

TRANSITIONS

THE QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER FROM SILVER OAK WEALTH ADVISORS, LLC

A Case For Attorneys in Transition

By Joel Framson



Many attorneys are skilled in guiding their clients through significant life-changing transitions that involve money. Whether their specialty area is family law, litigation, or estate planning, they have the technical training to resolve the transaction while also managing the stress that their clients often feel.

Those same attorneys, however, often fail when they need to manage their own money transitions. The practice of law as both a profession and a business has experienced a tumultuous transition over the past couple of decades. Many firms have broken apart, young

We specialize in guiding attorneys as they come to the realization that their own transition around money is imminent.

partners leave to start their own firm, less profitable practice areas are jettisoned by larger firms.

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When in Transition, Slow and Steady Wins the “Race”

By Eric D. Bruck



It may not be sexy or glamorous, but here's to the Tortoise in the famous child's fable, “The Tortoise and the Hare”! No one pays attention to the underdog.

The tortoise was not expected to win the race, but win he did—with the attitude that “getting there” was more important than performing well.

Where (and when) is “there” for you? If you are looking to transition to a “make work optional” modality within the next ten years, you would be wise to heed the wisdom and the experience of our friend, the Tortoise.

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Bag Lady Fears: What's really going on here?

By Linda Cao



There is one persistent mindset about money that is far more common among women than men. It applies to even affluent and high-earning women. That is, the fear of becoming a ‘bag lady.’

Conjure up any image of a bag lady, and invariably she appears alone. There are no family or friends nearby to support her, or even

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A Case For Attorneys in Transition *(Continued)*

At some critical point, however, an attorney will look inward and realize that he or she is facing a transition. The attorney's own financial decisions suddenly become the focal point and potentially the source of a great amount of stress. We have worked with attorneys who reach the realization that they are closer to transitioning out of practicing law than they ever acknowledged. They may decide not to extend their lease, or not to build the next firm. Decisions change.

The stresses that accompany these transitions can create clouded cognition and impair clear decision-making. The ability to concentrate is also impaired, and there is often a sense of feeling overwhelmed with everything that needs to be considered.

We specialize in guiding attorneys as they come to the realization that their own transition around money is imminent. Logical and technical tools alone are insufficient because the source of the stresses are emotional and subjective. As "thinking partners," we help bridge the subjective with the technical, effectively utilizing two tools: the Decision-Free Zone, and the Action Prioritization Chart. Call us for more insights into our tools.



Joel Framson, a Certified Financial Planner Practitioner®, draws on his experience as a CPA/PFS (Personal Financial Specialist credential) with a Master's Degree in Business Taxation from USC in providing attorneys and affluent families expert guidance as they plan for and transition to a financially secure future.

COMMON QUESTIONS

- 1 I've made money, but I'm worried about losing the money I've made.
- 2 I'm getting closer to retirement in years, but am I closer in resources?
- 3 If I do retire, will I be able to stay retired?
- 4 Am I taking care of all of the financial areas I need to in order to provide for my family?
- 5 Do I have a contingency plan in place in the event of a change in my career or my health?
- 6 Can I trust my current financial advisor to meet my needs?

Slow and Steady Wins the "Race" *(Continued)*

Let's review the play-by-play of that famous race. The Hare took off out of the gate at a record setting pace. Like many investment strategies, the Hare's plan was to set some serious speed records, and it was just assumed that the destination ETA would be achieved.

But the Hare stopped along the way--not unlike the stock and bond market--stopping us cold in our tracks in 2008. When the Hare woke up, it was too late to recover from the delay, and he lost the race.

Of course, we're using this story to illustrate that, given the distance (or time objective) of your "race" to financial independence, an approach calculating a *required* speed (not a *desired* speed) is the foundation for the best race plan. It may seem as if taking more risk for a higher return will get you there faster. But the historical reality is: This strategy may just stop you-- like so many others--cold in your tracks.

A professional race plan will help get you to your destination and avoid the speed bumps along the way. Remember, the Hare focused on performance, while the Tortoise focused on getting there. And, remember who won.

Eric D. Bruck, CFP®, has provided comprehensive wealth guidance since 1981. Eric's clients lead successful but often complex financial lives, and appreciate that the true value of well-managed wealth lies in the quality of life it supports.

Bag Lady Fears: What's the Reality? (Continued)

keep her company on the streets. Perhaps it's her isolation rather than her poverty that a woman fears most.

As such, the bag lady fear becomes far more rational, and needs to be taken seriously. The hard fact is that 56 percent of women aged 65 or older are unmarried, according to 2011 US Census data. Compare this to the 24 percent of men who are unmarried at age 65+. As women move

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into older age brackets, 75 – 84 years, the percentage of unmarried women rises to 63 percent.

The implications of these numbers are huge, especially as they impact the way the genders plan for retirement. The average male can expect a life of shared activities and decisions in his waning years, with a partner to assist with household decisions, medical care, the activities of daily living. The average female, on the other hand, can anticipate moving from a coupled state, to being and living alone. Decisions about where to live, and how to accomplish the business of living are likely to become more difficult. Studies have shown her income will drop by about half, but her expenses will decrease only by 20 percent. Her social life may be disrupted, as a result of no longer having a spouse or partner. In retirement, she is likely to contend with grief, isolation, and dislocation.

Too often it is assumed that retirement planning is all about managing the money for the last third of people's life. But for women, it needs to



ABOUT SILVER OAK

Silver Oak Wealth Advisors is a certified Wealth Management firm dedicated to guiding clients to make incisive financial planning and sound investment decisions. Our practice is experienced in—and focuses on—stressful periods of transition, when emotional factors can cloud good judgment concerning financial decisions. Our “Transitions” newsletter is designed to build a bridge that is required to help a client move through an emotionally charged “Passage” period before reaching the financially calm state we call the “New Normal.”

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be much more comprehensive and thoughtful. It's a time in her life when connection is so important. Her resources – namely, her community, the services it offers, and her options for health care and housing – are the retirement “wealth” that needs managing and planning, just as carefully as her IRA or 401(k).

We want to wish all our women clients, and those who care about them, a Happy New Year of promise and commitment to serving her needs and preparing her for a secure future.

Linda Cao, CFP®, is Wealth Advisor at Silver Oak. She specializes in working with women-in-transition and retirement planning.

HAPPENINGS

- In collaboration with prolific author and attorney coach Ed Poll, Joel and Eric wrote Chapter 9: *Retirement Planning for Attorneys*, in Ed's recent book entitled, "*Life After The Law – What will you do with your next 6000 days?*"
- Linda, Eric, & Joel attended the annual **Sudden Money® Institute (SMI) Conference** in Palm Gardens, Florida in December, 2013. SMI offers a curriculum developed by neuro-psychologists and behavioral finance professionals that will provide the training for Linda, Eric, and Joel to qualify as a **Certified Financial Transitionist™**.
- Joel recently attended the annual **American Institute of CPA's Advanced Personal Financial Planning Conference** along with a meeting of his national study group. Both the Conference and study group provided new insights and tools to enhance our client services.
- Linda has utilized SMI curriculum to develop a series of **Women's Circle** Discussions to create meaningful dialogue among women going through a variety of life transitions.
- Eric attended the annual **Financial Planning Association** retreat with other experienced advisors to collaborate and exchange advanced practice ideas.



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UPCOMING EVENTS

AMERICAN REALTY HEALTHCARE TRUST II DINNER EVENT

When: February 11, 6-9pm

Who: Key Clients & COIs (*Invitation only*)

Where: SLS Hotel, Beverly Hills

SILVER OAK WINE DINNER

When: February 19, 6-9pm

Who: Key COIs (*Invitation only*)

Where: Wilshire Restaurant

PRESENTATION BY LINDA CAO: WOMEN & MONEY

When: March 12, 6-7pm

Who: Key Clients, COIs & Prospects

Where: Westwood Library

Register: silveroakwa.com/contact/

WOMEN'S CIRCLE (QUARTERLY)

When: TBD

Who: Invitation Only

Where: Silver Oak Office