



Horton Financial Services, LLC

Insights about choices
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Financial Choices

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PROCRASTINATION

Why do we put off doing things? There must be a whole basket of answers to that questions. No doubt, you have some of your own. Why don't you call Aunt Jane, whom you love very much? It may be because you know that when you pick up the phone, you will spend the next hour or so listening to negative dribble. So, you put it off until she calls again saying, "Why don't you ever call me?"

It could also be that doing something you know you need to do will require effort, and the exertion of effort, either physical or mental is something that is easy not to do. It also requires decision-making, which is for most of us the most difficult of all things to do. Do I bake cookies or cake? Do I cut the red wire or the blue wire on the bomb? Decision-making runs the gamut from trivial to deadly serious, but it all requires tremendous mental energy.

A business card I saw had "NOBODY PROCRASTINATES THEIR WAY TO THE TOP" written on the back side of it, serving as a continual reminder to do the next right thing right away. One more sales call at the end of each day can propel a salesman's productivity up 40%. So, why wouldn't everyone do it?

Goals and objectives serve a vital function in the fulfillment of desired dreams and their attainment. Something about written goals induces an auto-serving chemistry within ourselves to take actions that will impact upon the attainment of those goals. The trick to goal-setting is to make realistic goals within the framework of your resources, capabilities and timeframe. If you have a goal to learn seven languages, break it down into smaller goals, such as "become fluent in Spanish over the next three years." Then, move on to the next language. If you can do it in three months, more power to you.

Many times we fail to meet our goals and we become frustrated and resign ourselves to wishful thinking. Nothing worthwhile was ever accomplished without direction and purpose. The pain of not keeping our New Year's Resolutions was just too damaging to ever do it again. Why not take another look at what you planned and achieved. You might find that you actually did do half or more of them. Don't focus on the failures. Bolster your resolve by realizing that you did accomplish some worthwhile things, and know that you can do more.

As a musician I know that audiences expect me to hit the right notes and be in tune. I also know that when I make a mistake, and we all do, it will stand out above the 99% of the error-free rendering. But as soon as a mistake happens it is in the past. We must put it behind us where it belongs, learn from it and move forward. One of my clients is a worldwide known recording artist, and has produced more than two dozen albums in a fewer number of years. As we toured one of his recording facilities and discussed the advances in recording engineering technology, I asked him if he ever wanted to go back and re-work his early recordings, which he admitted had many mistakes in them. His answer was a firm, "NO, I look only to the future!"

Procrastination dwells in varying proportions in all of us. My home room teacher wrote in my senior high school yearbook, "To Raymond, you sweet, sweet, lazy, lazy boy!" I've never forgotten it. It inspired me to become proactive, to take the initiative and be assertive. It didn't cure my procrastination, but it did keep me from being slothful.

A favorite trick of mine to fight procrastination is to take time away from everything, and fill a note pad with things I either want or need to do. It is amazing how much self-motivation that exercise will create. Do the next right thing!



Raymond C. Horton, Sr.
Editor & Publisher

The "*Financial Choices*" bi-monthly newsletter is dedicated to the idea of making good choices, financial or otherwise, and is distributed to our firm's clients, professional peers, potential networking professionals, and potential clients to inform and to strengthen relationships, present and future.

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Thanksgiving, Christmas, Hanukah, New Years Greetings!



I love the Holidays. I love the excitement in the air. I love the bright-eyed optimism in the faces of children. I love the opportunity to say to you "I care for you, I wish you well, I pray for you, what can I do to help?"

Our wish to you is that you will experience the same or greater joy of the Holidays that we know, and that your own optimism about the purpose of your life and those of your loved ones will be strengthened with greater resolve for the new year and beyond.

Ray & Rita Horton

Jim Bethea

Rance Cram

By the way... The top 15 jobs of 2006 for those without higher ed. degrees:

1. Nurses
2. Customer service representatives
3. Sales (non-technical)
4. Truck drivers
5. Maintenance and general repair
6. Bookkeeping and accounting
7. Executive secretary or Admin. Asst.
8. Secretary (not legal, medical, executive)
9. Carpenter
10. Auto technician and mechanic
11. Police and sheriff's patrol officers
12. Licensed vocational nurses
13. Electrician
14. Computer support specialist
15. Plumber, pipefitter and steamfitter

L O N G E V I T YHere are seven tips for living longer and healthier:

1. **Optimism.** There is something about a good attitude that instills hope and a continual search for greater meaning and purpose to life that in a positive way impacts how long and well we live .
2. **Engagement.** Have things to do and reasons to do them that make you want to get up in the morning and pursue those objectives.
3. **Mobility.** Don't sit around hoping for someone to call. Take action. Be proactive. Take the first step.
4. **Adaptation.** You might mourn, you might suffer, you might go bankrupt, but move on with your life.
5. **Healthy Habits.** Eat a healthy diet, exercise regularly, do not smoke, and drive responsibly.
6. **Social Participation.** Be a part of something bigger than yourself, whether it is family, religion, charitable causes, saving the world, or just being a good citizen.
7. **Moderation.** Ben Franklin is credited with saying, "the key to a balanced life is moderation in all things".

Did You Know?

- Anne Bradstreet was the first American woman to be published.
- A barrel of oil is 42 gallons.
- 300,000 of the 2.8 million dams in the U. S. have been reversed to their natural state for environmental reasons.
- "Tell me, I will forget. Show me, I will remember. Involve me, I will understand." (Chinese Proverb)
- More firefighters die from heart attacks while fighting fires than any other cause.
- Medicare supplement policies on a 65 year-old female, Plan C, can run \$651 to \$9,000 in price range.
- It is socially acceptable in China to pass gas while dining.
- The most profit made off the Iraqi War to date is by the film maker, Michael Moore, having made 15% more than Halliburton.
- A 10% weight loss will reduce snoring by 30%.
- For Thanksgiving, 22 million Americans traveled by air and another 30 million by highways.
- The U.S. economy grew 4.1% during the third quarter of 2005.
- New homes construction in the U.S. rose 5.2% in November.
- Kirk Kerkorian, the single largest stockholder of General Motors, recently sold 12 million shares, or 2.1% of his 9.9% holdings.
- Congress just passed legislation that will provide almost eight billion dollars of tax relief for Gulf Coast businesses.
- The gross domestic product of re-building the Gulf Coast will reach the equivalency of the World's third largest economy.
- Medical doctors and scientists have the most occupational prestige, followed by firefighters and teachers, then military officers.
- In pursuit of a worthy purpose, the journey of life is where we find our joy.

OPINION

With all of concrete's wonderful attributes, it has many shortcomings. Theoretically, it gets harder with time, but as you know, wear and tear will break it to pieces. A chunk of loose concrete from a highway that wedges between truck tires can become a lethal missile to unsuspecting motorists.

Concrete also gets very hot in the summertime, adding to the discomfort of those either walking or driving upon it. It can also break down re-capped tires like many trucking companies use to hold down costs, adding more hazards to the roadways.

I can envision self-adjusting, heat-controlled concrete. A combination of certain chemicals will prevent the concrete from reaching or falling below certain temperatures. It could also be made to maintain a specific temperature or range of temperature. This might also make the concrete less likely to crack.

Another use would be to lower heating and cooling costs with its self-adjusting capabilities. The concrete slab of homes could heat up in the winter and cool down in the summer.

Shopping mall parking lots could keep a certain stable temperature all year, taking some of the discomfort out of re-entering an automobile in extreme weather.

Improved environmental capabilities of concrete will create new uses for it, and will improve safety and our quality of life.

This opinion is not "news"; just the editor's imagination.

THE ECONOMY

The Federal Reserve has bumped up the short-term interest rates that banks charge each other thirteen consecutive times in their quarterly meetings. In June of 2004 this rate was 1%, the lowest in 46 years. It now stands at 4.25%.

Most banks prime lending rates are two to three points higher for loans to their best customers. One's capability of paying back loans, and one's history of doing so weigh heavily upon the rate your bank charges you.

What's in the future of short-term interest rates? Well, we can probably count on them going up again at the next meeting in early 2006. It could level off after one or two more increases, as other key economic indicators at this time do not support a protracted continuation of rate increases throughout next year.

DEPRESSION

Depression is a viable medical condition that affects millions of Americans. Thank God for medication, but there are some non-drug therapies for depression too.

There is something about exercise that produces the needed physical and chemical reactions to reduce depression. Sometimes, exercise performed regularly three or more times per week for thirty minutes or more is equivalent to drug therapy in some persons.

In seemingly all cases, exercise reduces the severity of depression. It is even more effective when done within a group of other persons, such as a team sport, an aerobics class, or just being in the gym with others doing the same thing. The home gym is great, if you use it, but the "go-to" place is better.

For the very depressed person, it might take more than an understanding of this to get started. Ask for help, or offer to help someone else.

Hot Ideas !

The "Hot Idea" for this issue is **Long-Term Care**. Who wants it? Who needs it?

The quality of long-term care, such as that provided by nursing homes, can vary. Essential care can be provided the poor by Medicaid. The wealthy are not concerned with the cost. The middle class is most affected by the cost of long-term care. They can neither qualify for Medicaid benefits, or have sufficient savings to pay the high costs for services.

The middle-class up to the moderately wealthy often prefer to shift the risk of long-term care costs to an insurance company, either partially or totally. Louisiana has the lowest cost in the Nation of about \$35,000 per year. The very poor and the very rich opt out. Medicaid takes care of the poor; the rich take care of themselves.

10 MEDICAID MYTHS

You probably know that Medicaid will pay for your long term nursing home care if you meet certain limitations on income and assets. But, most people misunderstand the Medicaid eligibility rules. This series, "10 Medicaid Myths," discusses the most common misconceptions.

Medicaid Myth # 8

"If I put my children on my bank accounts, the money will be considered theirs when I apply for Medicaid."

Sounds too easy, and it is. If you allow someone else's name to be added to a bank account, the account is still yours. For "joint" accounts, the rule in Louisiana is that the true owner of the account is the person who deposited the money into the account.

It is even possible that your name is not on the account at all and it will be considered yours, if the person named on the account is just holding the money for you. To divest yourself of an asset, you must give it away completely, with no strings attached – no right to reclaim it and no understanding between you and the other person, usually your child, that the money is really yours.

Aside from Medicaid, joint accounts are often a bad idea. The person who is listed as co-owner has the legal right to withdraw the money without your consent. This loss of control may not be what you had in mind. There are better ways. And what if the co-owner is sued or dies? You may then have to prove that the money is yours, which can force you to pay a lawyer a lot of money just to enforce your right to keep it.

Finally, when you die, the co-owner may withdraw the money without court order. This may be ok with you, so long as you want that one child to have the money, but your executor may demand that the child return the money to your estate to pay debts or to distribute to your other heirs.

For more details and a free booklet on Medicaid Planning in Louisiana, and/or Estate Planning in Louisiana, please call my office and ask to speak to one of my staff, or just email your request to me.

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About Our Practice

For forty years, we have been helping people solve financial problems. The slogan of Horton Financial Services is "*Meeting Financial Challenges Every Day!*"

Our firm is paid for distributing insurance and investment products, and the benefit of our counsel, but the nature of our business is "*planning*", working with each client, one at a time, to help them achieve certain financial objectives.

We have never focused upon our personal income, but upon doing the right thing for the client, always considering the income a by-product of our service.

We have impacted over 3,000 lives in a positive way over the years, and continue to grow our business, typically upon referrals from existing satisfied clients, investors and contract holders.

Our pledge to you is that we will always strive to do the right thing for you, and to merit your trust and confidence.

Raymond C. Horton, Sr.

THIS 'N THAT

- For the period ending October 31, 2005 Government Bonds have averaged yields of 4.7% over five years and 5.2% over ten years. Factor in that government bonds are generally free of Federal Income Tax, and one's equivalent taxable yield is higher. For example, one in a 28% tax bracket would have earned the taxable equivalent of 6.5% and 7.2% respectively. Not too shabby for the ultimate in safety in the market.
- The new combined life expectancy is now 77.6 years. That is up from 77.3 years for a child born in 2003. The older one becomes, the greater his or her life expectancy becomes. Typically, females outlive males in the U. S. about six years. Since the 77.6 years figure is averaged, that means that females can expect to live to almost age 81, and men can expect to just under age 75. By not smoking, buckling your seat belt, and maintaining a healthy diet with moderate exercise, one can add several years to the average life expectancy.
- If you plan on giving an old automobile with a value of \$500 or more to the Salvation Army, or any other charitable organization, and take a tax write off for the fair market value, think again. The IRS now says that all you can deduct is what the charity gets for the vehicle.
- The new Medicare prescription plan is a much better deal than Seniors had before, which was no plan for acquiring the costly medications. One can choose benefits in the cost range of about \$15 to almost \$60 per month. A single medication can cost \$100 per month. Just think about the person that takes twenty or more medications regularly for sustaining quality of life, and, indeed, life itself. The new plan might not be everything we want and need, but it is a huge initial step into government supported (via taxpayers' dollars and end-users nominal premiums) prescription medications in this day of enormous research and development costs required to meet current and future health needs in medication and cures for all that ails us.

Past Issues

Past issues of "*Financial Choices*" can be seen on our website, "www.HortonFinancial.com".

Sources include:

- The National Underwriter Company
- Wall Street Journal
- Fox Financial News
- The Shreveport Times
- Dow Jones
- National Assn of Ins. & Fin. Advisors
- American Health Insurance Assn.
- The Associated Press
- Million Dollar Round Table
- Cable News Network
- Society of Financial Services Professionals
- Reuters News Service
- Center for Disease Control & Prevention
- Employee Benefit Research Institute
- Fortune
- Worth
- Carillon Investments, Inc.
- Advisor Today
- Bureau of Labor Statistics
- ABC, NBC, CBS, CNBC, Fox News
- Editorial knowledge