

FEBRUARY 2021

Piece Of Mind

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Choose One: Your Heart, Your Wallet, Your Mind, or Your Duty

What Really Matters to You?

When my wife and I have visitors over to our home, they stop in their tracks at the entryway. On the floor is a stone inlay of a compass rose surrounded by two circles. It's a beautiful piece of work that I requested when we had our house remodeled. Usually the reaction we get from guests is, "John, what is that?" I love sharing the answer because the design isn't actually a compass — it's a depiction of the Brower Quadrant.

If you enjoy reading business books, you may have picked up "The Brower Quadrant" by Lee Brower when it came out in 2009. Lee is a friend of mine, and he introduced me to his idea in 2006. The concept is fairly simple. Lee believes that we can divide all of the assets in our lives into four quadrants: Human, Financial, Intellectual, and Civic. Here are a few examples of the assets that fall in each category.

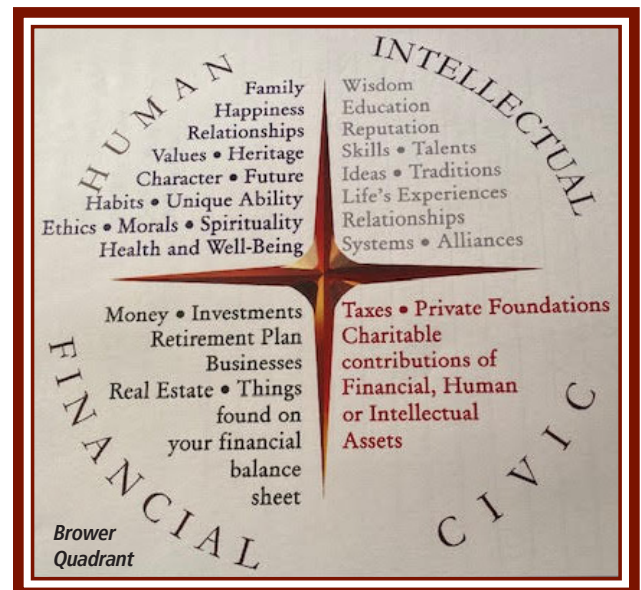
- The **Human** category contains our family, happiness, relationships, values, heritage, character, future, ethics, morals, spirituality, health, unique abilities, and more.
- The **Financial** category is for our money, investments, retirement plans, real estate, and anything else that would fit on a balance sheet.
- The **Intellectual** quadrant is for our wisdom, education, reputation, skills, talents, experiences, and more.
- Finally, the **Civic** section contains our taxes, private foundations, and charitable contributions.

The Brower Quadrant represents these four areas, with each point of the compass forming a dividing line. As soon as I saw it, I was fascinated by the breakdown. I wondered, "Why split these things into categories?" and then, "Which category is most important to me?"

Not long ago, a study was conducted to ask wealthy individuals that very question: "If you had to give up all of the categories except one, which would you keep?" Overwhelmingly, respondents agreed they would keep the Human category. Their money, investments, wisdom, and private foundations weren't nearly as important to them as their unique abilities, morals, and spirituality.

Do you agree? Maybe it's hard to weigh your hard-won wealth against the abstract ideas in the Human category. For me, a presentation on inheritance really put things into perspective. The presenter asked, "If you were a beneficiary of Tiger Wood's estate, which would you rather inherit: his golf clubs or his swing?"

Before the presenter finished his sentence, I was ready to pick the golf clubs. Keep in mind, I'm not a golfer, but how amazing would it be to own the clubs that won 82 PGA Tours? Then, his last word brought me up short. Tiger's golf clubs are nothing without his swing — of course I would rather have that! The difference between the two



inspired me to ask myself what I want my children to inherit. Would I like to pass on my books, desk, and chair (Financial)? Or would I rather they inherit who I am — my morals, values, and abilities (Human)? The latter clearly wins out.

What puzzles me is that for most of us, the Human quadrant rises to the top, but we don't always prioritize its contents day to day. We put time with our families off in favor of work and prioritize our reputations over our happiness. I'm guilty of falling into this trap myself, and I think part of the problem is that the system is rigged.

We have strict rules and deadlines surrounding the education of our children and filing our taxes. We encourage people to set financial goals. But

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A Simple Way to Improve Your Day!

The Calendar of 'Things to Look Forward To'

Many families have faced disappointment in one way or another. Since early last year, countless activities and events have been canceled, and people had to skip many family vacations and get-togethers. Though it is a new year, it's still going to be a while before normal activities and events will be scheduled, meaning there might not be a whole lot to look forward to, which can be disheartening.

So, why not change that and give yourself and your family something to look forward to? A great way to improve your day — or week, month, or even year — is to write down things you're excited about. In an article on Lifehacker.com, one mom talked about how she improved the overall mood of her family by creating a calendar of things to look forward to every week.

In a post on Facebook, she wrote, "I wanted something for me and my kids to look forward to each day, so I posted a list to my fridge of the days of the week and one fun thing each day. (Like Taco Tuesday, Takeout Thursday, Dance Party Friday, Movie & Popcorn Sunday.)" It's an idea anyone can easily implement.

Create themed days (like game night or park day) or create a schedule of fun things. Write down when the next show or movie you're interested in will be available to stream. You can do the same for a new book or video game that may be coming out and apply the concept to virtually anything.

The important thing is that you write it down on a calendar so you can see it. When



you or your family glance at the calendar and see what's coming up, it elevates your mood and boosts your day. And the more things you're looking forward to, the better!

Give it a try and get everyone in the family involved. When you need a little extra joy in your life, this is an incredibly simple way to achieve it!

Leaving Money to Charity Is Easier Than You Think

2 Simple Ways to Give Back in Your Estate Plan

As John mentioned on Page 1, donating funds to charity is a crucial part of the Civic section of the Brower Quadrant. It's also a great way to make sure your Estate Plan aligns with your values and contributes to causes you care about. Here are just a few famous examples of this practice at work:

- **Kirk Douglas** left almost all of his \$61 million fortune to charities, including the Kirk Douglas Theatre and Children's Hospital Los Angeles.
- **Joan Crawford** left most of her \$2 million estate to nonprofits like the Muscular Dystrophy Association of America and the American Cancer Society.
- **Doris Day**, who was worth more than \$200 million when she passed, left all of her money to the Doris Day Animal Foundation.

However, charitable giving is not just for the ultra rich! Giving to nonprofit organizations through estate planning is extremely common, and it's easier than you might think. Often, clients come to us concerned that they need to use advanced estate planning techniques to give back, like creating a Charitable Remainder Trust, but this isn't necessary for most people. Most people can accomplish their charitable goals with one of these two straightforward methods.

1. **Name the charity as a beneficiary in your Revocable Trust.** This is perhaps the simplest approach. All we need to know is the name of the entity you'd like to donate to and the dollar amount or percentage of your estate that you want to give.
Note: Leaving either a dollar amount or percentage works well, but leaving a dollar amount is slightly more straightforward

because leaving a percentage to a charity may require an accounting.

2. **Name the charity as a beneficiary of your retirement account.** This option is also very simple, and you can use it with an IRA or 401(k). All you have to do is name the charity as a beneficiary directly with the custodian of your retirement account. Better yet, when the assets from your IRA go to charity instead of a child or another heir, those funds can be transferred income-tax-free. That makes this method a great way to get the most out of your retirement savings if you are already charitably inclined.

If you want to add one of these methods of giving to your Estate Plan or update your current strategy for giving back, let our team know at your Annual Review.

The Perks of Estate Planning With Your Spouse

5 Reasons to Discuss End-of-Life Decisions

When couples come to us for estate planning, often one of them is more financially savvy than the other. If you're married and reading this newsletter, that's probably you! It's perfectly normal to have one spouse handle money matters, but when we start working on a couple's Estate Plan, we still ask both spouses to be involved in the hiring and design process.

Why do we do this? Well, there are a lot of benefits to involving your partner in your estate planning decisions, including reading our newsletter and tuning into our workshops. Here are five perks of sharing the financial load, just in time for Valentine's Day.

- 1. You'll have fewer arguments about money.** If both spouses understand the process from the start, you'll be able to avoid redundant questions, frustrations, and arguments about your funds and inheritance.
- 2. You'll be able to share important discussions with your heirs.** If you and your partner are both up to date on your estate plan, you can present a united front when discussing your Trust, Advanced Health Care Directives, and other important things with your children and other heirs.
- 3. You'll get to know each other better.** What would your spouse want you to do if they fell into a coma? What if they developed Alzheimer's? These topics will come up in the estate planning process, and you'll learn new things about each other that will bring you closer as a couple.
- 4. You'll both understand which steps to take in case of a divorce.** This might not be a happy thought, but it's true. If both spouses have full knowledge of their estate plan as-is, it will smooth the process of separating if it becomes necessary.
- 5. You'll be prepared no matter who passes first.** If the money-savvy spouse in a partnership passes first, their loved one may be left confused and unsure how to proceed financially. We're here to help in that situation, but getting both spouses involved upfront will help you avoid confusion and stress in the long term.

It may not seem like it at first blush, but sharing the estate planning process with your spouse is one of the most loving things you can do. It shows that you're invested in their future and want them to be prepared. What's more romantic than that?



Sudoku

1			7		6			4
				2		1	7	
				3	1		2	
	3	1		4	9		8	
4			2	1		9		6
	7	9				5		1
		8	1			3		
	1		3	9		7		

Solution on Pg. 4

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where are the deadlines for self-improvement? For building relationships? Valentine's Day, which is coming up this month, is the closest thing to a deadline for romance, but it's a softball — it's easy to snag a dinner reservation (or it used to be) and buy a box of chocolates!

This month, I have a challenge for you (and me). As we move into 2021, decide which quadrant you want to prioritize and set benchmarks and deadlines for the things in it. Try to strike a healthier balance between the vital work of financial planning, charitable giving, and your personal life. Make the things you love a priority. When I need a reminder of this, I just look at our Preston Estate Planning logo — the Brower Quadrant is right there to point my way.

— John Preston

1	2	3	7	5	6	8	9	4
9	5	6	4	2	8	1	7	3
8	4	7	9	3	1	6	2	5
6	3	1	5	4	9	2	8	7
4	8	5	2	1	7	9	3	6
2	7	9	6	8	3	5	4	1
7	9	8	1	6	4	3	5	2
5	1	4	3	9	2	7	6	8
3	6	2	8	7	5	4	1	9

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The Original Death by Chocolate

17th Century Chocoholics Get Revenge



How much do you love chocolate? Would you be willing to die for a taste of your favorite candy bar? Would you kill for one? You've probably never thought to ask yourself these questions, but if tall tales can be believed, arguments over chocolate have, in fact, turned deadly.

National Dark Chocolate Day and National Chocolate Fondue Day both fall this month (on Feb. 1 and Feb. 5, respectively), and in honor of those tasty holidays, we investigated the original "death by chocolate" — an act of legendary revenge.

Rumor has it that the controversy started in the 1600s in Chiapas, Mexico, when a group of chocoholic churchgoers started bringing their favorite sweet snack to services. This annoyed the

bishop, who resorted to banning parishioners from eating chocolate during church. As an article in Indian Country Today tells it, the chocoholics got back at the bishop by poisoning his daily cup of *chocolatl*, an Aztec chocolate drink. Who knew the ancestor of hot cocoa could be so deadly?

Surprisingly, this crazy story isn't the origin of the "death by chocolate" cake we love today. That dessert was created in 1993 by Chef Marcel Desaulniers, then-owner of The Trellis restaurant in Williamsburg, Virginia. Here's the restaurant's mouthwatering description of the seven-layer confection, which takes three days to make:

"The decadence begins with layers of moist chocolate cake, dark chocolate ganache, crunchy chocolate meringue, and an airy

chocolate mousse. The cake is then coated in a glaze of dark chocolate and served on a pool of chocolate sauce with house-made milk chocolate ice cream, topped with a hand-rolled white chocolate truffle, and finally dusted with white chocolate powder."

Is your mouth watering yet? The original version of death by chocolate might be a bit complex for the average chef, but if you're craving a slice, you can find more accessible recipes at Delish.com and SugarGeekShow.com. Just remember that when you pull it out of the oven, we don't live in the 1600s, so you should probably restrain yourself from poisoning anyone who steals a bite!