

Advisors are the New Stylists



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What does relaxation look like to you? Perhaps this looks familiar: you sit back comfortably and exhale as your shoulders dislodge from your ears. You sip your cappuccino and kick your feet up as you discuss your day. Laughter rings out as you say, "Can you believe I did that?" You've been looking forward to this stress relief all week.

It sounds great -- doesn't it? But it isn't a visit to your salon. It's a visit to your credit union. Wait. What? I know what you're thinking: since when did discussing my finances *reduce* my stress level? Go with me on this one.

No doubt, a visit to your hair stylist is a nice experience: you enjoy a connected conversation, let go of your weekly worries, and relax. Imagine coming into your credit union and having the same experience. Ok. Maybe you won't enjoy an aromatherapy head massage, or walk out with a stylish new do worthy of a selfie for social media. Actually maybe you could do that last one! Throw your arm around your advisor for a great thumbs-up photo! Sorry. Back to the analogy. Stick with me, here folks.



Life Events Conversations

Imagine visiting your financial advisor, and leaving without the stress that was causing you to pull out your hair. How? By having a life events conversation. In that conversation, an advisor, like myself, learns about your life goals, and suggests ways to help you financially as you prepare for and move through important life events.

What events? Anything that is meaningful to you and your finances. Starting a new job (or losing a job), getting married, buying a home, having children, taking vacations (may I suggest south Niagara?), helping your children through school, helping your children get married (and moving in with you!), helping your children buy a home, helping your children raise their children (does the parenting EVER stop?), planning for retirement, living in retirement while helping your children raise their children and occasionally escaping somewhere warm (may I suggest somewhere farther south than south Niagara?), and on and on.

By discussing the important life events that impact your financial situation today, tomorrow, and beyond, financial advisors come to understand your life and your goals. From that solid foundation, we help you prepare for the events that may cause financial stress and find ways to help you achieve your financial dreams.

Be Like Frank

Take Frank, for example. At the age of 55, Frank lacked the follicular fortitude (ahem, not-so-much hair) to warrant stress-relieving salon visits. Frank did possess financial intelligence though, and had the goal of retiring from a Welland-area business in 5 to 10 years. So he headed to his branch to discuss his retirement goals with his advisor (ahem, me... um, also not a big salon fan). In his life events conversation, Frank and I determined that Frank could better prepare for his retirement goals by shifting his investment strategy.

Specifically, we discussed the fact that Frank was invested in GICs earning less than 2% on his entire retirement portfolio. At that rate, Frank's retirement goals were a distant dream and we wanted to make them a sooner reality. In order to do that we determined how much Frank needed to save in order to achieve his goals sooner. Yup. You guessed it. He needed to save more. His rate of return was way too low and he needed to contribute more, but how? Well, we walked him through how to determine his risk level and we realized he was able to add some stock to his portfolio. Frank had enjoyed a conservative life and his portfolio was no different. Unfortunately, that conservative retirement portfolio did not come with a money tree, and thus, it wasn't producing enough for Frank to meet his retirement goals. So we realigned his portfolio to add a bit of risk (just enough to increase Frank's returns, but not enough to make him lose the hair he had left), to diversify more, and to have him contribute monthly. We also reviewed Frank's investment statements and decided to move a small investment Frank had at another institution, over to PenFinancial. We were able to invest that amount properly and have it work for him within his newly aligned portfolio. Armed with a greater understanding of his financial plan and a brighter future, Frank left a happy man. He may not have enjoyed an aromatherapy head massage, but he was all smiles (even after our awkward high five).

Fast-forward 3 years. Frank still has the hair I first met him with, and he also has a much stronger retirement portfolio. In 3 years, his return increased to well over 9% and he added more than \$50,000 to his retirement portfolio. Frank visits regularly to check in and ask questions and we make sure to avoid those high fives now. He's happy to have a single financial institution handling all of his investments. He's even happier to have his retirement goals within reach. It's not that he doesn't love his coworkers or his community, he'd just like to spend a bit more time away from his snow blower and his kids. Kidding! Frank loves his kids and his wife and their never-ending parenting. I swear. Ok. I should stop now.

Feel the Love

One last thing: don't be shy about coming in to your credit union for a life events chat. We'd love to get to know you and your needs. We'd love to help you relax a bit and worry less about your finances. Come on down. Discuss your long-term goals, review your financial statements, and see how an advisor can help you plan for and achieve your financial dreams. We'd even be happy to take a thumbs-up photo with you to celebrate your solid financial plan.