



**COMPASS**  
PLANNING ASSOCIATES

Fee-Only Financial and Investment Planning

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## On Course

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Welcome! You are busy -- work, family, and community demand your attention. It's no surprise that financial planning falls of the radar until it feels as though it's too late. This month, we're giving you guidelines on how to put together a great financial advisory team.

You may have missed our recent series on retirement. For Retirement, Part 1 - Retirement Savings, click [here](#). For Retirement, Part 2 - Social Security, click [here](#). For Retirement, Part 3 - The Retirement Paycheck, click [here](#).

As we close 2018 -- and the 18th year of *On Course* -- we want to wish all of you the best of the season, thank you for your support, and hope that 2019 will be a special year for each of you.

Jennifer Lane, CFP

### In This Issue

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*Even if you've given your investment advisor discretionary authority to make investments, your account statement should come independently from an investment company that holds the account, not the advisor. Deposit checks should be written to the investment company, not the advisor.*

## Your Best Financial Advisory Team

**Planning your financial future and managing all the pieces can be complicated. We always advise our clients to assemble a team of advisors and professionals who will help create and maintain the right road map for where you are now and where you want to go.**

### Financial Planners

- Your financial decisions should be based on a plan. As a first step, take time to think about what's important to you, understand where you are now financially, and what your short-term and long-term goals are.
- Once you've done that, your next step is to create a plan with a professional. A fee-only financial planner helps you without bias toward a particular type of investment or insurance product.

*Get more tips in Jennifer's book*

- Visit [NAPFA.org](http://NAPFA.org) and [LetsMakeAPlan.org](http://LetsMakeAPlan.org) to find fee-only Certified Financial Planners (CFP®) in your area. Study their websites to learn about their particular expertise.
- Interview at least three planners -- even if you pick the first one you speak with, you'll probably increase your understanding of how a planner works.
- If you are not quite ready for that full financial plan but still feel you need the help and guidance of a financial planner, check out [AFCPE.org](http://AFCPE.org) to find a fee-only financial planner who can help you with hourly or budgeting work.

### Investment Advisors / Stockbrokers

- If you're planning on using stockbrokers to recommend investments, it's important to do some research on their background.
- Go to [FINRA.org](http://FINRA.org) for advice on how to get started, what to look for, and then run broker searches for background and possible complaints.
- When you're interviewing potential brokers, ask how they are compensated. Those brokers compensated on the size of your account might give different advice from those compensated by a commission per trade.
- You can certainly use your financial planner as your investment advisor if you chose to. A CFP can often fulfill both roles.

### Insurance

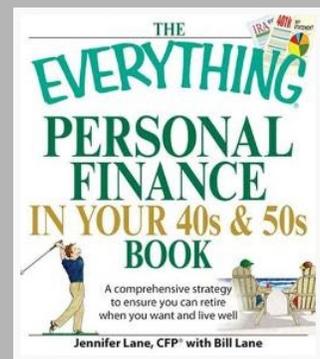
- Your insurance agents are your product specialists. Use them in conjunction with the rest of the team, not independent of it.
- Check out [NAIC.org](http://NAIC.org), which has helpful information and links to your state's insurance commissioner page.
- You can ask your family, friends, and other advisors for suggestions on potential agents. If you're new to an area, ask your real estate agent for recommendations or do a Google Maps search and interview potential firms.
- Using one insurance company for your home, auto, and umbrella can often lead to discounts.
- Try to compare rates and quotes from different carriers. And ask what potential loopholes might appear, e.g., the insurer doesn't inspect until after you sign up so the premium might change.
- Chances are you'll need another agent for your life insurance. Get referrals from family, friends, and advisors here as well. Make sure you get an objective opinion that the policy fits with your situation and financial plan before buying the life / disability policy the insurance agent wants to sell you.

### Legal

- Lawyers are important team members.
- Wills, house purchases, or concerns about elder family members are examples of when you need legal advice to support your planning.
- Sites like [LegalZoom.com](http://LegalZoom.com) are great for education purposes, but, in the end, you will still need an attorney to help sort through the issues that are specific to your situation. Your state bar association will have a list of attorneys in each specialty. For example, in Massachusetts, go to [MassBar.org](http://MassBar.org) to search for a lawyer near you.

### Accountants / Tax Advisors

- We usually recommend that you use [TurboTax](http://TurboTax) to do your taxes first whether you use an accountant or tax specialist. It's your money and you should understand your income, expense, and tax situation.
- CPAs (Certified Public Accountants) can help when you have a complicated tax situation or you are self-employed. Complete due diligence for anyone you chose.



([click here for link](#))

### Helpful Websites

[AFCPE.org](http://AFCPE.org)

[FINRA.org](http://FINRA.org)

[Let's Make a Plan](http://LetsMakeAPlan.org)

[NAIC.org](http://NAIC.org)

[NAPFA.org](http://NAPFA.org)



## Q&A

**Q: My teenager begins driving next spring. Is there anything I can do now to save money on her insurance?**

-- Charlotte, Weston

**A: Charlotte, here is a situation where it's so important to have a good, local agent. Hopefully, you have one in your town who answers the phone and understands your situation. Talk to your agent now about things you can do such as getting a lower cost car for your daughter, increasing your deductible, or adjusting your coverage. If your daughter goes away to school, you may be able to take her off the policy when she's not home. Good luck!**

## Jennifer in the Media

Below are links to Jennifer's frequent contributions to financial planning articles.

- The *New York Times* featured Jennifer in an article titled, "**Balanced Funds Don't Inspire Fear or Greed. That's Why They Are So Useful.**" Click [here](#) to read the article.
- With a contrarian view, Jennifer contributed to an article, "**People are enraged by the idea that you should have twice your salary saved by the time you're 35!**" published recently by *Business Insider*. Click [here](#) to read the article.
- Moving in together? Click [here](#) for the article from *Business Insider*, "**Five questions you and your partner should answer before taking the biggest step in your relationship.**"
- *Insider* asked Jennifer to contribute to an article on old fashioned ways to manage your money, "**Six money-saving tips your grandma used that are way more effective than any budgeting app.**" Click [here](#) for the article.
- Jennifer contributed to an article on *Business Insider*. Click [here](#) to read "**This is the best way to do your taxes online - according to experts.**"
- *CNN Money's Money Moves* featured Jennifer in an article on how to strike the right balance between retiring early and saving enough. Click [here](#) to read the article.
- Jennifer contributed to a *CNN Money* article "**When is the Right Time to See a Financial Advisor?**" Click [here](#) to read the article.
- Jennifer contributed to *The Wall Street Journal* article "**The Biggest Money Mistakes We Make -- Decade by Decade.**" Click [here](#) to read the article.

## Compass Planning News

- Jennifer and Sarah were both named [2019 Boston Five Star Wealth Managers](#).
- AdvisoryHQ named [Compass Planning](#) as one of the ten best Boston financial advisors.
- Jennifer recently answered NECN viewer questions about **how state pensions interact with Social Security**. Click [here](#) to watch the segment on her blog.
- Jennifer appears on NECN every other Monday morning at 9:30 am in addition to her Tuesday 7:30 pm appearance.

Compass Planning Associates helps families, individuals, and small-business clients achieve financial security, knowledge, and control over their money. Our **fee-only, client-centered approach** provides education and guidance for achieving financial goals and dreams.

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