



Wealth Matters Newsletter

September 2018

9 Steps for Managing the Pressures of The Sandwich Generation

They are hard pressed on both sides. They manage the needs and challenges of several households. They firmly occupy the middle ground between two generations.

They are members of the sandwich generation. Typically middle-aged, they often help support parents 65 or older and children under the age of 18.

The name refers to those people who are “sandwiched” between providing care for an older generation and a younger one.

What Is Happening and Why?

Changing demographic trends, shifting economic landscapes, healthier lifestyles, and longer life spans are putting an even greater squeeze on the sandwich generation.

On one side, postponing childbearing until the 30s means middle-aged parents are taking care of teenagers. On the other side, the parents of middle-aged parents are often in their late 60s and 70s, when health concerns may start to become acute and evident.

Adding to the pressure on members of the sandwich generation, sometimes called “sandwichers,” is the growing number of boomerang children, adult children returning to their childhood homes to live with their parents.

The Sandwich Squeeze

While retirement for many sandwichers may be on the distant horizon, the generational squeeze is taking an immediate toll, especially when unanticipated expenses are factored into the equation.

In particular, boomerang children are compelling members of the sandwich generation to rethink their long-range plans (which may include retirement) and often require the sandwichers to make unpleasant lifestyle adjustments.

The opportunity for boomerang children, who are struggling to find their own financial footing in a complicated world, to save money by living at home is enticing. In fact, boomerang children—25- to 35-year-old Millennials—are returning home in rising numbers; 15% of them live in their parents’ home.

These percentages are significantly higher than in previous generations: 5% more than the Generation Xers who lived at home in 2000 (10%) and nearly double the percentage (8%) of members of the Silent Generation in 1964.

Looking at the phenomenon from the other side, people are living longer; life expectancies are lengthening. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the average life expectancy in the U.S. at birth, is nearly 79 years, longer than at any other time in history.

According to the international Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, 65-year-old men can expect to live about another 18 years, while women in their middle 60s can expect to live at least another 20 years.

The percentage of the population 65 and over has also risen. In 1950, it was 8%; it was 12% in 2000 and is expected to reach 20% in 2050.

More Sandwichers?

The trend is expected to continue to grow as young adults seek more pragmatic solutions to financial challenges and older, retired adults live longer and fuller lives. Currently, 15% of middle-aged adults provide financial support to aging parents and children.

While the numbers of sandwichers isn't expected to increase substantially, the financial cost for care will, researchers say; and the bulk of the financial pressure on members of the sandwich generation is expected to come from their children, both young and adult.

With the added and sometimes unexpected burden, sandwichers have to make sure to take care of themselves to avoid burnout or making bad health or financial decisions.

Steps to Managing the Pressure

If you're a sandwicher, here are some ways to help make your life easier, more enjoyable, and less stressful:

TAKE CARE OF YOURSELF. With the responsibility of providing at least part of the financial and emotional care for both elderly adults and children, the stress can get overwhelming at times. Emergencies can throw well-organized schedules and plans into disarray. Self-care is vital to help you maintain your calm and cool. Stay healthy. Stay strong.

KEEP EVERYONE UPDATED. As the liaison (or middleman) for relatives and friends, you may get inundated with requests for information about the health of your parents, the status of your adult children, or the development of your young children. Send regular group emails or texts to friends and family members with updates on health and other matters.

SHARE THE WORK. Taking care of two generations and managing the needs and life challenges of so many people with divergent needs can be trying. You can't do it alone, at least for the long haul. Start delegating the duties. Assign chores to the children, especially the older ones. Enlist your siblings to help your parents with paperwork or other concerns.

SEEK HELP. If no one is volunteering, consider hiring someone to help with tasks or chores. Babysitters can fill the void for doctors' appointments and home care aides can help when you're with your children. Housekeeping services can also take up some of the slack.

CHANGE YOUR WORK SCHEDULE. See if your employer will allow you to change your schedule. A more flexible schedule may allow you to adjust to respond to the needs of your parents and children more efficiently.

DETERMINE WHAT'S MOST IMPORTANT. In other words, prioritize. Your daily schedule is fixed. You only have 24 hours. Draft a list; eliminate wasteful activities. Keep your to-do list simple and pliable.

THINK ABOUT YOU. Be selfish. Set time for unwinding and relaxing. Watch your favorite show, read a good book, or enroll in an aerobics class. The time away will give you a chance to recharge.

TALK IT UP, EXPRESS YOURSELF. Seek emotional support from close friends or family members. Sometimes just venting helps soothe your soul. Joining a support group is a great way to relieve the pressure and find comfort from others who may be undergoing similar experiences.

ENTER THE NOW. Sometimes life can feel stressful and ambiguous. You may wrestle with mixed emotions. You may be plagued by guilt, imagining you haven't spent adequate time with aging parents or young children. Put an end to the negativity. It may be hard at times, but years from now you'll take comfort and joy in knowing you invested yourself in doing what was right for the people you love.

If you are part of the sandwich generation, remind yourself that your service is a reflection of who and what you are. You are fulfilling a noble obligation to provide care for people who need you.

Sources Available Upon Request

Planning Ahead – National Preparedness Month

The Cambridge Dictionary defines "prepare" as making or getting ready for something that will happen in the future. It also states: "to expect that something will happen and to be ready for it."

A capricious planet Earth makes natural disasters inevitable. Some years are worse than others, and relatively brief stretches of recorded history demonstrate the ferocity nature can superimpose on unsuspecting civilizations.

In the United States, as recently as 2017, the havoc an untamed environment wreaked on communities and the economy reached near record levels. The U.S. National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration recorded 16 weather and climate disasters in 2017 with estimated losses exceeding \$1 billion. That number included one drought, two floods, one freeze, eight severe storms, three tropical cyclones, and one wildfire.

Look back in history to 1980, and the picture gets even bleaker. Nearly 220 weather and climate disasters swept across the United States since that time, costing more than \$1.5 trillion. That figure includes the initial costs for hurricanes Harvey, Irma, and Maria.

National Preparedness Month serves as a reminder.

National Preparedness Month was established in 2004 to encourage Americans to prepare for potential emergencies and disasters. The event is held every September and is sponsored by the U.S. Department of Homeland Security's Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA).

While we can't control nature's rage, we can brace ourselves for the worst in the hopes of escaping relatively unscathed. And that requires making preparations.

Here are some emergency preparation tips to help keep you secure:

- Put appliance thermometers in your refrigerator and freezer. Refrigerators should be kept at 40°F or colder and freezers at or below 0°F. Freeze water in containers to keep refrigerators cold during power outages.
- Put refrigerated perishable items like milk and meat in the freezer during power outages. Refrigerators retain adequate cold for about four hours during outages; full freezers may preserve contents for nearly 48 hours (if doors are kept closed).
- Plan ahead by buying emergency supplies if you know potential power outages may occur. Buy dry ice or block ice in anticipation.

The harsh realities of some of the recent and more severe natural disasters demonstrate the importance of making preparations to ensure all aspects of your personal life, including finances, are kept secure.

The Federal Trade Commission offers these steps to manage weather emergencies:

1. **Organize your finances.** Most people preparing for emergencies rightly focus on the material side, such as stocking extra batteries or bottled water. However, ensuring your finances are in order is equally important.
2. **Locate documents.** Inventory paperwork, forms or other important documents, and replace anything that is missing. Store the documents in a safe and protected place.
3. **Take a look at your insurance.** See if your insurance policies—home or health—will pay for shelter or replace any property, including clothes, destroyed in a disaster.
4. **Brace for flooding.** Hurricanes can send rising waters into homes and buildings, causing major structural damage. Check your policy to ensure you are adequately covered for all aspects of a disaster, including floods. You can also draft a personal or household flood plan.
5. **Protect your pets.** The family member often overlooked or neglected during disasters and preparations is the furry one, the household pet. Make plans to protect your pets from fires, floods, tornadoes, or other emergencies.

The American Red Cross provides assistance with developing emergency plans and conducting inspections. Here are ways the organization provides help:

- Conducts home visits to test or install smoke alarms and provides disaster education.
- Hosts The Pillowcase Project, a Disney-sponsored program to help teach children how to prepare for emergencies.
- Participates in FEMA's PrepareAthon!, which helps motivate communities to initiate and engage in more emergency-preparation functions.
- Encourages families with children to use Monster Guard, an app that teaches children through games about the importance of preparing for emergencies.

Our company prepares for emergencies too. Did you know we have a Disaster Recovery and Contingency Plan in place that we would employ in the event of a disaster or emergency? Our goal is to make sure our people, our office locations, our technology and our client's information is kept as safe as possible and that we are able to serve you as quickly after an event as possible. If you ever have questions about our preparedness plans, please let us know.

Preparing for emergencies and for your financial future should be a very important part of your life. If you have any questions or would like to learn more about developing strategies to pursue a prosperous and safe future, contact us today!

Sources Available Upon Request

How to Write a Family Novel – and Why!

Three generations. That's all you have. And then you'll be forgotten. Completely. Only your name may remain. Memories of you will have long since passed into the annals of parochial history.

"There is no remembrance of those who came before; and of those who will come after there will also be no remembrance," wrote Solomon thousands of years ago.

Ancient Greek statesman Pericles provided a different twist on our mortality: "What you leave behind is not what is engraved in stone monuments, but is woven into the lives of others."

That's the key. Leaving behind a financial legacy is fine for propelling successive generations into greater opportunity and influence.

But what about those more treasured possessions: the storied memories stretching across decades of living, the brilliant moments, the wonderful experiences that mark the uniqueness and peculiarity of your family.

Where will they go? How do you transport the wisdom of the ages to those yet unborn, those who will bear, in some distant fashion, the mark of your life, your upbringing, your very character?

The answer lies in the written word—as it has for millennia past. Transfer your legacy of life and passion to your children and your children’s children, and for generations to come, through a family novel.

Long after you’re gone, your descendants will be able to glean and reflect on their ancestors’ insights and observations. They will cherish your story, which will provide a valuable anchor to those long-passed occasions that helped shape and mold their own lives.

Your story will also provide valuable insight to your own immediate family.

Telling Your Story Helps Shape Future Lives

Every family has a story, those tales of military heroics, of lifelong sacrifices, of tragedies and redemption, even of infamy. The stories deserve to be told and shared—for the sake of the joy, the understanding, and the perspectives they’ll bring to future generations.

Here are 10 tips for writing that family best seller:

1. Who are your readers? If you imagine your family tales turning into riveting reading, a real page-turner, you’re making a mistake. Budding authors are writing books every day, only to see them sitting on dusty cyber shelves, rarely getting noticed by few people outside their small circles of friends and family. Take heart. You already have a built-in fan base: your family and friends, and more. Your book will be cherished for years to come.
2. What’s the big deal? You may find the mundane details about little, freckle-faced Tommy growing up in the suburbs of Toledo exciting. But other readers may find the “drama” less appealing. Sure, mention Tommy’s upbringing, his little travails. But delve into the conflict. Tommy struggled with bullies, but later overcame after discovering the true meaning of courage and valor. Inject some factual excitement into the mix. Future generations will thank you for it.
3. What’s the theme? We’re back to the big deal. What makes your family unique? Were they outcasts in your neighborhood? Were they innovators, community leaders? What were their struggles, their challenges? What did they believe in? What was that one unifying emotional, philosophical, or theological thread that kept them motivated?
4. What were they really like? What made them different from others? Describe their personalities. Were they stubborn, persistent, noble, combative? How about spirited and ambitious?
5. How are you going to organize your novel? Don’t do lists. Boring! Structure your book by themes, personalities, or places. How about, for example, something like this: The Early Days in Pennsylvania, The Westward Migration, Building a New Life? Also start chapters with interesting little stories.
6. How long will your book be? Chapters should be about the same length. Pick colorful or catchy chapter titles rather than numbers. If you have ten 2,000-word chapters, for example, you’ll have a 20,000-word book. Most family history novels are usually self-published. Books can be self-published for free or nominal rates. Top sites include: Lulu, CreateSpace, Kindle Direct Publishing, Kobo, Blurb, Xlibris, BookBaby, BookRix, SmashWords, and Draft2Digital.

7. Make it personal. Readers generally enjoy the details. Use anecdotes or even "quotes" to add pizzazz to your story.
8. Get readers to review your manuscript before you publish it. Some easy reviewers can provide feedback on your book's readability. Others can check facts.
9. How's it going to look? Envision the design. It has to be easy to read (maybe with large print). Readers also have to enjoy reading your book and toting it around.
10. What are you going to call it? Don't choose a boring title: "The Jones' Family History." Go with a daring title: "The Wild and Wayward Wanderings of the Williams Warriors."

Once you're done, prepare for the reaction. Some may love it. Some may not. But you did your due diligence for history's sake. Now sit back and enjoy.

AROUND THE OFFICE



Light the Night Kansas City

The Leukemia & Lymphoma Society's Light The Night Walk funds treatments that are saving the lives of patients today. Marc's family has been personally touched by this disease and he has been volunteering with this event for several years. He is in charge of Luminary Lane (shown below), a shining path of remembrance and hope. With a \$1 million fundraising goal, LLS has already raised more than \$700,000 this year. To learn more, visit <http://www.lightthenight.org/events/kansas-city>



Wheelchair Foundation Fundraiser

Mike had the opportunity to help his club, The Rotary Club of Naples, raise funds for their Wheelchair Foundation. The Wheelchair Foundation is a nonprofit organization leading an international effort to create awareness of the needs and abilities of people with physical disabilities, to promote the joy of giving, create global friendship, and to deliver a wheelchair to every child, teen and adult in the world who needs one, but cannot afford one. Mike's Rotary Club has a special connection to Haiti and their goal was to raise \$11,000 to send a container of 110 wheelchairs there, but they blew through the goal and will be sending even more than planned!

Summer Bowl for Kids' Sake

Our team had a great time at Summer Bowl for Kids' Sake, raising money for Big Brothers Big Sisters of Greater Kansas City. Because of your support and support of others in our community, they exceeded their fundraising goal of \$850,000. Thank you to everyone involved!

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