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the things
other
advisors
forget to
do.™**



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· ***Congrats to Seniors for not accruing debt!***

· ***The Terry Schiavo case, and one year anniversary of her death and what it means to you.***



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"We do all the things other advisors forget to do."™

Congratulations! You've done it again!

With the exception of the current generation of seniors, debt has become as American as apple pie and is likely to remain that way, according to a study commissioned by LendingTree.com.

Robert D. Manning, author of Credit Card Nation had these findings:

- The average American considers debt a permanent fixture of life vs. something that you need to reduce or get rid of.
- (This is very surprising!) Families are more likely to accumulate more debt than they are to reduce it...even as they get older! (Your generation excluded.) The average American family has had a dramatic increase in spending...did your kids have ipods and video games? Did you take your kids to Disneyland every year? Did you buy your kids cars?
- The stigma of debt is largely gone. People want immediate gratification; they are not willing to wait for it and will mortgage their lives to get those goodies right now.
- Homes are now being viewed as investments and not just as a roof over your head.
- Very few families have done any actual financial and, more specifically, debt planning.
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Your generation got it right!

Don't buy it until you can pay for it! Way to go! Even so, it is good to have a credit card or two for the way the world works today. It is almost essential when traveling, and makes life much more convenient...as long as you pay off the balance at the end of every month.

Regardless of how much you use your credit, you must know what your credit report looks like. You would be amazed and appalled at all the places that use your credit score and what a less than stellar score can cost you. Did you know that the price you pay for your car insurance is now based on your credit score?

There is only one source for truly free credit reports: www.annualcreditreport.com (877-322-8228). Don't be fooled by the other companies peddling free credit reports. They are going to get you someday with the *small print*.

Timely Tips from Donald O'Connor

Many people are surprised that they don't have a perfect credit score when they have never missed a payment on ANYTHING for 50 years! How could you not have a perfect credit score! Well you may not. There are actually 5 things that go into determining your credit score:

1. 35% of it is based on bills paid on time
2. 30% is based on debt to credit ratio. For example, you have a credit limit of \$5,000 and you have \$3,000 charged. It does not matter that you pay it off every month. How maxed out you look depends on your balance the day your issuer reports to the bureaus. If that is right after you made a big purchase but before you've paid your bill, your score suffers.
3. 15% is based on length of credit history.
4. 10% is based on how many credit applications you have filled out lately. Those cards you apply for to earn 10% off at the mall? They will temporarily hurt your credit rating.
5. 10% is based on the variety of loans you have.

Confusing? Yes it is, it took me awhile to figure it out as well. If you need any help understanding or walking through your credit report, please feel free to give me a call and I will do my best to help out.

TERRI SCHIAVO 1ST ANNIVERSARY

March 31st, 2006 marks the one-year anniversary of Terri Schiavo's death. More than any other story, Ms. Schiavo's situation brought the need for living wills and other advance directives to the forefront of everyone's attention. In the past year, an unprecedented number of people have explored their personal health care desires and made plans for their end-of-life wishes.

However, despite the increased attention and understanding, most Americans still have not put their wishes down on paper. A recent study by the Pew Research Center found that, although 70% of Americans had given thought to end-of-life treatment, only 29% have a living will. And even if you have already completed these documents, it is important to review them periodically to see if they still reflect your wishes.

A number of organizations are commemorating this anniversary by stepping up attempts to promote advance care planning. For instance, this month Caring Connections, a national program providing education on this topic, is urging Americans to wear a white ribbon to raise awareness, particularly on March 31st in memory of Terri Schiavo.

The best way to make sure your wishes are known and fully protected legally is to have your attorney draft the appropriate documents with you. A living will, health care power of attorney and HIPAA release are all important elements of your health care planning that your attorney can help you prepare. In addition, we at The Asset Protection Group LLC can give you a membership in DocuBank, which provides emergency access to these directives and ensures that these important documents will be available whenever you need them, even in an emergency, day or night, anywhere in the world. Carrying your DocuBank Emergency Access card in your wallet is like carrying your documents with you at all times.

There's no better time to make sure your health care wishes are known and up-to-date. Whether you're ready to begin the process or want to ensure your existing documents are always available through DocuBank, and my office is ready to help. Contact us at 860-667-8444 or toll-free 1-866-311-3563 to schedule an appointment. Links: www.DocuBank.com