

Episode 81: RISA® in Action: How the RISA® is used to initiate meaningful and personal retirement planning conversations.

00:00

Bob French

The purpose of Retire With Style is to help you discover the retirement income plan that is right for you. The first step is to discover your retirement income personality. Start by going to Risaprofile.com/Style and sign up to take the industry's first financial personality tool for retirement planning. Well, summer wouldn't be complete if we didn't interview someone from the Jersey Shore. Rockaway is no Cape May. It's close enough for us.

00:50

Wade Pfau

Hey, everyone. Welcome to retire with style. I'm Wade, I'm joined by my co host Alex and we're continuing the series today where we're talking to advisors who are on the front lines using the Risa as part of their practices today. Our special guest that we're happy to welcome is Neal Gordon of Gordon Wealth Planning based in Rockaway, New Jersey. And we're really excited to have you on the show today. Neal, welcome.

01:12

Neal Gordon

Thanks very much Wade and Alex, I appreciate you having me on.

01:16

Alex Murguia

Absolutely. Great. Yeah, absolutely. How can we not have you on when you have those two books in the background?

01:26

Neal Gordon

I'm waiting for Alex. I'm waiting for your book. Unless you have it out and I've just embarrassed myself.

01:32

Alex Murguia

You have a snickers and for those.

01:38

Wade Pfau

Who are listening, you've got Ed Slott's book and you've got my book behind you. So thank you very much for that. And for those no offense, but it.

01:47

Neal Gordon

Is the last edition. It's not the newest edition.

01:49

Wade Pfau

Well, I tell people if they've got the first edition, it's not necessary to upgrade. It's more of a nice to have. But for those who are watching or who are able to see this, which probably is about 1% mostly this is an audio only podcast. But if you are watching you notice Alex is sitting in front of a purple wall today. So Alex, where are you at?

02:11

Alex Murguia

It's beautiful, isn't? I'm from I'm in Canada actually in Ottawa. I'm here with Trevor. Trevor is our product lead for the reset and we're working on an upcoming release. So I'm actually in an airbnb in Ottawa in Orleans or I don't know how you pronounce it, in orlean we're here trenching away and it's the weirdest airbnb. It's nice, it's clean and everything. I'm doing my best to pick up the revenues back up for airbnb. I don't know if you've been reading that. I think they've been last by 50% or something in some areas. But I think this is the house of somebody's parents that passed away and instead of selling it, they just kind of went to garage sales and put in kind of a mismatch of furniture. It's the shabby chic of shabby chic. So you got different colors everywhere and you got just weird kind of things everywhere.

03:14

Alex Murguia

But it is plain and incident way that I brought the twins over. My kids are doing an internship with TRER learning how to work figma on the back end.

03:24

Wade Pfau

Those who follow along on LinkedIn have seen your twins quite a bit. And so now they're moving up and getting ready for college and doing internships. Lot going on in the.

03:36

Alex Murguia

Bringing them into the family business a little bit, learning how to code, if you will. Trevor's got them. They're doing something today. They're creating all the component parts. So like all the buttons and everything like that. They're recreating them, scale them out when we make changes. But it's pretty cool. They're getting a kick out of it.

03:55

Neal Gordon

Alex, for tax purposes, are these paid internships?

04:01

Alex Murguia

So how's New Jersey? How's? Exit zero.

04:08

Neal Gordon

Your kids don't listen to the podcast, do they?

04:10

Alex Murguia

I don't think so. No one does. No one of yours did give you.

04:14

Wade Pfau

A good review on Apple podcasts, one of the Boys.

04:17

Alex Murguia

Well, that's right. That's right. You should have seen me. The only good state. We were at a dinner, right? And we started throwing some reviews, by way, saying, have you checked out our reviews? And they were just vicious. In terms of myself. The theme is more Wade, less Alex. So whatever, right? And so we're at the restaurant and I started reading them to them and they were just like on the floor laughing, say, oh my God, you suck, pop, that kind of thing. And then a few days later, Wade notices a review from what was the name? Ander commander. Something like that. One of my kids is called Anders Andrew. Commander Alex boy, he's great like that.

05:04

Wade Pfau

Alex's jokes have me rolling on the floor laughing, I think was.

05:11

Neal Gordon

The brutal honesty of kids. It's great.

05:14

Alex Murguia

But. Yeah, Wade. I'm in Ottawa here. It's not bad. It's great. We'll go to the Reduced Canal on Friday and bike up and down that thing. Good little adventure. But enough about us. This is about Neal, right?

05:30

Wade Pfau

Absolutely.

05:33

Alex Murguia

Thanks for joining, Neal.

05:36

Neal Gordon

I appreciate it. If it's about me, let me turn it back on to you guys. So, Wade, you don't know. Alex and I have discussed some common heritage, shared background, both growing up in Florida and then ending up at school in Washington, DC. Alex at GW, probably a little more diligent than I was at American University, but still we're here. And then Wade, I found some points of commonality for us. You're a wrestling fan from way back, it sounds like. And so am I, unfortunately, having about ten years on both of you. Most of the people I followed have expired. They're no longer with us, so they're more in the hall of fame and there are only pictures of them. They're not around anymore. Then the other part I heard you were a ham radio and short wave aficionado and something I grew up with my father who had a short wave radio.

06:34

Neal Gordon

And I was fascinated with it, that you could hear things from around the world. That it was just one of the great memories of my childhood.

06:43

Wade Pfau

Yeah, absolutely. And that's with the internet now, it's kind of taken away some of the magic. And

sometimes I still turn on the shortwave radio. There's not a whole lot left to listen to anymore, but no, absolutely. When you're a kid able to tune into stations all around the world, it's quite an amazing experience.

07:02

Neal Gordon

It was fascinating. Yeah, absolutely wonderful.

07:05

Alex Murguia

Wade, was there Neal, was there a special station out of whatever parts unknown that was your favorite?

07:14

Neal Gordon

No, you could just hear news from around the world. What was going on. At twelve years old, I was fascinated that I could be listening to somebody at night while it's daytime. And by the way, I was working at my father's office, and this was how I spent my time. It was an education, not in his law practice at that point.

07:37

Alex Murguia

I think my kids are on a short wave radio right now, not doing any work.

07:42

Wade Pfau

But you also have that works just.

07:44

Alex Murguia

As an aside, Wade, what year to this one will happen in communist countries? Or you just can't have a short wave radio, especially like in 80.

07:52

Wade Pfau

Right. It could be contraband. In many cases. The only way to listen to the outside world was with a short wave radio. But you might have to be sneaky about it, I suppose, as government officials knew you had it, they might not be happy.

08:07

Neal Gordon

They used to have to hide the antennas as well. It was almost like Hogan's Heroes. They literally had to hide the antennas that would pick up the signals.

08:15

Alex Murguia

Well, I know nothing about that. There you go. So why are we here today? Wade, what do we have on top with Neal? You got some questions? Laura?

08:27

Wade Pfau

Yeah, let's kind of Neal, come up to the present a bit more. If you could just begin by telling us a little bit about your practice and what brought you into thinking about using the Reese as a tool, how it connects to your broader practice in general, what you do at Gordon Wealth Planning.

08:43

Neal Gordon

Absolutely. Well, so I started out about 14 years ago as a second career, and this was still at a point where I didn't know much about financial planning or anything, but it was get licensed. It was much more of a relationship business than it was commission business, even in 2009, and it continues to evolve. So but as I kept finding out, you were selling product, whether it was a mutual fund, a managed account, a model, whatever it was still selling a product. So whatever your best model was, as they say, if you sell nails, everybody looks like the hammer, or did I get that backwards?

09:26

Alex Murguia

Same thing. Those kind of phrases become sonic wallpaper. It just kind of but for people that are listening, when you say sell product, because this is one of these phrases that within the industry is kind of odd. Right. What would you explain to the consumer what that is? Because I think it's beyond just and you also said model portfolios. And I think at this point, model portfolios, the way they're packaged from a back office standpoint for an advisor, are pretty much productized as well. I don't think anything escapes that phrase. And so, I don't know, I'm just going with it. But selling product, how would you describe that to your neighbor?

10:12

Neal Gordon

Well, that was still somebody would ask what kind of investment should I have or how do I make money? And you weren't answering the question. You were just giving them whatever vehicle you had and it could

have been annuity or something else, but you were providing that item that supposedly fit, in a general sense, the goal. It was suitable, as they said, and now we've moved on to the best interest rules. What I found was I didn't have to ask what things were important to them, where they were trying to go, what the goals were. You weren't required to ask it. It started helping and why do you want that? It's like almost asking when you go into a doctor for a prescription, the doctor is going to say, what's the problem here? First before he starts handing out the pills, at least hopefully. So I put it in those kind of terms where, yes, we've got a lot of tools in the tool bag and if you just go out as a tool salesman, you're not fitting it around the ultimate goals.

11:14

Neal Gordon

And that's why the evolution in my background, my practice towards financial planning and then implementing the plan really was kind of the place I wanted to end up and where I'm at currently of trying to really get to understand and figure out why somebody wants what they want and where they're really trying to go. Because many times they can't even answer that question themselves. Most people can't. And the RISA fit in because it just provided one better structured tool for us to get to that kind of and.

11:51

Wade Pfau

So it's that evolution from the term selling product is more just, okay, this is what we have here versus financial planning or building a financial plan or thinking. Before we get to the idea of what products to use. You're looking at the overall financial picture to understand where these products can fit and what might fit in a better and what might work better to achieve the goals. Like a goals based type planning.

12:18

Neal Gordon

Absolutely. I'm trying to figure out the right ways to extend this because I get involved in everything from estate planning, tax optimization, the full gamut, we call it comprehensive or holistic planning, and a lot of words which even again, the clients don't understand these words, what they really mean. So there's a lot of education that goes into it, but we've, as an industry gone from what's your magic number? Prudential got that retirement red zone. What do you need, how much do you need to retire great into the phase where we're at now in a lot of ways of retirement looks like this, and you have to account for these different factors. So we're going to take you there. But I'm really trying to figure out ways. And there are a lot of different avenues and resources out there for life planning because once they have enough money, once you've given them the protection, once they've got their estate plan, they're protected, they've got their growth, they've got their income plan, these plans are in place, then what?

13:18

Neal Gordon

How do they be retired? How do they be old? How do you live a life of some dignity, which is very hard these days as the older you get and the more help you need and purpose and enjoy it. So once you tell

somebody you have your money, then what? And they give you a blank stare because it's not anything we've discussed and talked about societally of what is it that you're going to do because you have enough money?

13:50

Alex Murguia

You're speaking of a concept that's come up a lot lately. And you see this with this momentum building around the gear finance and the egg essential. And I think you're playing with the term of funded content. Once you have enough that you can underwrite your retirement, how do you find meaning or something like that. What are ways that you can maximize that meaning? Is that where you're getting at?

14:24

Neal Gordon

Well, it is, but that's the first time I've heard that term used. I get to a point where I try to explain it first and then tell people. I label it kind of life planning. Just you have theoretically this pile of paper on the table that looks green and says, in God we trust and you can do something with it.

14:45

Alex Murguia

Well, crypto decides they have to, by the way.

14:50

Neal Gordon

But they put a picture of Sheena Ibu on there or whatever the dog is. And we're still wondering. It's about as useful in my terms as having gold in your pocket. Looks great, wonderful. But go to Costco and you can't check out there. So it gets back to still, what are you going to do when you grow up now that you have enough money? What are all the things you want to do that you'll get? Satisfaction. Know the MIT Age Lab and Stanford and Boston College and Boston U and all these different places are looking at what is it to be old? Okay. And sometimes we have to back into it. How much money do you need for that and how do you do it with some enjoyment and satisfaction. So it's kind of getting the concepts to people beyond do I have enough money?

15:40

Neal Gordon

And those worries themselves. But we have to get there first. It's still a building block of what's the plan, what's the retirement plan, what's the income plan, what are your taxes, Social Security and all the other components.

15:51

Alex Murguia

And how do you find the resell playing a role in this if you do so I don't even want to lead the witness in that sense. But what role, from an order of operations standpoint, see resell playing in that sort of precursor to the situation you were explaining?

16:13

Neal Gordon

Well, simply how I tell people is it is an assessment tool to just help you figure out with these answers in kind of a structured way that you'll like to have the process be in one format over another. You might want to have a lot of your returns from the market and enjoy that level of risk and reward. Or you might want different things. Couples always, almost always. I don't know that I've ever had a married couple agree, which is fine, but now I've got a piece of paper that tells them I'm not the referee, and we're going to figure out a way to accommodate both of you.

16:54

Alex Murguia

Great.

16:54

Neal Gordon

All right. They got rid of that referee shirt a long time ago. It has helped just define a set of languages and concept. And again, if I'm just telling them about Behavioral Finance and I tell them the questions, that was good. And I've established my own process for it. You guys did a better job of making it a more structured, more scientifically based process. And it has a little more credibility than me just telling them, here's how I think you are from our conversations. Now we've got what if it's on paper? It's called empirical data. So it just adds to the credence of it.

17:38

Bob French

Are you a financial professional looking to learn more about the Risa and Retirement Income best practices? Well, if you are, you should join our retirement income masterclass on Monday, August 20, eighth and Tuesday, August 29, you can sign up@risaprofile.com Advisors. That's risaprofile.com advisors.

18:01

Alex Murguia

Does it affect your velocity about what we want to do for this client? Because there's two ways to read what you said. Okay, we just addressed the issues on surface and just recognize there's a point of view in psychology sometimes that just recognition of something is in and of itself sort of a way forward. But is that where you leave it, or do you also use this information to construct starting points for a retirement income plan for folks? You take that into consideration?

18:34

Neal Gordon

Absolutely. Now, before this, my process still was kind of in all of the above in the tool bag. Long term care, guaranteed income, Social Security, pensions, everything had a slice of the pie most of the time as my starting point. And then it was a matter of how big the slices were or weren't for any particular client. And I sort of explained it to people more in a spectrum of from one side of guaranteed income you could have, as if you could buy as much Social Security as you could, would you how much would you want giving up that money? And when you use Social Security as opposed to the word annuity. You sort of can take that off the table a little bit when people have their negative notions about what annuity is, because they're always wrong. They're about as wrong as Ken Fish as someone that has commercials about that.

19:27

Neal Gordon

And I explained it along the spectrum, and I said, people are not one end or the other. They're somewhere in the middle. And what you guys actually did was you took the spectrum and turned it into four boxes because there was crossover. There is crossover to it of people like some amount of guarantees, some amount of guardrails, some amount of flooring. I mean, there's so many different methodologies that we call it. I have a feeling it's a big mix, but by taking and turning into a quadrant, you got to overlap things as opposed to my linear view of it. And it kind of helped me define it a little better for people.

20:00

Alex Murguia

No, that's fine. And Wade, you say this really well. Sometimes not sometimes you say this. I should say you sometimes sit down. But you're right about the spectrum thing. What I started thinking going off that what the quadrants, I think, made Wade and I realized in a funny sort of way, is that two strategies income pertain, which is safety first, and commitment, orientation and total return, which is probability based and optionality. There's a congruency with them. Each of the strategies have their own internal congruency on these two factors, and you could see why they're OD. They're at different sides of the spectrum, the strategy. But it was looking at prime segmentation and income and risk rap that we came to realize that, oh, these are kind of like behavioral plays here, right, Wade? Do you want to go into that?

21:02

Wade Pfau

Right. Because of the evolution of time, segmentation is just a different way to behaviorally frame your investment portfolio. Risk graph is a different way to behaviorally frame the idea of building an income floor with part of the assets and having the upside potential with another part of the assets. But yeah, Neal, I liked how you were expressing that idea of the guaranteed income versus growth. And that was a factor that I think was clear, this idea of probability based versus safety first, but then it was this optionality versus commitment and how that entered the conversation as well. That had I never really thought of that as that's going to be the other primary factor. But it's something that comes up a lot, and many advisors

who are more total return oriented always talk about that optionality angle of they could never commit their clients assets to anything.

21:55

Wade Pfau

They need full optionality. And as it turns out, no, there's a lot of people that actually like the idea of committing to a strategy.

22:08

Neal Gordon

I agree. I would say that again. I start out with if you could buy more pension, if you could buy more Social Security, more guaranteed income for life. Would you do it? Very few say no. It's a matter of how much. Cover just your essential expenses, cover the nice to haves cover the really aspirational stuff. As advisors, we know you can't put everything well, most people wouldn't, few in the industry would. But put everything into the VA or the guaranteed income, because you have to have the liquidity, you have to have the backup, you have to have the growth for inflation. You can't just be an all income necessarily so the time bucketing comes in. I tend to use buckets just in terms of it's easier for people psychologically to see a bucket of aggressive account that's small, maybe 20%, and then a bucket of an asset allocation of a 60 40 and then a bucket of liquid CDs, guaranteed, no risk.

23:22

Neal Gordon

And I could put that into one model and it would still come out as an asset allocation, the same. But when people can see everything's doing what it's supposed to do, meeting expectations, which means not all of it's going up at the same time or down, you still have a way to show them they're properly aligned, but they can see it and feel it and not get too worried my account isn't going up the way I expected. Well, this one is and this one isn't. And getting them to realize how they feel about it beforehand is where you get the buy in. Yeah, so the RISA comes right into that is just getting the buy in because a great plan is only as good as somebody taking it out of the drawer and implementing it.

24:06

Alex Murguia

That's a good point. With regards to the ringside, using it with prospects. Have there been any aholments from a client, from a prospect? Reaction when you're like, okay, I see this now. And that could be anything from somebody thought they were something. Or you thought they were something else and they took RISA and they come out differently and they somehow you or them reconcile that or like, oh, okay, let's go from here.

24:38

Neal Gordon

Not so much that way. The way I've seen the bigger sort of impact in an unexpected way is when you start going into it and explaining it beforehand before they take it that there's this common language that we're each going to speak and we're going to understand the concept of what that language means. All of a sudden they now have a way to express how they feel that they didn't before. You guys have heard before, and I've said it as well, this is a better iteration and different. But then the risk profile questions are you willing to lose 20% if you can make 30%? The only risk profile that I know as an assessment that's good is when I get a call at 11:00 at night or an email saying, can't take it anymore, we've got to make a change because people don't even know their own risk profile.

25:33

Neal Gordon

They give answers that they think about. And at least when you have a common language for talking about how they'd want their income and their retirement to look like and how they'll feel comfortable, you've started off giving them a way to think about things that they haven't had before. So if that's your AHA moment, then that's it. It's not so much they came out slightly differently because nobody comes out one end of there's nobody who comes out on the lines. Everybody's in the middle somewhere or touching the middle of that four corner quadrant.

26:05

Alex Murguia

I think that's a very wise answer. Not just because you said it, but no, it's something Wade and I have sort of realized. Well, Wade and that's that people are coming to us now speaking in these languages. I mean, speaking in this language Wade.

26:24

Wade Pfau

Well, yeah, it puts that vocabulary around the conversation that we talk about how when we get many emails from people asking questions and of course, you have no idea, should I buy this annuity? Well, I don't know, but now at least they can begin preface it with, I took the Risa, I came out with these factors, this is my style. Should I buy the annuity? Then at least, you know, a little bit more information to what you still have to do the financial plan, but okay, we're now able to speak a common language that you have preferences that align potentially with the annuity. So at least I'm not trying to say, okay, well, your total return wondering if you should have the annuity and so forth. So that is important.

27:12

Alex Murguia

We have a Pygmalion in the audience looking to picks up their language. How can someone find out more about your firm?

27:26

Neal Gordon

Well, that gets very easy. Certainly my website goes into some of the concepts we're talking about here, and that's Ngwealth planning. Little long, but I could remember the Ng. And so it's Ngwealthplanning.com phone number easy to find me is 973-2912 800, and on the website is my calendar link. So that if somebody wants to set up, just as we call it, a discovery call and I wish you guys could come up with a better word than that, but it's just to get to know people, answer some questions. People always wonder if I'm charging just for that. No, until you ever know that you can help somebody that they want your help and you've decided the price for that help is what they're willing to pay, that, then no, we talk to people and just try to get them on the right start to getting this going.

28:26

Wade Pfau

And Neal, you're based in Rockaway, New Jersey, but probably a common question, since we'll have listeners all over the country is are there any specific geographic areas where you limit working with individuals from or the whole country?

28:40

Neal Gordon

Well, for financial planning, no. I'm licensed in a number of different states because I've had clients in those states and continue to and insurance licenses and securities licenses are easy to get once you pass a test and pay the states. So I work with people wherever because the internet now has made this and unfortunately the Pandemic has demonstrated one of the benefits is you can work with people everywhere. The process is the process got it.

29:14

Alex Murguia

Going back to the reset we spoke about the prospecting. Have you used it with existing clients and then saw at what stage do you sort of bring it up?

29:26

Neal Gordon

Well I have now. I've had clients who for years have had a plan and we've fleshed out how to and through experience. And a lot of it is still trial I hate to say trial and error, but there's just the experience of this is working. This isn't what do we have to change? And it's still an iterative process even after the recent because they'll give answers and things change in their lives and their feelings change and again, couples and so forth. So I have gone back with a little bit of trepidation to some to see how close I was or not and then just with one that did come out not markedly different but different enough. I said, well this is how you come out and we planned it this way. What changes do you want to make? How much towards that or not? And we only made some slight adjustments because once it gets comfortable with the different ways of doing this, sometimes it's just a matter of I think I want to be this but they just need to know how things react.

30:36

Neal Gordon

Even now I'm getting people who say we're going to be in a deep recession and the clients who held in and we made some adjustments during this past downturn and rebound. No, it's time in the market it's don't run to one side of the boat or the other. So the idea is when I went back to the one client he already had the experience knowing we're not getting extreme to one side or the other and your plan and how you're going to access your money and what it's going to do for you. He was very solid with that.

31:09

Bob French

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31:32

Alex Murguia

Moles, right? No. And I would imagine too I have to think there's an appreciation for what you did from the client's point of view because you're knee deep into a plan already that you're implementing. Right. They take the RISA and caveat is the RISA is not a magic stick. I mean it's just pointing out preferences and starting points for conversation. It's no need to be this uberly prescriptive. It's just to kind of almost. Like get a heat check on things, if you will. But there has to be. I would think there's an appreciation on the quantum side when they're thinking that, man, I've been doing this. But mino still has the confidence in his own self to be able to kind of do a e check and make sure that whatever plan was in place is the one that kind of still resonates with me.

32:24

Alex Murguia

And if it doesn't, I'm glad that I know that there are options that are still available to implement and he's willing to consider that. I have to think and maybe I'm painting too much of a primrose sort of picture here, but I have to think there is some level of appreciation and respect for bringing something like that up, even though you've already started a plan with somebody.

32:48

Neal Gordon

Well, I appreciate that. I'm not sure it's the fortitude to go in and be called wrong, but you go in for an evaluation and analysis during every review. Yeah, because not all of them come out good. January reviews this year were difficult and the half year reviews are great. And I tell people it's not as bad as it seems and it'll never be as good as it seems. It's going to be in the middle. But they also know I've used three different planning software programs. I started out with MoneyGuide way back when it was basically annuity sales tool, or at least that's the way one of the banks utilized it. Moved on to Emoney, which was great. The most

powerful software tool out there in our industry, in my opinion, and produced really wonderful 99 page plans, which everybody reads the first page and tell me what to do, and now I'm on to write capital.

33:53

Neal Gordon

So they're used to me changing technologies as the industry changes and it's going at breakneck speed. So just adding this as a tool wasn't some big shocker to everybody, but it was different. It was absolutely different and was as I somewhat described it. It's a Rorschach test for will they implement the ideas that I bring forth to them based on our conversations. And now it's a scientific test, if you will. You can have that phrase too, if you like.

34:30

Alex Murguia

Alex is practicing the pregnant piles.

34:37

Wade Pfau

Sound bites. You're thinking about how you're going to get some sound bites out of the episode too. That really is a great way to put it.

34:48

Alex Murguia

No, I think it's fantastic.

34:53

Neal Gordon

Again, one of the things, and I think I told you guys that more of my practice is working with women. The majority about 55 58%, which on industry average is much higher. And it's worked out that way just through my own background, who I've been referred to, and loyal clients, but they haven't had much in general of the industry pay that much attention to them.

35:20

Alex Murguia

Oh, great.

35:20

Neal Gordon

They're going to end up with before the money goes to the next generation, they're going to end up with a majority of it first if they haven't been the ones to amass it themselves. So again, generalizing, when you ask

women about their feelings, goes a long way. Men want to know what your return is in general and working with female clients that they want to know how is this going to take place and how are you going to accommodate the way they feel. And they feel listened to and heard, as the common phrases are now. And this is just a tool that kind of proves I want to know what they want.

36:00

Alex Murguia

I think that's a good point. The other nuance that you have, and I would say for the other 45% of your crisis and you were alluding to couples and how sometimes there is some sort of dissemination, how do you use it to maybe reconcile differing views? Or does that actually do you win sort of, I don't know, credits, if you will, goodwill? Because it seems to us when there's a couple, at least to me, I speak the way, but it seems to me when there's a couple, there's usually one person that carries the weight of the financials within the household. It's not necessarily not equally weight split. It's more a division of labor question where somebody handles the financials, the other person handles whatever ten things you got to kind of do within a marriage or a family. Right. And so when you bring this up, when you give the research of couples and they're differing views, what is your reaction?

37:02

Alex Murguia

What's your style? Just take it away.

37:06

Neal Gordon

Well, number one, throw some gasoline on that fire and let them sort of duke it out a little bit first, try to facilitate the conversation that they are going to like. Okay, so if I hear you, this is what you want that and what adjustments? Here's what we have to work with. I try to look for the middle ground, but I say we can accomplish this in a number of ways. We can separate some of the funding and some clients, as couples have separate funding, they keep their money separate and have common buckets. Some it's one bucket. And how is this going to work out? It helps when you do talk about when there's age disparities, when there's health and genetic and family history disparities, who's going to live the longest. And nine times out of ten, it's women will come out that way. So trying to get them both to understand if this is the common way that things turn out, how do we get you both satisfied and what's the difference?

38:16

Neal Gordon

And again, this one is where it comes along the spectrum. You're going to get some of a little of everything.

38:21

Alex Murguia

Yeah.

38:23

Neal Gordon

It'll never be all of one thing.

38:25

Wade Pfau

The Risa helped facilitate the conversation around what was maybe otherwise abstract with this idea that there are different ways to think about a retirement income plan. And maybe the individual who was managed absolutely never realized that the spouse might have a differing point of view.

38:48

Neal Gordon

Usually it's not so much didn't realize, it's just didn't pay attention to and more so. But it's again facilitating a common language conversation. I feel this way and here's what my results say. I would like how do we accommodate that? It takes me out of my opinion because they have results in front of them. They have a score. They have a dot in four squares that shows them what they want and what they don't. There I just take over of trying to show you can have both to some degree that you're both satisfied. It's not black and white. So it's not so much of a fight. It's let's talk about our areas of agreement. How do we do that? And again, it's usually going in for some combination and one party will tend to acquiesce a little more. And usually again, it depends on all the other factors here.

39:57

Neal Gordon

It's really fun when you get a blended family, second marriages and then different children. And the Risa helps me focus the conversation of I like your kids and I don't like your kids and boy, those get a little more difficult and they're so common these days. 25, 30% of the conversations I have deal with blended families and what's happened and who gets what. I tend to try to put it back to the most important part, which is how are we going to make sure you have your money through the and don't run out? The kids will be fine. It gets to that. Also, even how many parents will fund their kids life at the detriment of their own retirement? Another way to kind of help them.

40:51

Alex Murguia

Stay away from that should take on top normal. You see that a lot.

40:58

Neal Gordon

Me?

40:59

Alex Murguia

Yes. No, Wade, yeah.

41:02

Neal Gordon

No. There's many cases where I kind of really indicate what somebody's doing with their money and helping fund their kids. And I say I wear two hats. I'm the dispassionate advisor and I'm a parent. And it's not an easy decision. Tell your kids, go get a job and get off the couch, necessarily, or whatever their issues are that somebody feels the need to help them at the detriment of their own retirement. You really have to point the numbers to that. And then when it gets to be a couple, you're really trying to find a way to walk the line. And any document like the reason which has empirical information back to them takes it out of, I think, into, well, here's what you've said. It's a helpful tool that way.

41:57

Alex Murguia

Now, you pointed out a couple of cues that we've heard, we've been hearing directly, Wade, is that it's funny, right? Good advisors have a level of humility about them, right? They don't want their advice to sound like it's coming from the mouth of God and that's know that kind of because it just doesn't feel right to them, I think, naturally. And so a lot of folks have pointed out that the Risa kind of provides this third party information where it's like you said, it's not a matter of opinion anymore of my opinion, Neal the Great, it's a matter of how you answer this agriculturally back battery that indicates XYZ. And so based on that, I'm going to take that information and give you my interpretation of it. But it wasn't sourced from your sort of point of view. They can get that a lot. And there's an appreciation from a certain level of advisors because it provides that empirical sort of output that an advisor can point to help start the process.

43:03

Alex Murguia

And I think that separation of church and state when it comes to this mountaintop advice I think is appreciated by a good number of advisors. We say, Wade, we got in that kind of theme a lot.

43:18

Wade Pfau

Yeah, man of few words.

43:27

Neal Gordon

Man of few words.

43:29

Alex Murguia

Either that or you didn't agree with me and he's just.

43:35

Wade Pfau

That or I wasn't listening.

43:36

Neal Gordon

Alex, is he starting to sound like your wife? Sure, honey, yeah. Whatever you say.

43:42

Wade Pfau

Sometimes you got to let.

43:45

Alex Murguia

Yeah, exactly. All right, well, yeah, that's great, man. Like I said, I think this series is intended specifically for advisors like yourself. I mean, just listening to you, I don't know how somebody doesn't think, man, this guy's on it. You know what I mean? It's great. And again, our thesis is the really good advisors out there aren't the ones getting on the soapbox producing content on everywhere at the sacrifice of servicing clients. I think the really good advisors are the ones just doing the work, rolling up their sleeves and doing the work. And we just wanted to take the opportunity to give everyone, to give folks like yourself this sort of platform so people really can identify how to discern good advices from people that are just talking head. And so thank you so much for being on this. I really appreciate it from that vantage point.

44:43

Neal Gordon

Well, I'm appreciative that you guys did come up with this. It seemed like somewhat self serving to work to use in your own practice and then all of a sudden you figured out if it works for our clients and our prospects, maybe the rest of the world could use it. Financial planning is such an invasive process, especially with people who really don't understand and said, well, how am I going to make it? And you're trying to ask them all sorts of intimate questions and it's not the questions that are on the statements, it's the personal questions, it's the self reflective questions. And most people don't want to talk about that stuff. It's easier to say I've got how much in the I've got Social Security and how do you feel and what was your biggest money mistake and what were the messages you got again, when you can just put this tool in front of them and they have to think about it.

45:38

Neal Gordon

But I tell people, I'm not judged. This is your money, you can spend it any way you want. I'll just tell you what happens if you do. But there's a non judgmental aspect to taking this kind of assessment without it saying you're really bad with money, you're really good with money. It says this is how you feel. You want your money to come back to you in the form of retirement and retirement income and so forth. So, like I said, it's non judgmental. It can take away that lower the barriers a little bit, the psychological barriers.

46:16

Alex Murguia

That they might have agreed.

46:21

Neal Gordon

I know you did it.

46:22

Alex Murguia

No, but the way you said it is kind of cool. You actually said it. When I was hearing you phrase it back, I was like, I got to remember this phrase because it was really at a great level.

46:34

Neal Gordon

It's good you'll go back and watch the podcast.

46:37

Wade Pfau

Yeah.

46:39

Alex Murguia

Wade, you want to take us home?

46:41

Wade Pfau

Yes. And Neal, if any listeners would like to get in touch with you again, could you review how they can reach out and contact you.

46:50

Neal Gordon

Again? My phone number and my text number, 973-2912 800. My website and I'll expand the commercial is www.ngwealthplanning.com. One of the things I'm very proud of is the fact that I've put up within the last two months about 89 free non gated. Most of them, almost none of them will ask for information, different resources, how to guides, checklists. There's so much information, so much good commoditized information available out there. And I've just broken it down into retirement planning, income planning, estate planning. People go in and I'll never know that they were there and downloaded this information. And a couple have called me based on that, saying, well, if that's what you think is important, then maybe you might be able to help us out. So welcome to take those kind of calls.

47:46

Alex Murguia

Right on.

47:47

Wade Pfau

And for any advisors listening today, if you are interested to learn more about how you can bring the Risa into your firm, Alex and I will be holding a master class starting 2 hours a day, August 29th and 29th. And then those are for Ce credit and some optional sessions beyond that as well. So we hope to see everyone there. Thank you again for joining us today, Neal. Thanks everyone, for listening to Retire with Style and we'll catch you next week.

48:17

Neal Gordon

Guys. Thank you very much.

48:21

Bob French

Wade and Alex are both principals of McLean Asset Management and Retirement Researcher. Both are SEC registered investment advisors located in Tysons, Virginia. The opinions expressed in this program are for general informational and educational purposes only and are not intended to provide specific advice or recommendations for any individual or on any specific securities to determine which investments may be appropriate for you consult your financial advisor. All investing comes with a risk, including risk of loss. Past performance does not guarantee future results.