



Write Your Own Story

Craft your future with intention

In our common culture, “financial planning” means saving and investing enough money so you can afford to spend 20-30 years not working and relaxing. But we need a new definition and new goals to consider. While most of the issues faced in this time of life have financial aspects, our quality of life in the future will be dependent on so many other factors:

- 📝 Where will we find purpose if we stop working?
- 📝 How will our family dynamics change over time?
- 📝 Where will we live for the long term, and is our choice supportive of our desired quality of life?
- 📝 What will happen to our social network and connections as we age?

The challenges and opportunities presented with setting financial goals are abundant. If you are not prepared, you might find the challenges thrust on you when you aren't ready, causing you to lose control of your own quality of life. Instead, it's time to write your own story.

Good stories are constructed with 5 basic elements. These fundamental building blocks are necessary to create a compelling narrative. The story you write about the rest of your life needs to be compelling to you, too!

CHARACTERS

The protagonist of this story is you, of course. So, how will this main character act, and what will he or she do? How you see yourself down the road shouldn't be shaded by how someone of a certain age acts or your perception of what a retired person should do. You, and perhaps your significant other, who is the co-star of your story, can be whoever you want. The other people you know will play a contributing role in your life as your supporting cast, and you may meet new characters along the way, too. Who do you want to remain in your close personal network, and what characters don't get a part in the story?

SETTING

Where will it all take place? Is it simply a continuation of where your current story is set? Or do you make a break and set it somewhere else? You may want to move to that location you've always wanted to live. Perhaps you'd rather stay in the same house where your tale currently takes place. There is no right or wrong answer for this one; the only answer is the one that works best for you.

PLOT

What will you do with your days? This may be the most difficult component because it could be completely different than the familiar one that we have been told “should” be right for retirement. Maybe your life changes, and maybe it doesn't. You can go on working as long as you want or need to these days. But, when you begin to take more time for yourself, do you know what you'll want to focus on? It's easy to follow what's been laid out – but when there is unlimited choice, how do we choose what to do?

CONFLICT

Every story has an obstacle that the hero must overcome. Understanding the potential conflicts in your own story will help you know what you must prepare for in the days ahead. Is it making sure you have sufficient retirement income to last the remainder of your life? Will it be health issues that you have to tackle? Whatever those struggles may be, identify them to help move your narrative forward.

RESOLUTION

When this next chapter nears its conclusion, what will you want to achieve? Are there places in the world you have yet to see? What else is on your bucket list that you'll want to make happen? Knowing your desired ending can help you work backward to piece together the path to get there. Understanding how far many of us are from that point in our story is key to creating a compelling narrative moving forward.