

SONNY BONO'S LOVE CHILD

Why should you care about long term comprehensive financial life planning that includes estate planning?

So you don't make the same mistakes all these people made.

You might have heard about Aretha Franklin dying intestate (no will or trust). So did Prince, Jimi Hendrix, Bob Marley, Sonny Bono, Pablo Picasso, Howard Hughes, and Abraham Lincoln. Some of these estates were settled by the heirs peaceably; some were not. The Hendrix estate took 30 years (and lots of legal fees) to settle. Bob Marley's estate had dozens of claimants. And surprise, surprise: it turns out that Bono had a love child! Or at least someone claiming to be one. Even Bono's ex-wife (you might know her) showed up to claim money that would otherwise have gone to his legally wedded wife.

"But, Jim," you say, "I don't have an estate like those. Why would I need to do any estate planning?"

Many years ago a client showed up for a tax appointment without his wife. She had been sick for several years and I didn't need to ask why she hadn't come with him. At the end of our meeting, he asked me, "my wife had a savings account with \$2,000 in it. The bank won't give it to me. How can I get it?" I told him that he would need to hire and pay a lawyer and go through probate, all of which could have been avoided if she had put him on the account. Or filed a POD (payable on death) form.

Or think about Bruce Friedman (you don't know him). When his wife died, the \$1,000,000 life insurance proceeds went to his sister-in-law, who never liked that SOB her sister married.

But seriously, even if you do not have a huge estate or a love child, estate planning is an important part of financial planning, along with tax, investment, retirement, and insurance planning, and whatever else needs to be addressed to ensure a financially secure, fulfilling, and happy future.