

Summer, 2008

Helping People WHO CARE Assure That Your PLANS WORK:

In the first half of 2008 we had some of the most positive feedback ever from you, and for that our whole team says “wow” and a hearty “thanks!” More than two-thirds of our LifeSpan clients attended one of the five **2008 Annual Family Reunion™** (AFR) meetings in March and April, and if you did, we trust that the following represented your experience:

- ⇒ *“Great program. We are blessed to have you all as our advisors and friends. God Bless you all.”*
- ⇒ *“Another excellent reunion! Appreciated being able to follow and re-educate myself of the Operator’s Manual. Curt’s comments, handouts and visuals are always “translated” into layman’s language so that each of us can embrace his educational attempts. It works! Thank you for continuing to involve each of us in our personal estate planning. I appreciate walking this important journey with you. It offers me a great peace of mind!”*
- ⇒ *“Very interesting and informative. Worth the time. Nice review and update.”*
- ⇒ *“I felt this was a good overview, refresher, “what I need to know” version. I do encourage having the whole estate planning team participate in each session. Curt does a great job and learning from the team enhances audience engagement and adds credibility to each team member. Reminders of what we need to complete and send you are also helpful.”*
- ⇒ *“Well presented & nice variety. Visually interesting!”*
- ⇒ *“I especially liked the section where you gave us the estate and gift tax rates. This info is most helpful.”*
- ⇒ *“Felt meeting was moved along very well. Information was concise and positive.”*

We tried to make the 2008 AFR the most practical, understandable and useful AFR yet. It seems that we hit the mark. Our goal is to continue providing you with appropriate assistance so your estate plan will work.

As usual, we rolled out the 2008 education calendar and previewed brand-new programs being offered. We announced a new policy for storing your **Asset Review Reports™** to make it less confusing and more reliable.

Much of our time was spent on the most fundamental estate planning issue of all: “FUNDING”

...properly titling assets to follow your estate plan. Your estate plan won’t work as intended if your assets are titled incorrectly! Unfortunately, this is a growing area of concern for us. Too many clients are not taking full advantage of our **Red Check Review™** service to confirm that new assets are properly titled. (*This means you if your **Asset Review Report™** has any item(s) without a ✓ by it!*)

On the topic of funding, extensive materials—forms and information—were added to **Tab 4** of your **LifeSpan Client Organizer™** and we reviewed each page to make sure you knew how to use them.

We are now one of nearly a hundred law firms around the country with a “formal maintenance and education” element to support clients’ estate plans. As we showed you from a national survey, although we are among the most experienced at this aspect of estate planning, our fees rank near the bottom. With your continued cooperation we can continue to deliver more while charging less than others firms.

Only a short time was spent on the **Wealth Reception Planning™** topic (passing on your legacy of wisdom and values, not just your financial wealth) this year, but we closed with a poem that reminded us of the importance of investing wisely the *time* we have on earth. For some attendees, that was the highlight of the AFR. Here’s a small sampling of the feedback:

- ⇒ *“Reading [the poem] to video was great”*
- ⇒ *“Great poem & reminder!”*
- ⇒ *“Appreciate the [poem] at the end of the meeting.”*
- ⇒ *“This year’s information was presented very well. The ending [poem] was so good, Curt”*
- ⇒ *“The closing poem-very inspirational!”*

(For more ‘legacy specific’ assistance, be sure to attend the **Special Stuff Symposium** in August!)

To those of you who attended the 2008 AFR, thanks for the overwhelming compliments. For those of you who did not attend, we hope to see you next year!

“When you were born, you were crying and everyone around you was smiling. Live your life so at the end, you’re the one who is smiling and everyone around you is crying.”
- Ralph Waldo Emerson

Writing Your ‘Moral Autobiography’

We’ve all heard it sometime or another: “Put your money where your mouth is.” It is a simple concept, but one most people don’t consistently apply. We tend to rumble on in life without being conscious or intentional about our decisions. We say that certain things are ‘important’ or ‘valuable’ to us, but we don’t actually direct our resources—time, money, efforts, abilities—accordingly. We often live haphazardly.

In estate planning, all of our clients have been more conscious and intentional with respect to the financial and legal planning issues. You are more careful to title assets correctly; you’ve thought ahead to implement a plan that will provide for you the way you want (if disabled) and will avoid extra red tape (probate) at death. Many have built in an extraordinary level of legal protection for the assets that will be passed to your heirs, which is a form of added wisdom being transferred with the estate. Some of you have added more ‘wisdom’ by including ‘incentives’ or other guidelines for how the inheritance can or cannot be spent.

I recently heard a very entertaining and thought-provoking presentation by Paul Schervish¹ on the **Moral Biography of Wealth**. While it sounds rather lofty, the topic really boiled down to a simple concept that we have been exploring with our **LifeSpan™** families for several years now. According to Dr. Schervish, there seems to be a rising level of awareness and interest in these matters around the country, not unlike what we are seeing in our own client families.

Dr. Schervish’s simple definition of the **Moral Biography of Wealth** is the intersection of capacity and moral compass. Capacity means your resources, energy and means to do things...your wherewithal. Your moral compass represents your values, purpose and aspirations...in other words, what you believe is ultimately good and righteous and praiseworthy. Some day when others look back on your life, when they ‘read’ (figuratively, of course) your ‘autobiography’ of what you did with what you had, what will it tell them about your moral compass?

This should sound at least somewhat familiar. To those of you who attended the **Annual Family Reunion™** program, you will recall a short discussion of **Wealth Reception Planning™**, which we define as a formal process designed to assure you and your loved ones that your true wealth (both financial and non-financial) is fully realized, efficiently transferred, and effectively received. In

other words, **Wealth Reception Planning™** is about making the transmission of your capacity (primarily thinking here of your financial wealth, including real estate) and your moral compass (your non-financial wealth: wisdom, values and life lessons) *intentional and conscious*.

We pointed out that if you transfer your financial means to your heirs with minimized red tape, you might be doing a very nice thing for them. On the other hand, if you transfer to them your wisdom, values and life lessons you will have given them a most wonderful gift, and probably fulfilled your most important task in life.

However, each is hobbled without the other.

Using Dr. Schervish’s words, if you give your heirs the *capacity* in the form of financial wealth, but have not given them the *moral compass*, they will most likely use the capacity unwisely, perhaps even to do great harm to themselves or others. If you give them a *moral compass* with little or no *capacity* they will have adopted the best values, purpose and aspirations but will have very limited ability to act upon them.

Each needs the other to be most effective.

But the legacy—moral compass, wisdom, values and life lessons—is not something that is going to be effectively transferred upon your death or through your estate plan. To test that statement, ask yourself: “*If I learned I had a terminal illness, with 60 days to live, who would I want to talk to? What would I want to talk about?*” Undoubtedly you would be visiting about matters of much greater importance than the monetary value of your portfolio or farm. That sort of conversation is the stuff that your legacy will be built upon. And those conversations are not contained in your estate plan, are they?

So **Wealth Reception Planning™**—or writing a **Moral Autobiography** you can be proud of—requires focused efforts on both fronts. Our hope and prayer for each family we work with is that you will do your best to plan so as to efficiently and effectively pass on the financial wealth *and simultaneously* be conscious and intentional about using your current capacity (which includes not just your money, of course, but your time, mind, abilities and personal energy) to explain, expand, explore and most of all exemplify the matters of the heart, character, and principles...that you will pass on the non-financial ‘wealth’ that will guide your heirs to do good even when they are also doing well.

1. Professor of Sociology, Boston College, Director of Center on Wealth and Philanthropy
2. Legacy Builder Institute, Sunbridge Strategies

“The money empowers the legacy, and the legacy empowers the money.” Scott Farnsworth²

Bill and Mary taught first grade Sunday school at their church. For several weeks they had studied the Old Testament prophets. Before moving on to Jeremiah, Mary asked the children if they remembered what a prophet is. One girl raised her hand excitedly as she knew the answer. She said "A prophet is when you make more money than you can spend."



Nag...Nag...Nag!

-Sherry French -

A client came into the office the other day, smiling and waving a copy of some financial paperwork in the air and said, "I get another Red Check!" Hooray! That's the kind of attitude we like when it comes to funding. Thank you to that special person for making our day! We hope your attitude will rub off on others...

A lot of you are already fully funded and regularly keep me updated. I appreciate that very much. I need help from some of you. It has been really hard to get information from companies because of the new privacy laws. If I ask you to call or follow up on an asset it is because I cannot go any further. Your help will be greatly appreciated!

My goal is to help each client become fully funded (all assets are titled/beneficiaries are in trust name) and help you stay fully funded. Reasons for your trusts to be fully funded include: 1. to have your plan work 2. to avoid probate 3. to eliminate all possible stress for your family and 4. I'll quit bugging you!

Remember in your **Lifespan Client Organizer™** notebook under **Tab 4** is a chart of **Red Check Review Requirements**. TOGETHER WE CAN get your trusts fully funded and KEEP them that way! As always, if you have any questions, please fill free to give me a call.

Special Stuff Symposium™

One of you suggested on your comment form after the Annual Family Reunion™:

"Legacy workshops—who gets Grandma's yellow pie plate—more ideas as family historian"

We've heard similar requests from others. We are always pleased to be able to respond to such suggestions with, "Great idea! We are putting that into practice right away." And we are!

Those of you who are looking for assistance with any of the following:

- ⇒ how to communicate the story behind family heirlooms, or
- ⇒ how to preserve the family history, or
- ⇒ how to capture and pass on matters of the heart that simply aren't addressed in legal documents,

be sure to make a reservation and attend our **Special Stuff Symposium™** on **August 12**. We have picked up many ideas and shared some of them from time to time with individual clients, and we look forward to sharing them with you!

Headline from the Atlanta Business Chronicle:
SURVEY: MILLIONAIRES MORE PESSIMISTIC ON ECONOMY THAN THE AFFLUENT

Education Update

- Gayla Ball -

Believe it or not summer is here. It was great to see so many of you at the Annual Family Reunions this Spring. Turn out was good and your feedback was great! As usual it was enjoyable to visit with so many of you at the AFR's. Those of you who were unable to attend may still be interested in purchasing a video/dvd from our library. Also, if you did not get your **Lifespan Client Organizer™** updated, contact me and I can explain how we can do that for you.

We received several suggestions from you, our clients, at the AFRs. One of those is to confirm our meetings by e-mail along with our usual method of regular mail. So for those of who that have never given us your e-mail address, or have a new e-mail address, please let me know so I can add that to our system ASAP.

Another reminder, if you are at all interested in making reservations for any of our continuing education meetings please do so as soon as you can check your calendar. Depending on the location of the meeting, we sometimes have to limit the number, so it is best to make those reservations as early as possible.

Also, when I recently mailed letters to all our client helpers, many were returned with undeliverable addresses. So, please keep us up to date with address change information for your helpers.

Remember this fall will be the Client Update Program (CUPs) for all of you "Even Year" clients. This is when we update your living trust documents.

For easy reference place this newsletter under **Tab 9** in your **Lifespan Client Organizer™**. If I can ever be of assistance, please do not hesitate to call or e-mail

Be Safe and HAVE A GREAT SUMMER!!!

LEGAL UPDATE:

❖ *No IRA Distributions to Charity*

During 2006 and 2007, some readers took advantage of a special provision of a 2005 law that allowed you to make your charitable contributions by direct transfer from your IRA accounts. This effectively allowed you to keep that much of the IRA “required minimum distributions” from showing up as taxable income to you. Unfortunately, that opportunity has not been renewed by Congress for 2008. Sorry!

❖ *Plunging Interest Rates: New Opportunity with In-Family Loans and Wealth Transfer*

Some of our clients are involved in in-family loan arrangements. In some of these situations, the lowest available legal interest rate is being charged, because doing so provides maximum benefit in the transfer of financial wealth from one generation to the next, from parents to trusts, and so forth.

Federally-mandated interest rates have dipped again to incredible lows, and we would encourage you to look at any and all such loan arrangements, and consider re-negotiating the loans with lower interest rates. For example, a loan for up to 9 years, with annual payments, can be made with interest of under 2.9% per year. (This mandated interest rate changes each month.)

❖ *Estate Tax Repeal? Not Likely...*

In March the Senate voted 99-1 to ‘permanently’ set the estate tax exemption at \$3.5 million. It isn’t law yet, but looks likely. Illinois still taxes every dollar over \$2 million. Schedule a **Personal Counselling Review™** to discuss the planning opportunities available. There are many ways to avoid taxes even on larger estates!

Shall We Keep It Simple?

If only estate planning could be ‘simple’! John Adams was critiquing a book that claimed the French Revolution proved that a ‘simple’ government is the best type of government. In one of his many comments in the margins of that book, Adams wrote:

*“The clock with its wheels removed is simple.
But it will not tell the time of day.”*

Appropriate Assistance

Our estate planning process is designed to consistently deliver personalized results to each client family. Note that *our process* applies to nearly all of our clients, but that each client family has *unique, personal goals*. The goals are not the process, and the process is not the goals.

We designed our plan development process to include ample time with each new client (you) to educate you on what you can accomplish and explore your goals with you in light of those possibilities, so that a truly *one-of-a-kind plan* could be created and implemented for *each family*.

Our annual **LifeSpan™ Legal Services** process delivers a wide range of what we consider ‘routine’ assistance for the lowest possible cost. Our programs are designed to provide you with the information and attention that *our experience tells us most people need* in order to stay tuned in to their plan, to help assure that (1) you will correctly use what you have, (2) you and your family can get prepared for the tasks of settlement, and (3) you will easily and reliably adapt it to changing laws and circumstances. Word processing updates, client education on trends and laws, funding assistance and family education are all ‘routine’ services and *we want you to take advantage of them!* If you don’t, the settlement of your estate will probably not go as well as we all would expect.

We would encourage every client to review the **Continuous Commitment Compact™** in **Tab 2** of your **Client Organizer** for a refresher on just how much we do to help you in the routine maintenance of your plan.

What about the not-so-routine situations? For the more unusual, personal situations requiring legal advice, our **Personal Counseling Review™** is always available.

Simply put: we have tried to design an efficient process that gives you as much law firm assistance as is humanly possible, *while* keeping the fee low enough that you can afford to pay it from year to year. If we charged more (and provided more one-on-one time) many of you would drop out...and be left in the traditional no-assistance-until-you-call-and-get-it-all-one-on-one, paying full hourly rates for every moment.

Which brings me to the **Annual Family Reunion™**. The **AFR** is a *critical meeting* that keeps us together and delivers several aspects of the annual services. Much guidance is provided. We point out areas where others have experienced difficulties so you

[Appropriate Assistance, continued from page 4]

can avoid them. This year, we urged everyone to attend and gave you five dates in three locations to choose from...but almost 1/3rd of you skipped it. (There were a few of you who simply could not attend for health or comparable reasons, and we understand.) Bottom line is...

If you missed the 2008 AFR, you missed a gold mine of information!

We video-recorded the last AFR meeting. We are going to make copies of that program available on DVD, but unlike our usual A-V library, the AFR (2008 and future years) is available for purchase as follows:

- ⇒ If you attended the AFR and want a copy of the meeting for review, for your family, etc., we will charge only our normal variable cost of \$20 including shipping (\$15 if you pick it up at our office).
- ⇒ If you did not attend, we think you should have and review this information. But, to be fair to those who did make the effort and attended in person, the non-attenders' charge is \$55 (\$50 if you pick it up). We will also include copies of all printed materials.
- ⇒ If you did not attend but have already made arrangements to get a copy of the DVD, or believe that you had an exceptional reason for not attending, please let us know...we will adjust your fee accordingly.

LifeSpan Meeting Reminders

Remember these tips when you are coming to a LifeSpan™ program:

- ⇒ If Curt is teaching, the room will probably be cool. Bring a sweater if you're cold-natured!
- ⇒ We will serve light snacks only...unless we specifically tell you that there will be a meal.
- ⇒ Bring your **LifeSpan Client Organizer™** to all events; also bring your **Red Books** to the **CUP**.
- ⇒ Helpers with a **Helper Handbook™** should bring it to any meeting they attend.
- ⇒ Reservations are required. Be sure to let us know if you are coming!
- ⇒ If you don't know the meeting location, *come to our office at 919 West Main*; we post a sign on the door.

How Old Are You, Grandpa?

One evening a grandson was talking to his grandfather about current events. The grandson asked his grandfather what he thought about the shootings at schools, the computer age, and just things in general. The Grandfather replied,

"Well, let me think a minute, I was born before: Television, penicillin, polio shots, frozen foods, Xerox, contact lenses, Frisbees and the pill.

"There were no credit cards or laser beams or ball-point pens. Man had not invented pantyhose, air conditioners, dishwashers, or clothes dryers and the clothes were hung out to dry in the fresh air. Man hadn't yet walked on the moon. Your Grandmother and I got married first, and then lived together.

"Every family had a father and a mother. Until I was 25, I called every man older than me, 'Sir'. And after I turned 25, I still called policemen and every man with a title, 'Sir.'

"We were before gay-rights, computer-dating, dual careers, daycare centers, and group therapy. Our lives were governed by the Ten Commandments, good judgment, and common sense. We were taught to know the difference between right and wrong and to stand up and take responsibility for our actions. Serving your country was a privilege; living in this country was a bigger privilege. We thought fast food was what people ate during Lent.

"Having a meaningful relationship meant getting along with your cousins. Draft dodgers were people who closed their front doors when the evening breeze started. Time-sharing meant time the family spent together in the evenings and weekends, not purchasing condominiums.

"We never heard of FM radios, tape decks, CDs, electric typewriters, yogurt, or guys wearing earrings. We listened to the Big Bands, Jack Benny, and the President's speeches on our radios.

"And I don't ever remember any kid blowing his brains out listening to Tommy Dorsey. If you saw anything with 'Made in Japan' on it, it was junk. The term 'making out' referred to how you did on your school exam.

"Pizza Hut, McDonald's, and instant coffee were unheard of. We had 5 & 10-cent stores where you could actually buy things for 5 and 10 cents.

"Ice-cream cones, phone calls, rides on a streetcar, and a Pepsi were all a nickel. And if you didn't want to splurge, you could spend your nickel on enough stamps to mail 1 letter and 2 postcards.

"You could buy a new Chevy Coupe for \$600, but who could afford one? Too bad, because gas was 11 cents a gallon.

"In my day 'grass' was mowed, 'coke' was a cold drink, 'pot' was something your mother cooked in and 'rock music' was your grandmother's lullaby. 'Aids' were helpers in the Principal's office, 'chip' meant a piece of wood,



'hardware' was found in a hardware store and 'software' wasn't even a word.

"We were the last generation to actually believe that a lady needed a husband to have a baby. No wonder people call us "old and confused" and say there is a generation gap...so Sonny, how old do you think I am!"

Turns out Grandpa would have to be about 60 years old. Time flies. Make the most of every day.

"The urge to save humanity is almost always a false-face for the urge to rule it." H. L. Mencken

Remember Audio Visual Library...

We have the following videos available for check-out or purchase:

- ⇒ *Nuts 'N Bolts I*™ (2007)
- ⇒ *Nuts 'N Bolts II*™ (2007)
- ⇒ *Truth About Estate Planning*™ (2007)
- ⇒ *Technical Training Program*™ (2007)

For check-out, we charge \$5 shipping & handling, and with each checkout you get a copy of the handouts. (Helper Handbooks™ are only given out in person at live Nuts' N' Bolts events.)

If you would like to *purchase* the DVD (which we encourage; the fee is nominal and you don't have any expense of returning it) our supplier charges \$20, delivered to you with handouts.

For **AFR** videos, see *Appropriate Assistance* article.

Quotable:

"At some time in the future today's youth, like all generations before them, will yearn for multi-generational family connections. They will want to know their roots, and the stories of those roots. They will feel an aching urgency to belong to something beyond themselves. I don't know at what stage in their lives that will happen but I know for certain it will.

"If we do something today, we create the likelihood that when they go searching for those connections, those roots, those stories, that sense of belonging, they will find them. But I can guarantee with 100% certainty that if we do nothing, they will come up empty. If we don't do something today, it will be impossible for them tomorrow." -Scott Farnsworth

"People work harder and figure out solutions better when their own money is at stake." John Lott

The Last Word

- Sarah Rupe -

Well, SUMMER is here, do you know where your **DocuBank**® card is? If you don't (*after looking for it in the places you think it might be*) call me and I'll help you get a new one. Remember, DocuBank® is a service we provide to our LifeSpan™ clients at no additional cost! Those clients who *have* used it have been grateful to have the convenience!

Keep this in mind regarding your DocuBank® membership: If your hospital/doctor calls to get your health care directives, use your **member number** and **PIN**; if your hospital/doctor goes online to get your health care directives, use your **member number, PIN, and password**. Your member number and PIN are both on the front of your card, however, your password is not on your card! **Your PASSWORD is your zip code** unless you've changed it.

DocuBank® is offering a new service. You send your "babies" off to college and if something happens to them and they are admitted to a hospital, will the staff know how to contact you (their parent-guardian-next-of-kin)? Docubank provides a new service for college students at a discounted rate through our firm! You can provide your child with a 4-yr (minimum) Docubank membership for \$46.00*. This is reduced from the regular rate of \$125.00. Let Sarah know if you would like more information on this service.

Have you checked out our website lately? Did you know that you can now update your **DocuBank**® information from the "Links" page on our website? Did you know that we list the upcoming dates of our **Educational Programs** on our website? Did you know that anyone that wants to learn more about our services now has a one-click link to the list of upcoming **Truth About Estate Planning**™ workshops (INTRODUCTORY WORKSHOPS)? This remains the entry point for anyone who wants to be a client, so if your family or friends show interest, point them to the schedule on our website! Check out all the great features on our website and feel free to call or email me with any questions!

* must be paid through The Estate Planning Center to receive this rate.

"Anyone may so arrange his affairs that his taxes shall be as low as possible; he is not bound to choose that pattern which will best pay the Treasury; there is not even a patriotic duty to increase one's taxes." Judge Learned Hand