



The Most Important Piece of Planning You will Ever Do.....

In this my first piece for the Digger, I thought it important to set the scene and deal with one of the most important issues facing older Australians, how they pass on their family wealth to the next generation.

Estate Planning and the perils of getting it right all need to be done properly and can best be illustrated by the following story.

It is one of many I have experienced in my years as a Financial Planner and the first that I will share over the coming columns to best illustrate what can and does occur when children and their spouses smell money or blood in the water.

I was in the Hunter Valley attending the wake of an elderly male client who passed away and was standing with their spouse when she and I watched the daughter-in-law remove from her handbag a box containing a roll of those red sale dots you'd see used in a retail store. After receiving a short jab in the ribs to watch this, I was amazed to see her walk the enormous property calmly placing the sale dots on a range of items including the most extensive range of Lladro, Crystal and Artworks I'd seen accumulated in a lifetime. As the lady returned to her bag my client asked her a question,

"What would you be doing there darling ?", her response "well Norma in a few weeks time there'll be the reading of the will and I thought it best to indicate now, for the benefit of all, what items we'd be keen to have from the estate". Norma's calm reply "oh no darling, there'll be no reading of the will". With that the daughter-in-law's hand hit her forehead as she screamed, "F--- old people, he's died intestate this will take f--- months if not years !!" Norma's reply, "oh no darling he didn't own a thing !!"

And with that she grabbed her husband (Norma's son) and their kids and made for the door.

As we watched them go Norma turned to me and said, "Michael best you organise the Lawyers for me, there'll be a bit to do".

The **5** keys to avoiding a family war are (or the “red dots’ at your funeral);

- 1** Get a Specialist Estate Planning Lawyer
- 2** Be explicitly clear with your wishes
- 3** Define what’s important to you and what you want to see done
- 4** Take the specialist’s advice not the vested family members
- 5** Remember – “We are all friends when there’s nothing at stake”

Michael Brown



Michael has worked in the Finance and Banking Industry since 1985. His areas of expertise have covered both Investment Management and Financial Planning.

Prior to moving into the Private Sector in 2006, Michael had worked for a number of Major Financial Institutions such as the Commonwealth Bank of Australia, Lumley Securities and also with Westpac Banking Corp as an Executive Manager in Private Bank

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