**(U.S. and International)**

**What Story Do You Want Others to Tell About Your Life?**

*"I want them to not only do what’s legal obviously, but I want them to judge every action by how it would appear on the front page of their local paper."*

That's master investor and CEO Warren Buffett describing how he wants his 330,000 employees at Berkshire Hathaway to work every day.

Imagining how your own life would look on the printed page can be a helpful exercise when you're building a Life-Centered Financial Plan. After all, the purpose of a financial plan isn't just to earn more money. It's to grow assets that help you live a life that fulfills you and that you're proud of.

As you think about the story of your life, ask yourself these three questions to reflect on what's happened so far and to write an inspiring rough draft of the chapters ahead.

**1. What goals have I achieved?**

A legacy filled with positive stories doesn't just happen. The happiest and most successful people are often those who live their lives the most intentionally. Rather than waiting around for life to happen to them, they dream big, set goals, and work hard every day to make progress.

If you want to be thought of as a consistently high achiever, start out small. Identify one or two goals you'd like to achieve in six months to a year that build towards bigger overall goals. Then, break down those goals into daily actionable steps.

The great thing about this technique is that you can apply it to just about any aspect of your life. Long-term financial goals might start with a brown bag lunch three days per week and increasing monthly contributions to your retirement accounts. A fitness goal might start with taking a long walk every morning. And creating your own dream company might start with an online class you take to learn a new skill or earn a new certification.

**2. How did I learn from the mistakes I made?**

No person's life journey avoids every bump in the road. There were, and perhaps will be, times when you make the easy choice instead of the right choice. You'll do things that hurt others or embarrass yourself. A big business swing could come up empty. You might lose perspective and place your friends and family behind things that aren't as important.

Try to accept that these kinds of mistakes are a given. But will you let these errors define your life? Or do you want people to remember how you responded, rebounded, made amends, course corrected, and came out the other side a better, more thoughtful, more caring person? When you’re looking back on your life decades from now, these stories of learning and growth will be far more important than the stumbles along the way.

**3. How did I impact others?**

Many people don't start thinking about their legacy planning until they're retired and nearing the end of their lives. But your legacy is bigger than what you bequeath in your last will and testament. Your legacy is defined by the actions you take and the choices you make every single day.

You may not love everything about your job. But you can choose to show up every morning with a smile on your face and to treat every coworker and customer with kindness. You may not be rich, but the weekend volunteer shifts you put in at your local food bank will make life easier for folks who are in need. You may never achieve perfect work-life balance. But your family will always remember the summers when you coached the kids' soccer teams or carved out enough free time to take that big family vacation.

Again, authoring these kinds of life stories doesn't just happen. Living your best life possible with the money you have is a process that combines long-term vision with intentional planning. If you need help writing your next chapter, please get in touch and we can talk about our Life-Centered Planning process, your life, your goals, and your legacy.