

Wealth Reflections

Insights on building, preserving and passing wealth – Gwen K. Harvey

Decision-Making At All Ages And Stages

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Making solid decisions based on our own life wisdom protects what we have created and provides a trusted platform to build from. But how should we adapt our decision making process as we enter different phases of our life?

Decision-making in our growth years:

When a business or wealth is in a high growth mode there is a sense of urgency to deal strictly with the present. Isn't it better to address the long term when we have successfully pulled through the growth? Won't we have the luxury of "extra" time later to thoughtfully weave all the pieces together?

But waiting to plan for the long term can mean missing opportunities that were part of the end goal. During the growth years it is wise to establish regular meetings with trusted advisors to keep an open line to fresh perspective. What planning opportunities and insights can they share? Discuss any basics that can be added without much distraction from your daily work. Some opportunities are lost over time. Have a decision making model in place that keeps you aware.

Decision-making in our years of realized wealth:

Wealth can create new and curious stresses. While some families who have amassed substantial assets have underlying fears of suddenly losing their wealth, others have concerns of wasting what they have built. Fear and frugality can cause families to be overly restrictive in the use of their assets.

What if you could afford to take all the grandchildren on a vacation or a mentorship trip to a third-world country? What if you could afford to begin a family philanthropic project and involve

your children in giving back to a community that has financially rewarded your business efforts? What if you could do this, but you didn't, because of unexpressed concerns?

During the years where wealth has been realized it is worthwhile to spend some time articulating and documenting fully how you want the wealth to enhance your life, and the life of your family members and community. Combining this with financial modeling to show how this would play out provides a powerful level of clarity and a great platform for values-based decision making.

Decision-making in our later years:

A significant part of planning focuses on decision-making. Yet when do we stop to consider that point in time where we may not be able to assess all the variables with the same accuracy of our younger years? *Powers of Attorney* is a helpful tool when we are incapacitated. However there are many who begin to make erratic decisions and lose wealth while they still have capacity. How do we plan ahead for our potential decline in good decision making?

To plan ahead for this phase of life, assess your circle of advisors and trusted family members. Have a frank discussion. Advise them to express their ideas and opinions openly. Invite them to initiate further research, discussion or processes when they observe thinking patterns that concern them. Wealth developed through a lifetime of wise decision making can be devastated by a few careless acts. Planning how to handle decision making in your later years may prove to be one of your wisest decisions.

If you have any questions about this, please give us a call.