

THERE'S A STRUGGLE FOR YOUR FUTURE

There is a struggle underway, one that is happening in the financial services industry, but that plays itself out in your financial future.

Advisors across the country look to understand the goals of their clients, and then build financial plans that move toward those goals. It is well-intended, it is well-executed, and it is woefully incomplete.

On the surface, the logic is undeniable; ask for goals and build a plan to achieve them. The challenge is that the process benignly bypasses a critical component, arguably the fundamental component, of planning. It fails to address the question, "How do you want things to be one day?"

Goals are wonderful things, but in the absence of a meaningful context, they are empty. The industry, the media and our peers have taught us "goals." They have us retiring at 65, playing golf, walking hand-in-hand on beaches, and sharing drinks on a sailboat. But here's the question: are those your goals? If they aren't or if you're not sure, what is the price tag of *achieving* them, let alone missing them?

A Different Starting Point

Financial Planning needs a different starting point. Beginning with goals is like starting in the middle of a book or movie; you lose the context, purpose and intent. You might understand all of the words, but you won't understand the characters and the narrative is lost.

Financial Planning needs to start at the beginning, and the beginning requires a bit of *qualitative* discovery (what matters to you and why), before digging into the *quantitative* elements of how to grow, protect and distribute financial resources and assets. The starting point needs to be your Vision for the future.

"Vision" is a loaded word and people often equate it to a boring or semi-meaningless document on a boardroom wall, or the rants of someone not quite grounded in reality. The truth is that Vision is simply how you want things to be one day; the desired future state. Planning that ignores this is myopic and narrow sighted.

By starting with your Vision for the future, it then needs to be shored up by understanding your Values. Essentially, what are the rules of the game for you? How should people behave? What are your priorities? What is acceptable, and what is not? These values create solid footing for plans and is one of the reason we work with our clients to help them articulate their values.

Vision sets the stage for the ultimate state of the future, and Values help everyone recognize key requirements along the way. When both are clearly articulated, then (and only then) can real goals, goals that are meaningful and that can move you toward your desired future state, can be identified, and prioritized. Goals are steps toward your Vision.

Now here's the catch: few of us have our Vision for the future, and our Values clearly articulated. We understand it and respect it. That's why we bring a clear process to help you discover both.

There is no question that we are strong quantitative planners. But by adding the *qualitative* components, you can have the clarity, confidence, and partner to move toward a future of your design.