



FROM THE DESK OF ERIN BOTSFORD

BY ERIN BOTSFORD, CFP®

Like many of our clients, when I was growing up, there was no such thing as entitlement. I was taught that you worked hard for a fair day's wages and you gave more in effort than what was expected of you. Unless you had a disability that hindered your employment (which my sister did), you were expected to earn your keep as a productive member of our family and our society.

Passing along a strong work ethic and other laudable character traits is an often overlooked part of estate planning. After all, most of us don't want to leave our assets to the next generation, only to have them squander everything we've worked so hard to achieve. We hope our children and our grandchildren will recognize the value of a dollar, and the significance of volunteerism, sacrifice and charitable giving.

In working with our clients, beginning with our "Visions and Values Conversation"™ we take time to explore the dynamics of the entire family and define what we feel are the risks to our clients as a result of their moral obligations to their children and extended family members. In addition, we use this important information to create estate plans that can include multiple generations and take care of those family members who may not have had the advantages we have had. That being said, we can also encourage beneficiaries in their work ethic and career pursuits by including matching funds for things like higher education. The great thing about estate planning is we are only limited by our imaginations. For example, it's possible to structure a multi-generational family trust to incentivize philanthropic activities, participation in the arts or church involvement.

"Passing along a strong work ethic and other laudable character traits is an often overlooked part of estate planning."

If you haven't done so already, I encourage you to take some time to review your estate plan to make sure it accurately reflects what you want to leave your family and the reputation for which you desire your family to be known. Quietly reflect on the things you believe matter – really matter – and the beliefs and qualities you want to pass on to your children, and your children's children.

Once you have a clear idea of the core principles you hope to convey to future generations, we are always here to help you solidify your ideas and review your current documents to be sure your values are accurately reflected. By demonstrating qualities like integrity, discipline and generosity, you can provide for your beneficiaries' well-being in ways that extend far beyond material comforts.

Erin Botsford to Join Rich Dad Live!

*Erin Botsford
Featured Speaker
at*

**Robert Kiyosaki's
"Rich Dad Live"
in Dallas 2010!**

Saturday, April 24th

**Embassy Suites Dallas/Frisco
Hotel & Convention Center
Frisco, TX 75034**

This is a great opportunity to learn new approaches to enhancing your wealth and introducing friends and colleagues to Erin's philosophy of "Lifestyle Driven Investing"™.

**For details, visit
www.richdad.com/dallas/**



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CHARLIE'S TIPS TO BE WRECK-LESS

Scan:

Constantly scan
your surroundings.

Recognize:

Identify real or
possible hazards,
such as a swerving
driver, a truck blocking
an intersection or a
driver on a cell phone.



React:

Plan your reaction
based on the
possibility of that
hazard crossing
your path.



CHARLIE HALFEN

SUCCESS TO SIGNIFICANCE

More than 5,000 teenagers are killed in car accidents each year in the U.S., and more than 300,000 people are injured. In fact, auto accidents are the number one cause of death for Americans younger than 34.

Before retiring, Charlie Halfen was a Corporate Fleet Safety Manager at UPS, responsible for accident investigation and prevention. During his many years on the job, Charlie unfortunately witnessed several fatal, but preventable accidents. After observing the pain and suffering of the victims and their loved ones, Charlie decided to use what he learned at UPS to help bring down the statistics.

"I believe that all auto accidents can be prevented by just one of the drivers," he says. "It should be everyone's goal to never be in an auto accident. Good drivers don't have accidents."

Today, Charlie spends his retirement talking to parents, elders, teenagers, and even young kids to make them more aware of the dangers of driving and share his strategies for preventing accidents.

Drivers in their teens are his primary focus. In a report to Congress in 2008, the National Highway Transportation Safety Administration noted, "Younger drivers are not experienced in hazard recognition. They do not generally acknowledge inherently dangerous situations on the road, and therefore do not react appropriately." Very few drivers training courses provide instruction in this most critical area, and less than 1% of all drivers receive additional instruction and training after getting their license.

To help parents and guardians teach their children how to drive safely and avoid accidents, Charlie developed two worksheets, one is called *What's Your Driving IQ?* and the other is *The Driver Hazards Observations* form. Both are available at no charge at www.dds.ga.gov. He also created an instructional DVD for teens on hazard recognition, which is available through his website at www.hazardrecognitiondriving.com and through Amazon.com.

Charlie believes driving is a physical and mental skill, like baseball, basketball or playing an instrument. Mastering that skill takes longer than the 30 hours of classroom training coupled with six hours of practical education most novice drivers are required to complete. True proficiency on the road requires ongoing training and learning. Charlie Halfen is committed to providing that training, and helping more people avoid tragedy by staying alert behind the wheel.



PROTECT YOURSELF AGAINST IDENTITY THEFT

In February 2010, New York law enforcement officers nabbed 22 crooks accused of identity theft. The criminals reportedly sold their victims' identities – including driver's license and social security numbers – for up to \$10,000 a piece. The buyers included convicted felons, drug traffickers and sex offenders, all of whom were trying to “reinvent” themselves to erase their criminal past.

Identity theft is not just a nuisance, it can destroy your credit rating, keep you from getting promoted at work, cause you to be denied health insurance coverage, and even result in your incarceration if authorities mistake you for the criminal who stole your data.

The Federal Trade Commission estimates that more than 9 million Americans have their identity stolen each year. Other sources put the number closer to 15 million. Fortunately, authorities and service providers are getting more savvy about blocking

identity theft and catching impersonators.

Here are a few simple steps you can take to reduce your chances of becoming another statistic:

Safeguard Your Social Security Number – Keep your social security card in a safe place, not in your wallet, and only share your social security number when absolutely necessary. Many businesses will request the number for identification purposes, but they really don't have a need for the information, and they don't always keep it secure. If a company or organization requests your social security number for general record keeping, ask whether you can provide an alternate number, instead.

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MEET WITH YOUR TAX ACCOUNTANT

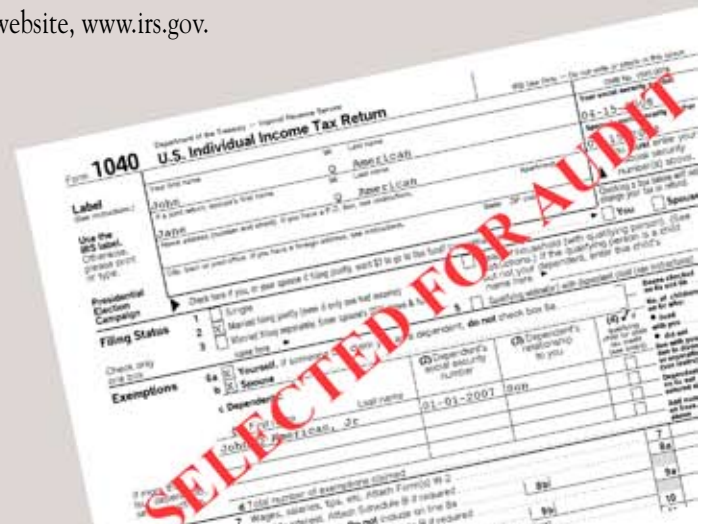
For most people, an IRS audit is one of their worst fears — and according to recent statistics, high income earners are much more likely to get a call from an examiner. Taxpayers with an income of \$200,000 faced a 2.89 percent chance of an audit, compared to only 0.96 percent for those earning less than 200,000.

So, what do you do if the IRS comes knocking at your door?

- Don't panic. Unless you have knowingly committed fraud, you have nothing to fear.
- Respond promptly. You generally have 30 days before the IRS begins to take action.
- Meet with your tax attorney. Be sure you can substantiate the items in question.
- Gather the appropriate records. If any are missing, request duplicates immediately.
- Bring copies, not originals. The IRS is not responsible for documents in its possession.
- Be polite. Taking out your frustrations on the auditor does nothing to help reach a fair resolution.

Source: “Enforcement and Service Results for FY 2009”, Internal Revenue Service

For most people, an audit results in modest changes to a return. Any proposed changes will be explained in detail. You can agree with the audit results, or appeal the examiner's findings following the procedures explained in your letter. For more information, refer to IRS Publication 556, Examination of Returns on the IRS website, www.irs.gov.





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PROTECT YOURSELF AGAINST IDENTITY THEFT

Keep Address Information Private – Thieves can steal your identity right off an envelope or package label. To reduce your risk, keep mail out of your trashcan and recycling bin, and shred items bearing your address. Also be sure to shred credit card applications, insurance forms, medical records and bank statements, rather than simply tossing them in the waste basket.

Surf the Web Wisely – When entering personal data into a website, look for the closed padlock symbol at the bottom of the page to confirm that the site is secure. Also, avoid logging on to your bank account or inputting medical information while using a wireless connection, which makes you more vulnerable to hackers. Get more tips from top computer experts about protecting yourself on the Web at www.onguardonline.gov.

Select Intricate Passwords – Using a combination of letters, numbers and symbols for your password will make it more difficult for hackers to access your information. Avoid using passwords that might be easy to discern, such as your pet’s name, your mother’s maiden name, your birthdate, or the last four digits of your social security number.

Use Caution Before Sharing Information – Before you offer up information like your driver’s license or social security number over the phone, be sure you know who you’re talking to. In general, you should not share personal information unless you initiated the call. Scammers often pose as representatives from the bank, the IRS, or another reputable organization, and even savvy individuals can fall victim to an experienced con.

To learn more about identity theft and the steps you can take if your identity has been stolen, visit the Federal Trade Commission online at <http://www.ftc.gov/bcp/edu/micorsites/idtheft/index.html>.

PASSING ON FAMILY TREASURES

Sandor Rosenberg collected postage stamps his entire life. By the time he passed away at age 80, he had amassed several albums full of vintage stamps from across the globe. The impressive collection went to his son, who 30 years later left it to his daughter – who had absolutely no idea what to do with it.



The popular PBS program *Antiques Roadshow* often features people who have purchased furniture, artwork or collectibles at a bargain price, because the owner didn’t recognize the item’s true value. If you plan to pass on jewelry, paintings, coins or other family treasures to the next generation, consider creating a written summary of the item’s history or value, as well as a list of informational resources (books, websites, organizations, etc.). That way, you can rest assured that whether or not your grandchildren share your passion for Depression Era Glassware, at least they will know the value of the expansive collection you bequeathed to them.

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