

Inside

- 1 Ken Wilson Encourages You to Share Your Authentic Self
- 2 3 Things Everyone Needs to Know Before Swimming in Open Water
- 3 Navigating Possible Legislation Changes on Retirement Plans
- 4 Watermelon Cucumber Skewers
- Stepfamilies Settle Estate Amicably
- 4 Avoid the Summer Heat Somewhere Cool

Chill Out

Relax in These Cool Destinations This Summer

As the scorching summer sun beats down, it's hard to remember that just six months ago you were shivering through the winter, whether that meant a chilly 50 F or bitter subzero temperatures. But if cooler temps sound like paradise, and a dip in the pool is no longer keeping you cool, it might be time to take a vacation somewhere chilly. Check out these three destinations to avoid the summer heat.

Alaska

No place says chilly quite like Alaska. Trips to Alaska can be expensive during this time of year, but when you step into that crisp air with a cool mountainous view, you'll understand why it's a popular summer voyage. Travelers can choose to fly or take a cruise ship, and many cities feature tourism-packed excursions. A few notable locations include Anchorage, the Kenai National Wildlife Refuge, and Denali National Park and Preserve.

Iceland

Just as its name suggests, Iceland can be the perfect destination for travelers yearning to get away from the unbearable summer heat. With temperatures rarely exceeding 60 F — the average high for the country

— packing is easy for this relaxing vacation. Take a relaxing dip in one of the country's many hot springs or enjoy tremendous views of the fjords. Even better, you can tour the country at any time because it's sunny almost 24 hours a day. What could be better than a midnight hike around the fourth happiest country in the world?

Norway

Just because it's summer doesn't mean you have to give up your skiing hobby! Venture off to Norway and experience some of their most popular summer ski resorts. After a day or two shredding the slopes, experience the popular Norwegian Opera and Ballet in Oslo or choose between numerous outdoor and indoor exhibitions. Best of all, you won't even break a sweat, as the average temperature in Norway's hottest month barely hits 70 F. Bordering Sweden and northern Finland, Norway can even be the beginning to a cool European tour this summer.



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THE ULTIMATE GIFT

Leave Your Loved Ones With What Really Matters

As a 57-year-old husband and father of six children, I am becoming increasingly more aware of my mortality and what I want to leave my family. Having spent the past 20 years at Preston Estate Planning, I am well-versed in the mechanics of a living trust and how to efficiently leave assets to those I cherish. But I can't help but think about the other things we leave to our heirs.

There has been a social media explosion over the past decade. About 64% of individuals ages 50–64 use social media, and over one-third of individuals 65 and older do the same. These rates are increasing rapidly. Think about all the photos, posts, texts, and emails our loved ones will have to remember us by. What will this digital treasure trove say about us?

For most people — myself included — sharing online means carefully curating an identity that exaggerates some qualities while repressing the characteristics we decide are undesirable. No one has acne, dark circles, or a temper. No one is depicted washing dishes, doing laundry, or scrubbing toilets. We capture ourselves taking exotic vacations or doing extraordinary things. We take selfies next to fancy cars or mingling with famous celebrities — designed to illustrate beautifully unblemished lives.

“We have forgotten that sharing an image is not the same thing as sharing a part of yourself.”

But sometimes, I think when we deny what is worst about ourselves, we also deny what is best. We repress our ignorance and faults, and we deny our capacity to learn and change. We forget it is our flawed human self, not our avatar, that creates, considers, contemplates, accomplishes, forgives, and shows mercy.

Ultimately, we have forgotten that sharing an image is not the same thing as sharing a part of yourself. Your avatar isn't real; it's a projection. It's not terribly far from a lie, and the danger in this is that we can begin to identify more with our virtual self, who looks so beguiling in photographs where life is literally filtered.



In this way, I have learned that we alienate ourselves and our experiences. It's a form of self-rejection because we deem ourselves as “not good enough.” What happened to the person who spent so much time studying, working, driving a beat-up car, raising children, struggling to make ends meet, overcoming health issues, contending with loss, and taking care of others? Do we fail to adequately acknowledge that unglamorous but crucial part of our life? Will our children and grandchildren fail this way, too?

So today, I would like you to pause to appreciate the parts of you that you don't put online. In fact, I would like to mount a rigorous defense of the boring, internal, book-reading, dishwashing, overworked, exhausted, self-doubting, and thought-having portions of your lives that are not captured digitally.

There will be a lot more unpleasant stuff than you will ever post on Facebook. There will be sleep deprivation, petty standoffs, moments of self-doubt, and regrettable decisions, but the moments of love, tenderness, and belonging will touch you more deeply than anything you will find in the virtual world. Anything of significance in your life is

Continued on pg. 3 ...

Summer Swimming Safety

3 Tips for Swimming in Open Water

There's nothing like taking a dip in a nearby pond, lake, or even the ocean. For many, it's a summertime tradition. However, swimming in open bodies of water brings certain safety risks, as these environments are not nearly as controlled as public, club, or backyard pools. Everyone should follow these tips to have a fun and safe time cooling off under the summer sun.

Never swim alone. When you swim in virtually any body of water, having someone there to keep an eye on you can be a lifesaver: the more people, the better. Stick to bodies of water with a professional lifeguard on duty when possible, though that's not always an option. When swimming in open bodies of water, have a "designated spotter" to keep an eye on the swimmers. This way, you're prepared if anything bad happens. It's also a great idea to keep flotation devices nearby, such as life jackets, life rings, foam boards, etc.

Know what you're getting into. Sometimes, it's next to impossible to see what's under the surface of the water. If you are



unfamiliar with a body of water, don't jump or dive in without knowing how deep it is. If you cannot confirm what is under the surface (and the spot is not a known diving location), don't risk it. It may be okay to swim or wade, but jumping is out of the question. Along these same lines, be VERY careful around bodies of slow-moving or standing water. These can house dangerous microbes and other contaminants that can make you ill and potentially be deadly.

Watch for rip currents. These can occur at any beach without warning. They pull swimmers away from shore and are strong enough that even excellent swimmers struggle to get through them. In fact, rip currents are behind nearly 80% of beach rescues. Keep an eye on the foam at the surface of the water. If it seems to suddenly pull away from the beach, there's a good chance a rip current is lurking beneath. If you find yourself in a rip current, it's crucial to remain calm and avoid expending energy swimming directly back to shore. Instead, try swimming parallel to the shore until you're out of the current.

Blended Blunders

JM Preston Shares How a Preston Estate Planning Provision Saved the Day

Bringing blended families together can be both complicated and rewarding. There are often numerous emotions and opinions involved in these unions, but many blended families experience years of joy together.

However, this does not make their estate plans any less complicated. Often, spouses who have children from previous relationships will work together to designate a fair distribution of their estate when they pass. As is common in spousal relationships, the surviving spouse may be given complete control over the estate until they too die. This can create a problem if the surviving spouse decides to disinherit their stepchildren.

At Preston Estate Planning, we include a provision in our trusts that is specifically designed for blended families. It provides that when the first spouse dies, the surviving spouse cannot change the distribution on the deceased spouse's portion of the trust (typically his or her half of the community property). This ensures that the deceased spouse's wishes are preserved for his or her named beneficiaries.

Several years ago, I met with a couple who had hired us to redo their trust. Both spouses had children from a previous marriage, and I asked them if they were worried that under their current trust, the surviving spouse could change the entire distribution. They both insisted that neither one of them would change the distribution of their trust

after the first spouse died. I commonly hear this in these situations, but in my experience, it is always better to be prepared. Ultimately, the clients agreed to add our surviving spouse provision to their trust.

A few years later, when the husband died, I met with the wife, whose first words were, "I would like to disinherit my spouse's children. Can we do that?" While I don't believe her intent was malicious, her question served as a reminder about the significance of this provision. Because of the provision we had added to their trust, she was unable to disinherit her deceased spouse's children.

About two years ago, the wife passed away, and her children and stepchildren settled the estate amicably. There were no hurt feelings or added drama surrounding her death, because she and her husband had decided to divide their estate among their children — and it remained that way even after one of them passed away.

Blended families can be complicated, and at Preston Estate Planning we understand this. That's why we include a provision to help your beautifully blended family.

Preston University

Waiting on Congress to Make Retirement Plan Changes

Currently, Congress is considering new legislation that could implement some of the biggest changes in retirement planning (IRAs, 401(k)s, etc.) that we have seen in years. While some of the proposed changes will be welcomed, other provisions will likely increase the amount of taxes paid on inherited retirement plans.

For example, one of the proposed changes will delay the required minimum distribution on a retirement account to age 72, instead of the current 70 1/2. This would allow an extra 18 months before having to take the required minimum distribution. Although this provision may not make a huge impact on the income taxes paid, it does make sense as more people continue to stay in the workforce longer than ever before.

However, as is common in government, when a little bit is given on one end, something on another end is usually taken away.

That is why Congress is also considering severely shortening the required minimum distribution payout for inherited IRAs. Currently, a nonspousal beneficiary can elect to postpone paying the income tax on an inherited IRA over his or her life expectancy (also known as the "stretch"). This means the beneficiary can pay the income tax on the inherited IRA in smaller chunks rather than one lump sum, thus saving income taxes. The younger the beneficiary, the longer he or she can "stretch" the income tax payments.

However, the "stretch" option generates less tax revenue for the government. So, in order to increase tax revenue, legislators are considering a provision that would require most beneficiaries to distribute an inherited retirement account over a 10-year period. Essentially, the "stretch" option that we have been accustomed to for many years will be gone. There are a few exceptions to this 10-year rule such as a disabled or minor beneficiary.

Currently, only the House has passed their version of the bill. The Senate has a similar bill that has not yet been passed. But, with bipartisan support in both houses, it appears that a hybrid version of both bills will eventually be passed.

We likely won't know the final version of the bill until later this year at the soonest. Once it has been passed, we will inform you about what changes need to be made to your estate plan to ensure it is up to date.

The best we can do right now is continue to monitor the process as the bill works its way through Congress. Rest assured that we will be in contact with you once these changes happen.



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done by this nonidealized version of yourself. All of your substantial experiences will be had by the boorish slob you try to edit out of existence.

The next time you upload photos to social media, thank your authentic, true self for getting you this far and the significance it plays in your life. Remember that you are enough just the way you are, and remind your children and grandchildren that they are, too. If you are not on social media, your children and grandchildren are, and this is a message worthy of their time and attention.

Someday, your adult children will struggle with the rigors and adversity of life, including your eventual passing. When they do, they will certainly take a moment to reflect with gratitude on the life of their mom or dad. They will not be thinking of your avatar or the carefully chosen cover photo that obscures the lines in your face and hides the gray in your hair. They will be thinking of you and the legacy of experiences, core values, and tender moments you left for them.

-Ken Wilson
CFO and Director of Operations
at Preston Estate Planning

Watermelon Cucumber Skewers

Inspired by CookingLight.com



Ingredients

- 1 medium-sized watermelon, cubed
- 2 cucumbers, cut into 1/4-inch rounds
- 1 block feta cheese, cubed
- 1 bunch fresh mint leaves
- Salt, to taste

Equipment

- 1 packet of bamboo skewers

Directions

1. Assemble skewers by placing one watermelon cube, one cucumber round, one feta cube, and one mint leaf on skewer in that order. Repeat until skewer is full.
2. Lightly season with salt and chill in fridge until right before serving.