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Tune in to Jeffrey's podcast, *Financial Focus*, by visiting
<http://financialconceptsmesquite.com/podcast/>

INGREDIENTS

- 2 tbsp olive oil
- 4 c. chopped broccoli florets
- 1 tsp lemon zest
- 1/2 tsp kosher salt
- 1/2 tsp freshly ground black pepper
- 1/2 tsp garlic powder
- 8 1/2 in. thick slices rustic bread
- 1/4 c. mayonnaise
- 1 c. sharp Cheddar cheese, shredded
- 1 c. Fontina cheese, shredded



DIRECTIONS

1. Heat oil in a large high-sided skillet over medium-high. Add broccoli; cook, stirring occasionally, until charred in spots and crisp-tender, about 8 minutes. Remove skillet from heat and transfer broccoli to a small bowl. Stir lemon zest, salt, pepper, and garlic powder into bowl with broccoli. Wipe skillet clean.
2. Spread 1 side of each bread slice with mayonnaise. Place 4 slices mayonnaise side down and top with Cheddar. Top Cheddar with broccoli mixture; top broccoli mixture with fontina. Top fontina with remaining 4 bread slices, mayonnaise side up.
3. Return skillet to medium heat. Place 2 sandwiches in skillet; cook, flipping once, until cheese is melted and bread is golden brown, 3 to 4 minutes per side. Repeat with remaining sandwiches.

<https://www.realsimple.com/food-recipes/browse-all-recipes/broccoli-cheddar-grilled-cheese-recipe>

Broccoli-Cheddar
Grilled Cheese



Jeffrey Bird-RICP®



Financial Focus

A Monthly Insight Into Your Finances
April 2023

How to be Content in Retirement

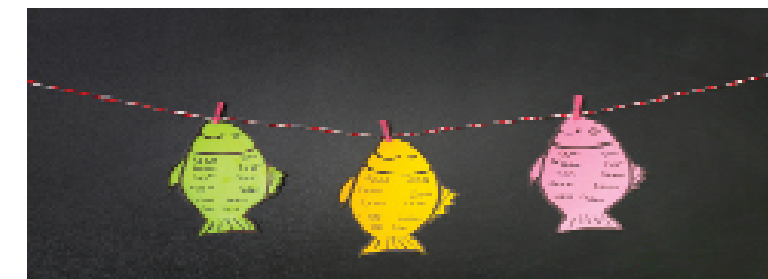
When envisioning your future retirement, it's easy to focus almost entirely on the big things like your budget and cash flow, where you're going to live, your healthcare strategy, and what you intend to leave behind for your loved ones. But while those things are certainly important, you should also weigh some of the lesser discussed elements that could possibly help make your retirement a happier one.

An AARP article, [10 Secrets of a Happy Retirement](#) has some interesting and hopefully useful information that I'm excited to share today. If you'd like to review the article yourself, it's available at aarp.org.

Save more, Spend less

The first thing you may want to focus on is being a bigger saver than you are a spender. Many financial services professionals recommend having at least a half-million dollars in the bank when you cross the retirement finish line.

Continued on next page...



April Fools' Day Originated in France

April Fools' Day dates back to 1582, when France switched from the Julian calendar to the Gregorian calendar, as called for by the Council of Trent in 1563. This meant that New Year's Day officially moved to January 1st.

People who were slow to get the news or failed to recognize that the start of the new year had moved to January 1 and continued to celebrate it during the last week of March through April 1 became the butt of jokes and hoaxes and were called "April fools." These pranks included having paper fish placed on their backs and being referred to as "poisson d'avril" (April fish), said to symbolize a young, easily caught fish and a gullible person.

<https://www.history.com/topics/holidays/april-fools-day>

HOW TO BE...

One way to potentially reach that savings goal is to pay off your mortgage as soon as possible. As I'm sure is no surprise, for many folks, a mortgage is their single biggest monthly expense. That means eliminating your mortgage payment will allow you to focus on saving money as well as your broader retirement strategy.

Hobbies are Essential

Having numerous hobbies and pursuits is another important piece of the retirement puzzle. When I think of some of my most content retired clients, they share similarities like a desire to explore new parts of the country and world as well as a sincere desire to keep learning.

While it's true that after you've left work for the last time that you shouldn't feel compelled to build your days around alarm clocks and long commutes, you also shouldn't spend your days in front of the television watching 90s sitcoms you didn't even like much when they were originally on.

Maintain a Few Routines

While learning to play pickle ball or scuba dive during retirement is an important part of your health and wellbeing, you shouldn't dismiss the importance and power of having some routines. You may want to consider working as a reading volunteer at a grandkid's elementary school or delivering food for Meals on Wheels or even organizing a monthly potluck with your friends. Routines are important because they're something you can build your calendar around.

Several decades of eight or nine hours a day, five days a week gives you plenty of structure to build a routine around. But when you retire, that structure is suddenly gone, which can certainly be a bit of a shock to the system if you don't have a strategy.

And you don't want to fill those days obsessively checking your portfolio or doom scrolling news sites on the internet. You need to get out there and experience your community in new ways. Visit restaurants in neighborhoods you haven't visited often. See a community or high school theater production. Many communities offer far more than what often appears at first glance.

Friends Still Matter

Another way to potentially make your retirement more fulfilling is to maintain close connections with your circle of friends. And to be clear, social media check-ins or the occasional email don't cut it. I'm talking about regular get-togethers for dinner, or a show, or even group vacations. Regular, face-to-face relationships are, in my opinion, an essential part of retirement.

And while keeping up with old friends is important, don't disregard the power of making new friends, even when you're in your 60s and 70s. If you volunteer at a non-profit that also has younger volunteers, take some time to get to know them. Friendships with people who are younger than you are may be a good way to keep up with the latest movies or bingeable TV shows.

Looking for advice on how to program the radio stations on your new car that seems more like a moving computer than an automobile? Someone younger than you may know how to help.

SOURCE

<https://www.aarp.org/retirement/planning-for-retirement/info-2021/happy-retirement-secrets.html?intcmp=AE-RET-BB>

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CREATING YOUR OWN OPERATING LONDON BRIDGE

"London Bridge is down." On September 8, 2022, those words were reportedly used to launch what was arguably the most complex end-of-life proceedings the world has ever witnessed: the funeral arrangements for Queen Elizabeth II. The plan, known as Operation London Bridge, laid out in exacting detail how the ensuing days would unfold. Although most families don't need a playbook as intricate as the royals, a comprehensive end-of-life plan can significantly ease the burden on family members during a highly emotional period.

Guidance in a Medical Crisis

What would happen if you became incapacitated and could not make financial or medical decisions for yourself? To help ensure that your affairs continue to be managed by someone you trust and according to your wishes, you might consider creating a durable power of attorney (DPOA) and an advance medical directive.

A DPOA authorizes someone to manage your finances on your behalf, while a medical directive documents your wishes for medical care, such as whether you want extraordinary measures to prolong life if there is no chance of recovery. There are several types of DPOAs and advance medical directives; each has its own purpose, benefits, and drawbacks and may not be effective in some states.

Funeral Instructions

Planning your funeral or similar commemoration can relieve significant stress on your family members. Decisions would typically cover whether you want a burial or cremation, a wake with or without viewing, a religious ceremony or secular event, and could include details such as music, readings, speakers/clergy, flowers, venues, and an obituary. You might discuss thoughts with family members, taking their ideas into consideration. You might also consult a trusted funeral director who can help you navigate the various options, decide whether to prepay for arrangements, and become a valuable resource to your family when the time comes.

Estate Management

The most fundamental components of an estate plan are also among the most important: a will and a letter of instruction.

A will states how you wish to disburse your assets, names an executor to act as your legal representative, provides guidance for the management of your financial affairs, and (if appropriate) identifies who you want to be guardian of your minor children and their assets. A letter of instruction has no legal status but provides vital details that complement your will (see graphic).

You might also familiarize yourself with the death-related tax rules at both the federal and state levels. The 2023 federal estate tax exemption is \$12.92 million. Although that sounds like a lot, 17 states impose their own estate and/or inheritance tax —most at much lower thresholds. When you consider that an estate includes the value of your home, insurance policies, retirement plans, and other assets, it may be

easier than you'd expect to trigger a taxable situation. (Estate tax is imposed on the estate of the deceased, while an inheritance tax is imposed on the beneficiary.)

Seek Assistance

For more information on how to create your own Operation London Bridge, contact an estate planning attorney. Once your plan is established, store all documents in a safe place and communicate its location to your executor.

What Might a Letter of Instruction Include?



- Funeral instructions or how to find them
- The location of your will and other estate planning documents, as well as other legal documents (e.g., Social Security cards, birth and marriage certificates, titles, deeds)
- Contact information for attorneys and financial professionals
- Financial institution names, account numbers, usernames, passwords, and PINs, with beneficiaries and account balances (as of a given date)
- Bills, credit, and loan account information
- Life insurance policy information, including beneficiaries
- A list of all tangible assets (e.g., jewelry, antiques, art), their location, and related inheritance instructions not included in your will
- Location of keys to safes or safe-deposit boxes
- Social media usernames and passwords
- Care instructions for your pets
- Preferred charities

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