

HAVING YOUR FINANCES ON LOCKDOWN

JUNE 2023

“At our Firm,
Your Estate Plan
is Not Business,
it’s Personal...”



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“What is one to say about June, the time of perfect young summer, the fulfillment of the promise of the earlier months, and with as yet no sign to remind one that its fresh young beauty will ever fade.”
— Gertrude Jekyll

Have you noticed there is a lot of drama in the world of economics lately? Not sure if I am simply more sensitive to my environment / community, but it seems that talks of impending ‘end’ of financial times is always upon us. First, there was the Sam Bankman-Fried and the whole cryptocurrency scandal, then there was the Silicon Valley Bank being severely underfunded; and today it’s about the collapse of First Republic Bank.



In the scheme of things, this type of constant newsfeed simply isn’t healthy for your overall state of mind. This is why here at the Asset Protection Center, we constantly advocate legal and financial principles, not simply the latest fads or techniques. It is the same with handling your financial affairs. Slow and steady wins the race.

As you know, we have been big proponents of the Dave Ramsey Method, also known as Baby Steps to financial freedom. The reality is that there are many more advanced approaches to reaching financial freedom. However, the reason we don’t promote those as much to the ‘general public’ is simple. See, the reality is that the majority of our client base lies at the end of either spectrum, they are doing very well financially or quite the opposite, making ends meet is a monthly challenge.

The reason we do not publicize advanced strategies as much is because we would all be served better (especially your family) if you came to get legal counsel by having your financial affairs in order first. What does that entail – having an emergency fund, paying off your debts, having 6-12 months of living expenses set aside, then start working on retirement / mortgage payment / investment opportunities.

As simple as that may sound, this could very well take years to get in place. The last thing you need is news distraction telling you about the end of banking as we know it. All it does is distract you from your ultimate goal. With years of experience, you quickly learn that staying single-mindedly focused on achieving your goals is harder than you may have first imagined. Not only that, having the grit to stick it out when times get tough. We are definitely entering into unknown territory as a nation regarding the USD and its future. However, unless you work in a very specific part of the U.S. government, chances are you / we will have very little input on what can be done about this.

All you can do is focus on your career and your financial objectives.

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INTRODUCTION

It’s official, it’s... summertime!!!

June is upon us, students will enjoy a lengthy and pleasant break from schoolwork, professionals will take a well-earned vacation; while the Summer Solstice is observed in many cultures around the world during this month.

In the Northern Hemisphere, the traditional astronomical summer begins on June 21. Do you feel as though summer has suddenly arrived and you have to do all the things you had been planning to do during the long, chilly winter months and several weeks or months of social isolation? Try to ease up a bit on yourself the next few months. Think about what you actually want to do for a while, as opposed to what you have to do. For June, we shall ease up a bit to enjoy the sun, and rejuvenate our souls, shall we?

But having said that, families do tend to spend more during summers. Thus, the theme for this month will be finances. Let’s get this newsletter started!

PLANNING AHEAD

When I was a student, the furthest I could project my finances was a month at a time. Not because I was lazy or irresponsible, but that was literally the extent of the forecast I could dedicate to it, with everything I had going – classes, studies, going out, my next move after college, etc. You understand I'm sure, the stressful life of a college student! 😊

Then came the brutal... excruciating... intolerable... (you get the point) reality of becoming an adult. As a young adult at that, everyone understands that you are going to be 'working' 24 hrs / day, and you are granted more immunity for the time being. You are spared from family responsibilities, a clean home, other social responsibilities. But then, you start becoming 'the' adult in the room, you are the one people look to when things go wrong, you are where the buck stops as Americans say! That transition happens ever so slowly for most of us, and before you know it, staying afloat is no longer an option. You are the one steering the ship, so it is up to you to see where the boat will end up tomorrow.

I've never recuperated from that day 😞

Now, the daunting tasks are on you! If there is a broken down car, an unforeseen medical emergency; all those costs are on you to cover. Unfortunately, for most people, a lifetime is spent in that 'pocket'. It is the handling the cost of living on a month to month basis, and people make do with that reality. There is absolutely nothing wrong with that, and many people are happy with this version of reality.

This is not the case for me, and I hope not for you! In order to be able to provide on more than one front, I have found it imperative to prepare and be ready for the unforeseen. This means constantly putting funds aside for savings (even when things are tight!), forecasting the personal and professional budget *for the year*, and basically creating a healthy portfolio to withstand most storms!

There is no secret in this endeavor. It is a hard and demanding task. The toughest part is... It never ends! And so you must build a certain mental fortitude to be able to thrive irrespective of what you face on a daily basis. You can ease the process by having a hard, consistent schedule when you look at your finances. Creating such a healthy habit will also spill into other areas of your life, so why not!

However, there is an additional benefit you may not realize. By consistently (notice I did not say constantly) reviewing your numbers, If you are good at bookkeeping or are surrounded by a good accounting team, you will notice that your past numbers actually help you forecast the upcoming numbers coming down the pipeline. Having a good system enables you to predict what months or seasons are going to be tougher than usual.

To me, estate planning is the ultimate anticipation tool. Most people think of it as 'what happens in the end?' type of scenario. It certainly encompasses that, but it also provides you a vehicle, buckets if you will, to allow you work from moving forward. An account for savings, one for children's college education, one for insurance and so forth.

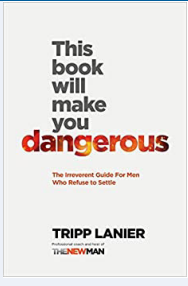
This type of thinking is what makes 'adulting' much more bearable. The ability to play the game right. Next thing you know, you realize being an adult doesn't have to be all that bad, and it's actually quite a bit of fun if you are up for the challenge!



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If you are like most, you likely bank at CHASE, and I can assure you that this financial institution isn't going anywhere. Do you have over the FDIC insured amount and don't feel quite safe? Go ahead and go to other major institutions – HSBC, Wells Fargo, Bank of America, etc... However, don't spend too much of your precious time and thinking power obsessing about the world economy.

As the summer rolls around, this is a perfect time to review your financial milestones you set out at the beginning of the year, see what you need to do to continue moving in the right direction. Most importantly, don't cut corners, don't get discouraged, and do not compare yourself to others. This life is your journey, focus on you and your loved ones, the rest is nothing more than... noise!



TRIPP LANIER – THIS BOOK WILL MAKE YOU DANGEROUS

Tripp Lanier works with men to help them escape the grind, establish themselves as experts in their fields, and earn a fantastic career doing the things they are passionate about. The majority of men will succumb

to fear. “Most Men Should Not Read This Book” he claims! Our globe now offers more opportunities than ever before. Why then do most men accept dull, formulaic lives that leave them feeling stifled, worn out, and uninspired? This Book *Will Make You Dangerous* is a manual for the select few men who do not wish to go through life asleep.

This book will show you how to energise your perspective and see opportunities instead of roadblocks. It is the result of tens of thousands of hours spent teaching forward-thinking men all over the world. You'll discover how to access your own sense of leadership and go through your biggest obstacles in every aspect of life, including job, relationships, and health, while others simply follow the crowd.

The fundamental ideas in this book are actually quite sound. Create your own winning criteria by living as if there is no safety net and that the only obstacle is you. He provides sound counsel and does so with clarity. So it's worth reading if you feel that your life is just a series of motions. Lanier shares his skillful method for assisting people in overcoming obstacles. He observed tendencies in the lives of his coaching clients that allowed them to remain in their comfort zones.

Lanier's irreverent (and humorous) book *This Book Will Make You Dangerous* will help you carve your own path, if you dare. It's a radically different approach from other personal development books that try to convince you that their theories and techniques are “the solution.” The beginning of his motto starts with you and your own particular experience. Lanier encourages you to explore the essence of your experience and identify the areas of your life where you feel more Freedom, Aliveness, Love, and Peace. He does this by expertly deconstructing the notion that your life's purpose is some sort of magical life task. Instead of focusing on outcomes that can push us further away from these experiences, what if we played for these experiences? The chapter of Lanier's book when he discusses strength really shines. He challenges you to be astonished by what truly makes you powerful rather than paying attention to what you believe you should do.

The book is packed with this kind of advice to “check in” with your experience. Guys who don't want to compromise or mimic what other men are doing should. He does a wonderful job of assisting the reader in realizing the challenges they have while trying to build a life they truly care about. He advises you to take the easy, manageable (and little terrifying) step and to be prepared for discomfort during the creative process. Living on the “edge” is all about growth. This book will motivate you!



The Time Management That Can work For Anyone

To manage your time effectively and accomplish your goals, you must make choices about what to do, when to finish, and which tasks to take on. You'll be able to say that you successfully managed your time if you decide to give high-value, goal-oriented chores a priority, complete them before the deadline, and leave time for leading a healthy life. But how exactly do you do that? Well, by employing effective time management strategies.

At work, time management can be difficult. Perhaps this explains why individuals and organizations aren't always successful at it! But in the work-from-anywhere environment the global pandemic has produced, effective time management is a crucial component of productivity. To be more effective and efficient with your time, make better and quicker decisions, and do more in less time and with less work, you must adhere to a set of rules and principles called time management strategies. Most time management strategies address one or more of the aforementioned issues, so consider what you want to change about your routine before selecting your time management strategy to hone in.

A simple way to manage your time is to time box / time block; this involves assigning each task a specific amount of time in advance and doing it within that time frame. Many people find timeboxing overwhelming because they find it impossible to arrange their days around their erratic schedules, which may vary from day to day, hour to hour, etc... or from being at the mercy of their clients or boss. Not every assignment is made equally. However, many of us group smaller tasks we need to do with major ones when we plan our days. Prioritizing your to-do list should always be your initial step. A two-tier system ought to function adequately. Create your timetable based on the tasks you've determined are most crucial and important; not just urgent. Your productivity planner should include your deadlines.

There isn't a foolproof system for everyone. It's possible that what works for some folks won't for others. Fortunately, there are many theories that you may adapt to work for you and your team. You might choose one approach to scheduling your week and another to determining how much time to devote to each task. Some tactics work well for individuals but don't work as well when organizing teams. To determine what works best, test various concepts with yourself and your team, but most importantly - be intentional. Like they say in marketing, continually test!



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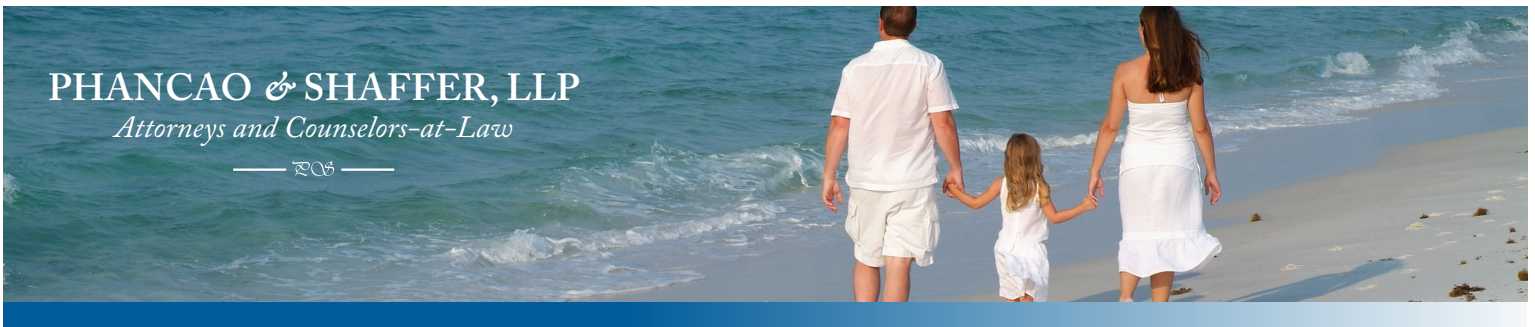


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June can feel a little underrated because there isn't a major holiday, but that doesn't mean that the month doesn't have good points. What are your plans for the summer? being at home? leaving for a vacation? rediscovering family and friends? As we look forward to the summer months, take full benefit of longer days and (hopefully) less work schedule to create a space for you! Don't hesitate to put your kids in a camp so you can have a few hours to yourself. Aim for efficiency, not just busy-ness all the time. As we had discussed in January of this year, 2023 has been unpredictable – the projected home crash hasn't happened, the banking system has been put into question, and many more unknowns will be upon us. It is imperative that your state of mind stays youthful and alert. Do not shy away from enjoying this summer!

“There are two seasons when the leaves are in their glory, their green and perfect youth in June and their ripe old age.”
– Henry David Thoreau

