're nearly flat broke that Medicaid kicks in to help you! This is not a solution that we recommend you implement!)

Don't make the mistake of thinking that Medicare or Social Security is going to take care of you. They simply can't.

Sure, they cover many things, but there are still huge gaps that if you don't plan for yourself ahead of time, you'll never have them taken care of.

You must know what the government does help you with, and what they don't help you with!

And, you must have a plan to address the almost unknown areas that could cause your family some real problems. Don't wait until you've been completely wiped out before you figure them out.

5. Getting Caught By the Relatively New 20% Withholding Penalty for Lump Sum Distributions

Are you aware of the tax law that has caught thousands of unwary retirees in its ugly web?

If you are retiring, or transferring a lump sum distribution from a company plan at a later time, and you don't follow the paperwork rules **exactly right**, you could end up having 20% of your money withheld from your distribution.

And, to make matters even worse, *you can end up paying taxes and penalties if you can't make up this 20% difference out of your own pocket!*

A Tax Trap to Look Out For...

For example, if you were getting a \$200,000 distribution, and you had it go to an IRA, but didn't fill out the paperwork correctly, you could end up having \$40,000 withheld from your transfer!

And, if you didn't have the \$40 grand lying around to put into the IRA to make up for the withholding, you will be taxed on that \$40,000, even though you didn't get the money. (Which could cost you anywhere from \$6,000 to as much as \$16,000 in taxes depending on your bracket.)

No, we are not making this up. This disaster was passed by Congress to nail unsuspecting retirees with lump sum distributions. Why? Well...my best guess would be because the government is looking for any way possible to get large chunks of tax money, that's why.

But wait. There's more. If you are under 59 1/2 years old, and this happens to you, you get to pay an extra 10% penalty *on top* of all the extra taxes. Yes, this is just one tax trap that is waiting to get a lot of retirees where it hurts the most, when they can afford it the least.

How do you avoid this?

Make sure that you get expert help in filling out the paperwork for making your choices of how to receive your lump sum. We cannot tell you how many times we've worked with retirees who thought they had it all figured out right, who did it on their own, or even with "help", and ended up really screwing up big time.

6. Incorrect Ownership of Assets

One of the biggest mistakes we see is retirees who own their assets in ways that subject them to all kinds of unnecessary risks.

For example, the most common way that retirees own their home, investments, bank accounts, etc., is in joint tenancy with rights of survivorship.

While this is a simple way to own assets, in many cases, *it could be a huge mistake!!!*

Why? Well, some of the reasons are:

- ✓ You could pay way more in estate taxes than necessary. (We have a local executive who came in to see us after his parents died, and wanted to know if we could help him save the 45% of his parent's estate being confiscated by the IRS, which of course was hopeless, since it was all after the fact.)
- ✓ If one of you has a liability problem (a car accident, for example) both of you could lose everything.
- ✓ If your marriage goes down the tubes, they can clean out the accounts.
- ✓ If your kids are on the accounts, if they go bankrupt or whatever, YOU could lose YOUR money.
- ✓ Many retirees put their kids on some of their accounts, which later ends up costing gift taxes, and can screw up your family's finances if someone goes into a nursing home.

Joint tenancy is, in many cases, a financial disaster waiting to happen. (Now, we are **not** giving you any legal advice, just pointing out some potential problems.)

Some of our clients have Living Trusts they set up before coming in to see us, and think they've protected their estate. Not necessarily true. A Living Trust may help protect assets, but in many cases it does nothing to protect your assets from liability or other problems. In fact, most of the time, they don't even protect your assets from income or estate taxes at your death.

See, many attorneys just listen to your situation and set up your wills, trusts, etc., without analyzing and coordinating all the issues you should consider and just set you up in a simple, but sometimes dangerous way. (For example, would you be surprised to learn that over 50% of our clients find out that the Living trust doesn't cover a large percentage of their assets because things haven't been titled properly...even though the client is "working" with an attorney?) You have to take a look at the way you own your assets in the context of your whole financial situation, so you don't risk losing everything you've worked for because you've placed your assets in jeopardy.

Asset ownership is a serious yet often overlooked area that can turn into a gigantic mistake.

7. Misunderstanding, Or Not Knowing All the Tax and Other Traps That Surround Your Stock Options Like Sharks Circling Their Prey

While this situation doesn't apply to everyone, if you have either Non-Qualified Options (NQO's) or Incentive Stock Options (ISO's), and you make any mistakes in the decisions that need to be made in dealing with them...you could kill yourself financially, as surely as a bullet would to your heart.

Listen. If you do not understand all the subtleties, fine points and traps involved with managing a portfolio of NQO's or ISO's, you can cost yourself a fortune. For example...

We recently met with a client who, before coming into our office, just paid a little over \$1,100,000 in additional and needless taxes... because she did not set up a stock option plan that was integrated and coordinated with her overall financial situation...

See, she had never done a plan to determine how to handle all the decisions that go with stock options like, *"Should I exercise some or all or none? If I do exercise, which ones should I do in which order?"* Or, *"Should I wait until the stock hits a certain point?"* Or, *"How will exercising affect my taxes and net worth and retirement plans?"* And so on.

For example, did you ever hear of, know about, or set up a plan to protect yourself against a little known, but potentially large tax called the "**Alternative Minimum Tax (AMT)**? If you're like many of the folks we see, probably not. Did you know that if you exercise and/or sell shares acquired through exercising stock options, and certain conditions exist in your financial situation (most many have never heard about)...*that you could end up paying the not-so-coveted AMT*, which is a tax that you pay only if it ends up being HIGHER than your regular tax.

You can only imagine the look of horror on uninformed retirees faces when they find out that what they thought was a low, or no tax decision actually cost them tens or hundreds (or millions) of dollars in AMT taxes they never heard of, that no one warned them about, or taught them how to coordinate their financial situation so this would never happen.

See, you only pay the AMT if you have set up your finances in certain ways that allow this to occur. And, we can't give you any rules of thumb about it, because the only way to know if this could happen, and more importantly, to PREVENT it from happening...is to literally crunch all the numbers

for YOUR specific entire financial situation, and see what the numbers tells us. There is NO WAY to estimate or ballpark it. It HAS to be done in the context of your whole situation. It's that complicated.

It's seems so unfair. But, as we said, these types of traps are simply unknown or not communicated by the majority of financial advisors.

Please make sure that these sort of unknown penalty taxes don't apply to you.

If you're not sure, then you have no choice but to find out what the deal is *BEFORE* making any decisions or taking any actions.

8. Thinking "Risk" Just Involves Losing Principle

Here is a big mistake we deal with almost every day.

In fact, a client that's going to be retiring, said, *"We don't want to take any 'risk' with our retirement funds and stock! We want them to be totally safe and free of 'risk'!"*

(Have you ever thought about that yourself?)

There's More Risk in "Riskless" Investments Than You May Think

Let's discuss what the definition of "risk" is, in the first place? If you look it up in the dictionary, you'll see that it is defined as "A chance of encountering a loss or harm, a hazard or danger".

Now, you'll notice it *doesn't* say. "loss of principle". It just is defined as "loss". This is a major distinction we need to make here. Most retirees think "risk" means that you put your investments somewhere, and the \$100,000 you started with is now worth far less than \$100,000.

And yes, this is one type of risk...and a real one at that!

But it is only **one** type of risk. There are others that are just as scary and that can hurt you just as badly as losing principle.

See, the risk we're talking about here is the risk of losing **purchasing power!** This risk is so profound, yet almost totally ignored by most retirees, that is, until it's too late!

Let me tell you a story about a woman, Liz.

Liz was a very frugal woman. When she retired at age 65 in 1956, she had a Social Security income of \$400 a month, plus a pension from her late husband, which paid her \$205 a month. And, Liz had \$12,000 in the bank.

Now, in 1956, this total of \$605 a month income, plus \$12,000 in savings was BIG MONEY.

Liz's mortgage payment was \$81 a month. And with her car payment of \$45 a month, and her other necessities, Liz was living on EASY STREET!

Let's move ahead to 1966. Now, Liz had sold her home, and pocketed \$65,000 from the sale, which was all shielded from income tax because of the special once in a lifetime capital gains tax exclusion. (She sold the home because it was too much for her to keep up, at age 75.)

She had that money, plus most of the \$12,000 she started retirement with. But her expenses had increased, especially her rent. She was now paying \$150 a month in rent, and most of her other expenses had gone up as well due to inflation.

She Ended Up Having To Depend On Her Grandchildren To Take Care Of Her For The Rest Of Her Life.

Over the next several years, she went through a lot of her nest egg, by helping out her kids and grandkids, paying for down payments, college expenses, and so on.

Now, it's 1982, and Liz is broke. Her rent is \$657 a month. Her medical expenses that are not covered by Medicare and insurance are over \$200 a month. Her food, clothing, etc. is way up, and she has long since stopped helping the younger folks, because her savings are gone.

If she didn't have so many grandchildren that she had helped, *now pitching in to help her*, she would have ended up on welfare.

Liz didn't understand how powerful a risk the loss of purchasing power provides. Believe me; this kind of story can break your heart. The only way to assure you won't run out of money is to have a plan that both meets your income needs, and provides the opportunity to keep up with inflation.

Now, no one is suggesting you not keep some money in CD's or other insured programs, because that would be foolish.

But, on the same token, having too much in these types of investments can assure that you have a high risk of running out of money. No one wants to outlive their money. Misunderstanding the risk of the loss of purchasing power is a mistake you do not want to make.

9. Paying For the Wrong Kinds, And Wrong Amounts, Of Insurance

This area is so misunderstood for most retirees, that you wouldn't believe it.

For some reason, when people are retired, many of them hang on to old insurance coverage of all types, just because they've had them for a long time, and are resistant to change. I'm not sure why, but it seems to be the case more often than not.

You see, when you are in retirement, many have little extra room in their budget to waste money on needless coverage, or to be shortchanging yourself on coverage you do need!

Many of our retired clients find they can get more coverage in the areas they *do* need, and eliminate or reduce coverage on stuff they *don't* need, **and save hundreds or thousands of dollars in the process!**

We recently saw a couple in their late 60's, who were paying over \$2,100 a year for coverages they didn't need, and had no insurance at all on things that they really should have in place.

By repositioning their insurance portfolio, we showed them what to get and what to get rid of.

The net bottom line is that they have an excellent group of coverage for just about anything that could go wrong, and are saving \$123 a month that they are spending to have fun! No one wants you to be insurance poor, but we also don't want you wasting money on things you truly don't need, either.

The only answer is to have someone objectively review your insurance, and find out what's wrong and what's right. If there was one area that is more frequent by retirees than overpaying taxes, overpaying for insurance is definitely it.

Most people we see have truly bad auto, homeowner, condo, health, long term care, and life policies. All the coverages are bought with all the wrong information, from people who are motivated by all the wrong reasons. I would have to guess that even without knowing you or ever talking to you that you have more than one type of insurance that is anywhere from kind of bad...all the way to really bad!

This financial area must be reviewed & coordinated, OBJECTIVELY, with all of your finances.

10. Planning For Your Retirement When You Are Already Retired

This mistake is one that we see over and over again.

People getting "laid off" from a job they've had for years. Or taking advantage of the "early retirement" program offered so they can shrink their payroll. Or, people taking normal retirement at age 65. Or whatever reason.

We have people coming in here, constantly asking the same question: *"Will we have enough money to make it all the way with the same lifestyle?"*

This is a big mistake. They have already made all their decisions about options. They have already taken their retirement plans and either had them distributed or receiving monthly payouts.

They have made all their choices, and want us to tell them they're going to be OK.

I've got some sad news.

Many of these people are not going to be OK, because they let the horse out of the barn, and want us to close the door up with the horse still in the barn.

If I'm making any sense to you, you'll see that waiting until you reach a certain age to plan for that same age usually doesn't work.

Think about Liz. If she had done a better job of planning 40 years ago, she might not have ended up in such financial distress.

We had a client that came to us under these kinds of circumstances, and we had the unpleasant job of telling him and his wife that they would be out of money in less than 10 years. Their response was to fire us, because we brought them the bad news. (They chopped off the head of the messenger!) But they were making the same mistake that Liz made many years ago...only worse.

So, if you're not yet retired, do some detailed planning right NOW. Don't wait until you are retired. Now, if you're already retired, it's never too late to start or update your planning. **Which brings us to the most important mistake of all to avoid:**

11. Not Doing Consistent, Careful, Ongoing Planning

Yes, planning is the single, most effective technique to have a safe and secure retirement. It worked during Teddy Roosevelt's days, it worked during Vietnam, and it works now. See, the reason most of us aren't going to win the retirement game, is that we don't follow this crucial sequence, when it comes to managing our finances:

- 1) Figure out where you are today.
- 2) Figure out where you want to be.
- 3) Get a true understanding of the options you have available to you. (Not from biased sources.)
- 4) Develop a plan that will provide the right "course" to follow.
- 5) Make the changes necessary to get the plan going.
- 6) Watch your progress, and make the proper adjustments to keep the plan "on course".

Makes a lot of sense, doesn't it? Kind of the same process you go through every day when planning a trip to the mall, or taking the Grandkids to practice, or going on a visit or vacation, etc. Or like you do at a job before making decisions.

Could you imagine how you could get through your daily life, or keep the business alive without following this sequence of events?

Could you imagine how messed up you'd be if you didn't know where you lived, what time your meetings were, didn't know which roads led to the recreation center, didn't know where the meeting was going to be held, and finally, didn't know which room the meeting was in?

I know that sounds silly, because in our day to day activities, we always know all those things.

But, can you really say the same thing about your money? Do you truly know where you are today? Are you certain you have specific goals of where you want to be financially? Can you say that you know all the choices available to you? Have you set up a plan to get where you want to be?

Or, like most of us, are you "winging it" as you go along???

In all the years we've been helping people like you win the game of money, and when studying the characteristics of families who are truly financially independent, we find one common theme.

Not their age, nor occupation, nor sex, nor income, nor any of those things.

No. The one common attribute is that *they make a constant effort to plan for their future.*

That's it. It may not sound very exotic or romantic. But it's simple, and it works. You know, usually, the most effective things in life, are the most simple and basic

Make sense? I hope so. Because this topic is very important to us, and to you. It's important to us, because we help people plan for a living. It's important to you, because planning may be the best weapon you'll have to make sure you live the way you want.

So where do you go from here?

Well, we have two ways of introducing planning into people's lives. Both are easy, and both require no pressure or any "sales traps". Another way to look at this, is that a doctor cannot help a patient until he or she does a diagnosis to see what is wrong. And then prescribe treatments based on that diagnosis. So the patient can have a "map" or a plan on how to get well.

And, just like that doctor, the first step towards getting well financially, we need to perform a diagnosis to see what "ails you!" **If you've read this far, you're likely serious about your finances and would like to ensure your retirement is free of financial worry.**

You can discover the savings that lie hidden in your personal finances. If you qualify, I GUARANTEE that I can help you save money...

...let me explain:

Just as all of my clients value their time, I do as well. For this very reason, my practice is very selective as to whom we allow to become clients. This is why we do not offer free consultations to anyone and everyone in Indiana. We never call people at dinner time to sell financial products and never beg our existing clients to give us the names of their friends, relatives, etc. (if any of this sounds familiar in respect to your current advisors, you may want to think about why they do this). In the year 2005 I decided that I could only work with \$50,000 more clients. While most people have never thought about how many clients their advisor works with, this is crucially important if you would like to establish an important relationship and get outstanding service from them.

If you meet the following criteria, I would be happy to spend 75 minutes with you to identify how much money may be 'slipping through the cracks' in the form of income taxes, investment fees, lack of investment return, and unreasonably high insurance premiums:

- 1. You absolutely must be either currently retired, or preparing for retirement in the next 5 years.** This is my specialty, and if you fit this demographic and your advisor doesn't work

exclusively with people like yourself, then you should definitely take advantage of this opportunity.

2. **You must be nice.** Sounds silly to some, but I pride myself on being a good, caring person; and will only work with people who feel the same way.
3. **You are willing to come to my office in Lake Forest.** This isn't because gas prices are high, but because I've already made the commitment to serve my existing clients, and no one can serve their clients well if they spend 20+ hours driving all over town each week. (Food for thought if you work with an advisor who does).
4. **You must meet my minimum for investment assets.** This is the cumulative amount of: banking accounts, retirement accounts, brokerage accounts, and annuity accounts. The current minimum is \$50,000.

If you meet the criteria listed above, I will, at absolutely no cost or obligation reserve 75 minutes of my time to evaluate your financial situation and identify a bare minimum of \$3,000 in savings on taxes, investment fees, insurance premiums and other financial expenses.

I am so confident that there are financial moves available to you that could so greatly improve your financial positioning, we make the following guarantee:

Request a FREE financial evaluation that is specifically designed to identify at least \$3,000 in saving on taxes, investment fees, insurance premiums and other financial expenses. If it doesn't identify \$3,000 in savings, you owe us nothing more than a wave goodbye!

We cannot think of anything more fair and worthwhile. Can you?

There's surely no catch—

No gimmicks or tricks—

And absolutely no cost or obligation to do anything else.

Here's how it works:

Call our office at 651-321-2444 and ask for Alan. Simply reference the report you've received and Sara will schedule your free evaluation. Alan will schedule a free 75-minute meeting and rush to you a kit that explains some of the topics that we can cover to personalize your evaluation, along with a questionnaire. You will need to bring the questionnaire to the meeting as complete as possible (this should take you around 25 minutes) if you want your evaluation to be accurate. When you bring your completed questionnaire into our office, we'll review it with you to identify your savings.

You will save thousands or you owe us nothing.

If you're wondering what you owe us if we are able to identify \$3,000 or more in savings. Quite simply, all we ask is you **consider** doing business with us. Keep in mind, **there's no obligation** to do anything.

So here's what to do:

1. **Pick up your phone and call 651-321-2444.**
2. **Schedule your appointment date and time.**
3. **When you receive the Free Evaluation Kit, briefly complete the short questionnaire (this should take no longer than 25 minutes).**

4. When the questionnaire is complete, we'll review it with you at our office and **identify your savings.**
5. You review the savings that we identify and you decide what direction to go. There is no sales presentation and absolutely no obligation to do anything, period. It's entirely your decision.

Now, let us assure you this is a free review designed to identify savings, NOT A DISGUISED SALES PITCH.

You will NOT get a sales presentation. You will not be asked to spend any money—in fact; we insist that you leave your checkbooks at home. **You have everything to gain and nothing to lose.** What could be more fair?

It's been a pleasure, please do not procrastinate, and call today.

With Thanks,

Alan Schmidt

P.S. If you're still skeptical, and want to know more about Retirement Resources, just visit our website at www.thediamondgroup.co You can learn as much as you'd like about us, then call when you're comfortable.