



A Personal Note from Single Steps Strategies Founder Mary Grace Musuneggi

Baby Gloomers

In the United States we call those people 50-65 Baby Boomers. In England they call them Baby Gloomers. The term has arisen as more and more British have found themselves taking care of dependent parents while they are taking care of dependent children. Now you may think these parents are in their 80's and the children in their teens or twenties; but that would not really be possible. Instead they find themselves taking care of parents in their late 60's who did not retire financially secure, and their children in their 30's who have lost jobs, marriages, or whose poor spending habits have led them to return to their parent's home. To add to the gloom, some parents are returning with new spouses and step-children; and children are returning with kids of their own.

So for the Boomers who managed to prepare for their retirement and saw a happy and prosperous life down the road, their goals have been undermined by their need to be responsible for.....well, everyone!

And here is a scary statistic that I read in September 2009 MORE magazine.....Donna Jackson Nakazawa is quoted as saying that although some statistics say that over 50% of marriages will ultimately end in divorce, 75% of marriages will end in divorce if one spouse develops a chronic illness.....WOW! So who will take care of that parent when their own spouse chooses to walk away?

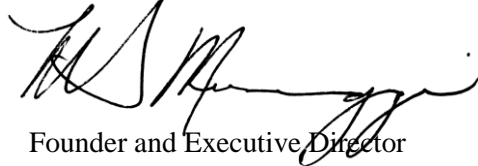
If your financial plan does not encompass the possibility of you being a "Sandwich" parent, if you have not gotten a handle on how your situation will need to change if parents and kids return to depending on you; if you have not had the end of life discussion with your children; or if you have not sat down with your children and explained what your retirement plans are, and how financially they may not include them.....there is no time like the present.

We see people retire comfortably only to see this change the minute the "kids" need a new TV, a few dollars, education money for the grandchildren. We see people pulling principal from their income producing assets to help the parents, to buy cars for the kids, to pay the grandchildren's college loans. It is enough that some takers have no concept of what that means for the givers down the road (and sadly we see some who do not care), but it is even harder for the givers to accept the consequences to their lifestyles because of what they have given to the takers. All financial decisions have consequences.

So what can you do? Develop a sound plan for financial independence. Just say "no" to requests for money you cannot afford to give. Prepare a solid Estate Plan. Build contingency planning into your retirement plans. Set and reset your priorities. Know what you can afford to give....and what you can't afford to give. Have adequate life and Long Term Care Insurance, and see that those who may become dependent on you have done the same. If you "lend" money, get a repayment agreement in writing; have them pledge assets or insurances.

Just like a good umbrella can shelter you from the gloom of a rainy day, a good financial and estate plan can shelter you from a financial rainy day. Then you can continue to be a “baby boomer” instead of a “baby gloomer”.

Mary Grace Musuneggi

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'M. Musuneggi', written in a cursive style.

Founder and Executive Director

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