



## MAKING CENTS

### FINANCIAL PLAN MELTS MONEY AND MEANING

-John P. Napolitano, CFP®, CPA, PFS, MST



**C**reating a financial plan may seem like an easy enough task. But to draw a roadmap that encompasses all your dreams and expectations, you need to start with non-financial issues.

A life-centered financial plan is one that places your goals, aspirations, dreams and values at the center of the plan. To bring those visions into focus, an adviser will want to take the time to understand what is important to you. Sure, they will gather all relevant financial information, but that is not the focus in a financial life plan until the personal goals and visions are clear to both the planner and the client. Living meaningfully is your core objective of a life plan; a solid financial plan should be structured to support that goal.

In my practice, "financial life planning" is becoming more significant all the time. This stems from a deeper understanding of what motivates people and what concerns them most about financial issues.

Not to sound all "Woodstocky," but the baby boomer generation (and that includes me) views money and all that surrounds it differently than their parents. Retirement

no longer conjures up an image of sitting quietly, waiting for nature to take its course. Today's retirees have a vision of continuing their active lifestyle.

For some, this may include never retiring completely, and keeping a hand in the business or some other labor of love that may or may not come with a paycheck. People

expect to live well past the age of 65 and want those years to have meaning and encompass everything they have worked for.

By merging meaning with money, life planning allows individuals

and couples to review value and purpose in their lives - to assess whether and in what ways their current lifestyle is rich and fulfilling. Incorporating meaning, passion and purpose into a financial design is more significant than the amount of money you have amassed for your future.

In the life planning relationship, a financial adviser properly trained in life planning can help devise a strategic financial plan, but can also help you discover and give voice and a roadmap to those goals and dreams that define your present and your future.