

52 Pick-up

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Does that sound familiar? Remember as a kid when you were asked by a friend if you had ever played "52 pick-up"? If you were like me, you said no, and all of a sudden, they would throw the entire deck of cards into the air, and when they all hit the ground, you would hear them laugh and say, "Okay, now you can play 52 pick-up!" A silly kid's game, but as with all experiences in life, we can learn an important lesson.

Most people build their financial house as if it was a house made out of cards. They carefully try to put them together so that they lean on each other for support, but all it takes is a misplaced card to bring the entire structure down. Does that scenario sound all too familiar? Are you playing "52 pick up" with your financial future? Is your entire program an accident just waiting to happen? Maybe it's time to put away the cards and the kid's games and get serious about planning.

Financial planning has become one of those five dollar phrases that scares a lot of people away, because a lot of so-called financial planners have tried to make the whole process very difficult so that you need to pay them to do it for you! By the way, with inflation and their fees, financial planning has become a \$500 phrase! It needn't be so complicated and difficult, and there are some simple things that you can do to put yourself back in control and know what's going on.

Let's start by pulling out your wallet and get out all of your credit cards. Are you shocked at how many you have? Maybe it's time to "cull" the pile. Make a list of the cards and the numbers and the expiration dates. Next, write down the "800 number" to call in case you lose that card. Now you know what cards you have, and I would suggest you do the very same thing with your spouse's wallet. If you have kids running around with those precious pieces of plastic, get those cards listed too.

You just saved yourself a few hundred dollars in fees that a planner would charge you to do this simple task. You also saved yourself thousands of dollars if someone loses a wallet and you don't know how to cancel the cards. If that list looks a little long, maybe you need to trim down and carry a little less plastic. If you decide to eliminate a card, make sure you write to the company and tell them to cancel the card. Just cutting up the card does not eliminate it from your credit record and if you apply for a loan or credit, that will still appear as a potential liability.

You can put your wallet away now. It's now time to check out your banking relationships. It is truly a love-hate relationship. They love to take your money and hate to give it back! Do you have all of your money safe and secure in your favorite bank? Wrong! They want you to feel that is the way it is, but believe me, it's not safe and secure. They charge you big fees and pay you very little interest, and what they do pay you is taxable. Do you like the building that your bank is in? You should. They built it with your money! Part of the Greenfield financial power program is to evaluate your bank and see what they are charging you for the privilege of keeping your money. If you drop me a line with a self-addressed stamped envelope, I'll send you that worksheet. You will be amazed!

Did someone say insurance? Every planner likes to look at your policies and show you how much they can save you so you can pay them a big fee! You can do it yourself. Call your property and casualty agent and ask them to send you a list of all of your policies with the company names and policy numbers, due dates, premium amounts, and a brief description of what the contract is for. Tell them you want this on one page. Once you get it, ask them to review it and make any suggestions they might concerning the coverage. Ask that they send it to you in writing.

Now take that list and call two independent agents and tell them you are sending them a list of your coverage and want them to review it and ask them to comment on the coverage in writing. Once you get their comments, call your original agent and if they suggested changes, ask them why it took a call from you for them to come up with the changes. Remind them that you are paying them not only for the policies but also for their expertise. If you see some major problems pointed out by the other agents, maybe it's time to change agents. Take a good long look at increasing the deductibles on your policies. That can save you a bundle.

I could go on for a few more pages, but this will keep you busy for a while and also give me material for future articles! As with all of my information, you can always drop me a line. I have armed you with the tools to save yourself some big bucks. Now it's up to you. You can do that or go back to that old deck of cards and see what new games you can come up with!

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