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Life Is for the Living, and So Is Life Insurance
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Financial Update

Ideas and Action Steps for Achievers

Tips for Stress-Free Air Travel



You've seen the disturbing viral videos of long lines at crowded airports and angry passengers on planes. Maybe you've even witnessed these scenes yourself. Inclement weather, an airline computer outage, or even just bad luck can disrupt travel plans for anyone at any time. Before your next flight, consider these tips to help reduce stress on your next airport visit.

Travel off-peak

Certain days and/or times are busier than others. As a result, you may want to avoid peak travel times, such as during the holidays or the afternoon/evening. By adjusting your travel schedule by one day or even just a few hours, you might face fewer crowds and decrease your travel time.

Take the road less traveled

Avoid travel hubs with the most air traffic. Instead, try searching nearby, smaller airports to see whether they offer flights to your destination. Smaller airports may offer cheaper flights and often have fewer delays and less traffic to and from the airport. You can also research whether a specific airline or flight route is usually on time or late by checking its on-time performance.

Do your homework

Save time at check-in by doing what you can before you leave for the airport. Most airlines have a streamlined ticketing/boarding process that allows you to select your seats and complete the check-in process at home.

The lighter, the better

Most airlines have restrictions on the number of carry-on or check-in bags passengers can bring. Many also charge extra for heavy bags. As a result, only bring necessities and try to avoid overpacking for your trip in order to stay within your airline's luggage limits.

The early bird gets to relax

Avoid the long lines and traffic by leaving as early as possible on your scheduled day of travel. If you're worried about waiting around the airport for too long, bring your laptop or extra reading material to keep yourself occupied.

Have a backup plan

No matter how much you plan ahead, flight delays and missed connections can happen, so you'll want to be prepared to make adjustments to your travel plan (e.g., renting a car if you miss your connecting flight). Keeping an open mind and being flexible can make it easier to deal with any travel glitches that may arise.

Don't forget the essentials

Keep copies of your travel itinerary, necessary photo identification (e.g., driver's license, passport), medications, and a change of clothing with you in case your luggage is lost or delayed en route to your destination. You'll also want to make sure that you have plenty of snacks and beverages to help tide you over if your flight is delayed. Make sure that your electronic devices (e.g., laptop, phone, e-reader) are fully charged and bring chargers so you can plug them in, if necessary, at the airport. And if you are traveling with kids, be sure to bring along toys/games to keep them occupied.

Stay connected

Want real-time flight information on departures and arrivals? There are numerous mobile apps that can help make air travel more efficient. Check with your airline to see if you can sign up for flight status updates that go directly to your phone.

Prepare for the worst

It's important to remember that even the most well-thought-out travel plans may not proceed without a hitch. The important thing is to stay calm and be prepared for the unexpected travel mishap.



Life Is for the Living, and So Is Life Insurance



The cost and availability of life insurance depend on factors such as age, health, and the type and amount of insurance purchased. As with most financial decisions, there are expenses associated with the purchase of life insurance. Policies commonly have mortality and expense charges. In addition, if a policy is surrendered prematurely, there may be surrender charges and income tax implications.

Life insurance guarantees are based on the claims-paying ability and financial strength of the life insurance company issuing the policy.

Life can be busy. The requirements of work and family often leave little time to step back and think about where you've been and where you're heading. But as your responsibilities grow, so does the need to evaluate what would happen if life for you stopped. September is Life Insurance Awareness Month and a good time to reflect on how life insurance can help those you leave behind — the living.

Your spouse or life partner

A successful marriage is often predicated on sharing and providing for one another, and that includes each other's financial obligations. If you were suddenly no longer in the picture, would there be enough money to pay for your final expenses, cover debt, and buy some time to allow your significant other to adjust to a new way of life? Life insurance can provide funds to cover immediate expenses and income to help support your surviving loved one.

Your children

You've worked hard to provide for your kids, to give them the chance to realize their hopes and dreams. Your children are likely your greatest responsibility — a responsibility that doesn't end with your passing. Whether your children are in diapers or about to enter college, if something happened to you or your spouse, or both of you, would there be enough income to continue to provide financially for your children? Life insurance can help provide the resources for their continued growth and maturation.

Your home

Buying a home may be the largest single expenditure of your life. While being a homeowner is exciting, mortgage payments, often lasting 30 years, along with maintenance, utility costs, homeowners insurance, and real estate taxes can add up to a long-term financial commitment. Adequate life insurance protection can provide funds that could be used to cover these expenses, allowing your family to remain in their home.

Your business

Do you own your own business? Life insurance can fit into your business plan in many ways. It can be part of an employee benefit program, with coverage under a group plan. Life insurance purchased on the lives of certain key employees can protect your company from the loss of talented and valuable workers. And life insurance can be used to fund a buy-sell agreement.

Caring for an aging parent or loved one

Are you caring for an aging parent or loved one? Would the people who depend on you be

able to afford quality health care and a comfortable place to live without your financial support? Life insurance can become extremely important in these situations, helping to provide for these individuals in the event of your death.

Planning for retirement

Preparing for retirement probably means you're saving as much as you can in your 401(k), IRA, or other savings vehicle. If you die before you get to enjoy your retirement, will your retirement plan die for your surviving loved ones as well? Not only will your salary be unavailable to help pay for current living expenses, but your income won't be there to build the nest egg for the retirement of your spouse or life partner. Life insurance can help provide funds that can be used for your spouse's or life partner's retirement.

Your health has changed

If your health declines, how will it affect your life insurance? A common worry is that your insurer could cancel your coverage should your health change. However, changes to your health will not affect your current insurance coverage, provided you continue to pay your premiums on time. In fact, you should take a closer look at your life insurance policy to find out if it offers any accelerated (living) benefits that you can access in the event of a serious or long-term illness.

Leaving a legacy

Life insurance can be used to increase the size of an estate for your heirs. The death benefit could provide your beneficiaries with a larger legacy than might otherwise be possible. The cost of life insurance may be significantly less than the proceeds of the policy paid to your beneficiaries when you die.

Charitable giving

Donating a life insurance policy to a charity may enable you to make a larger gift than you otherwise could afford. Further, the government encourages charitable giving by providing tax advantages for certain charitable donations (the charity must be a qualified charity). This means that both you and the charity could benefit from your donation (though some charities may not accept a gift of life insurance for various reasons).



Five Common Financial Aid Myths



Net price calculators

Net price calculators, available on all college websites, provide families with an advance estimate of what their "net" price will be at a particular college based on their income, assets, and personal family information. The net price is the price after grants and scholarships are factored in. This figure gives families a much better idea of the real cost of a particular college so they can make well-informed financial decisions.

With some private colleges now crossing the once unthinkable \$70,000-per-year mark in the 2017/2018 school year, and higher costs at public colleges, too, financial aid is essential for many families. How much do you know about this important piece of the college financing puzzle? Consider these financial aid myths.

1. My child won't qualify for aid because we make too much money

Not necessarily. While it's true that family income is the main factor in determining aid eligibility, it's not the only factor. The number of children you'll have in college at the same time is a significant factor — for example, having two children in college will cut your expected family contribution (EFC) in half. Your assets, overall family size, and age of the older parent also play into the equation.

Side note: Even if you think your child won't qualify for aid, you should still consider filing the government's Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) for two reasons. First, all students — regardless of income — who attend school at least half-time are eligible for unsubsidized federal Direct Loans, and the FAFSA is a prerequisite for these loans.

("Unsubsidized" means the student pays the interest during college, the grace period, and any loan deferment periods.) So if you want your child to have some "skin in the game" by taking on a small student loan, you'll need to file the FAFSA. Second, the FAFSA is *always* a prerequisite for college need-based aid and is *sometimes* a prerequisite for college merit-based aid. Bottom line? It's usually a good idea to file this form.

2. The form is too hard to fill out

Not really. Years ago, the FAFSA was cumbersome to fill out. But now that it's online at fafsa.ed.gov, it is much easier to complete. The online version has detailed instructions and guides you step by step. There is also a toll-free number you can call with questions: 1-800-4-FED-AID. All advice is free. In addition, a recent change has made the FAFSA even easier to fill out: The FAFSA now relies on your tax information from two years prior rather than one year prior (referred to as the "prior-prior year" or the "base year"). For example, the 2017/2018 FAFSA relies on your 2015 tax information, the 2018/2019 FAFSA relies on your 2016 tax information, and so on. This means that your necessary tax numbers will be handy as you answer questions on the FAFSA. The first time you file the FAFSA, you and your child will need to create an FSA ID, which consists of a username and password.

Side note: The CSS/Financial Aid PROFILE, an additional aid form required by most private colleges, is more detailed than the FAFSA and thus harder to fill out. It essentially takes a financial snapshot of your family's past year, current year, and upcoming year (it asks for estimates for the latter).

3. If my child applies to a more expensive school, we'll get more aid

Not necessarily. Colleges determine your EFC based on the income and asset information you provide on the FAFSA and, where applicable, the CSS PROFILE. Your EFC stays the same no matter what college your child applies to. The difference between the cost of a particular college and your EFC equals your child's financial need (sometimes referred to as "demonstrated need"). The more expensive a college is, the greater your child's financial need. But a greater financial need doesn't automatically translate into a bigger financial aid package — colleges aren't obligated to meet 100% of your child's financial need.

Side note: When making a college list, your child can research a particular college's generosity, including whether it meets 100% of demonstrated need and if it replaces federal loan awards with college grants in its aid packages.

4. We own our home, so my child won't qualify for aid

The FAFSA does not take home equity into account when determining a family's expected family contribution (it also does not consider the value of retirement accounts, cash value life insurance, and annuities).

Side note: The CSS PROFILE does collect home equity and vacation home information, and some colleges may use it when distributing their own institutional aid.

5. I lost my job after I submitted aid forms, but there's nothing I can do now

Not true. If your financial circumstances change after you file the FAFSA — and you can support this with documentation — you can politely ask the financial aid officer at your child's school to revisit your aid package; the officer has the authority to make adjustments if there have been material changes to your family's income or assets.

Side note: A blanket statement of "I can't afford my family contribution" is unlikely to be successful unless it is accompanied by a significant changed circumstance that affects your ability to pay.

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How do economists measure inflation, and why does it matter to investors?

The Federal Open Market Committee (FOMC) adjusts interest rates to help keep inflation near a 2% target. The FOMC's preferred measure of inflation is the Price Index for Personal Consumption Expenditures (PCE), primarily because it covers a broad range of prices and picks up shifts in consumer behavior. The Fed also focuses on core inflation measures, which strip out volatile food and energy categories that are less likely to respond to monetary policy.

The typical American might be more familiar with the Consumer Price Index (CPI), which was the Fed's favorite inflation gauge until 2012. The Consumer Price Index for All Urban Consumers (CPI-U) is used to determine cost-of-living adjustments for federal income taxes and Social Security.

The CPI only measures the prices that consumers actually pay for a fixed basket of goods, whereas the PCE tracks the prices of everything that is consumed, regardless of who pays. For example, the CPI includes a patient's out-of-pocket costs for a doctor's visit, while the PCE considers the total charge billed to

insurance companies, the government, and the patient.

The PCE methodology uses current and past expenditures to adjust category weights, capturing consumers' tendency to substitute less expensive goods for more expensive items. The weighting of CPI categories is only adjusted every two years, so the index does not respond quickly to changes in consumer spending habits, but it provides a good comparison of prices over time.

According to the CPI, inflation rose 2.1% in 2016 — right in line with the 20-year average of 2.13%.¹ This level of inflation may not be a big strain on the family budget, but even moderate inflation can have a negative impact on the purchasing power of fixed-income investments. For example, a hypothetical investment earning 5% annually would have a "real return" of only 3% during a period of 2% annual inflation.

Of course, if inflation picks up speed, it could become a more pressing concern for consumers and investors.

¹ U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2017 (data through December 2016)



I just bought a vacation home. Do I need to purchase a specific type of insurance?

Insuring a vacation home is different from insuring a primary residence. As a result, you'll want to purchase insurance that is specifically geared to this type of property.

The cost to insure a vacation home will vary, depending on where the property is located and the insurance company. Other factors, such as the type of property and special amenities, may also affect the cost of premiums.

Insurance that is specifically designed for second/vacation homes can range from standard coverage that protects against certain named perils, to more comprehensive coverage that protects against all perils (up to policy limits), unless specifically excluded in the policy.

Depending on what the policy covers, you may need to obtain additional protection (e.g., personal and liability property coverage) through either an endorsement to your primary homeowners policy or a separate policy. And if your vacation home is located in an area that is susceptible to flood damage, which is not

covered under standard homeowners insurance, you'll want to consider separate coverage for that peril as well. Homes susceptible to hurricanes, wildfires, or earthquakes might also require an endorsement or separate policy.

Insurance premiums for vacation homes are usually much higher than those for a primary residence because of circumstances unique to second homes (e.g., long periods of being unoccupied, vandalism risk). However, you may be able to save money by insuring your vacation home with the same company that provides coverage for your primary residence. You might also be eligible for other discounts, such as those offered for newly built homes and those with an operating security system. Policy discounts vary by state and insurer.

Be sure to shop around for the best coverage and rates. You might also want to contact the state department of insurance where your vacation home is located for additional information on the coverage and rate options that may be available.