

# Time to R.E.T.I.R.E.

*By Mark Stevens*

No matter what stage you're at in your financial life, it's time to **R.E.T.I.R.E.** It's time to think and act in ways that can improve your financial future, by modifying your financial present. From this moment on, I'm officially advising you to:

**R**ealize the future now.

**E**xamine your spending habits.

**T**rust good advice.

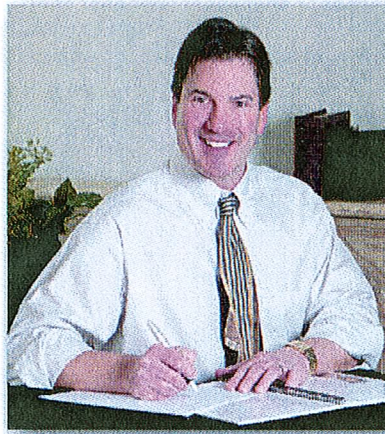
**I**magine yourself financially stress-free.

**R**etire now.

**E**njoy.

Let's look at this formula in more detail:

**Realize the future, now.** Living in the moment is fine, but not without living in a way that also allows you a fine future. Look ahead. Realize that a time might come when you may not be able to work anymore ... to have the base guaranteed pensions, company benefits and even social security your parents had ... or even have the physical capabilities to button your shirt, let alone perform yard work and maintenance associated with your daily life. In other words, don't waste money today you're probably – almost certainly – going to need tomorrow.



**Examine your spending habits.**

Just because you can afford something doesn't mean you should spend the money on it. Simply choose not to. In fact, it's helpful to change your language from "we can't" to "we choose not to." We do this ourselves, and we teach it to our kids. I know it's not easy in a stuff-based, "look at me" society



to tell your friends why you won't buy that 60-inch plasma TV like theirs. But you don't have to explain anything or make them look foolish for their financial folly.

You don't have to lower your status just because you're wise enough and responsible enough to save your money. Is it okay to splurge on occasion? Yes, but not on occasions like holidays just because that's what everybody else does, or because that's what's marketed, or because it's a convenient rationalization. Instead, set your splurge schedule based on achieving savings goals.

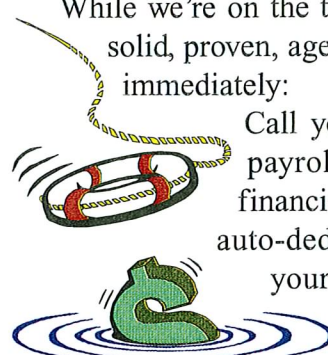
Tell your family that you have expectations of moderation and that you **choose not to** spend rather than spend what you can't afford. Tip: if you're tempted to make a big purchase – wait – if you're tempted to make any purchase – take a cool off period first. Ask yourself "Am I trying to keep up or show off with this purchase?" Most times you will see the value in a less costly product if you wait or cool off before you buy. And remember: if you must use a credit card, use one credit card only, and pay it off every month. Don't

make payments, pay it off. Put savings first, and your money will last.

**Trust good advice.** In fact, seek out good advice, whether it's financial or lifestyle advice. I have a friend who owns a \$135,000 sports car. You know what? He can easily afford a \$350,000 sports car. Maybe two! But he chooses not to, and he respects my modesty regarding lifestyle, because he knows that true asset creation takes discipline. And the continuation of wealth takes greater discipline combined with a healthy dose of financial, estate and tax advice.

Whether you live in a 5,000 square foot home or in an upstairs flat, good advice helps you create financial stability based on your circumstances. So seek out advisors capable of focusing on your needs, not their company's needs. Rely on good financial advice; don't shrug off or minimize their recommendations.

While we're on the topic, here's some good, solid, proven, age-old advice you can use immediately:



Call your Bank, credit union, payroll department or financial advisor and ask about auto-deduction programs for your payroll, and/or checking account. These auto millionaire programs work because your savings gets paid before you do.

**Imagine yourself and your family without financial stress.** You already know how financial stress impacts our daily lives. How many times have you misspoke or were harsh to your spouse and kids because the paycheck didn't quite cover this week's bills? How many times did you feel uncertain about taking that over-expensive trip with the Jones's at the club, just to fit in? Well stop the future failure choo-choo, and simply get off! How? Act on the rest of the good advice in this article. This step goes hand-in-hand with the first step: you need to balance realistically imagining and preparing for a worst-case

scenario financial future, while also imagining a fine financial future – then act to avoid the former and create the latter.

**Retire now.** “What? At my age?”

Yes. Learn to live today on less than you make today. I have clients whose spouses left fulltime positions to be home with their kids for two years, later returning to work to save mom's income. Why can't you?

Get real about your savings and initiate a false financial crisis now. If your spouse does not work, call your benefits department and tell them to pull 20% or more from your check and put it into an alternate (preferably non-accessible) account. Reduce your spending; within three months, you won't miss the funds and you will refuel your spirit. Financial independence, once a dream, is on its way to reality.

**Enjoy.** Yes, enjoy the intrinsic value of financial stability. If you follow my exercise in self-discovery and utilize the R.E.T.I.R.E strategy, you will soon realize the intrinsic value of financial independence and stability. Remember, your creation of a sound money mindset eliminates the disabling feeling of financial stress in your life, and creates evenness and stability that not only helps you, it strengthens generations. What a lesson. What a legacy.

*Learn more at [MarkStevensFinancial.com](http://MarkStevensFinancial.com).*



**Mark Stevens**  
F I N A N C I A L L L C

3870 North Buffalo Street, Orchard Park, New York 11412  
**667-7432** [www.MarkStevensFinancial.com](http://www.MarkStevensFinancial.com)

The material shown in this article is meant for general information only. Although the information has been gathered from sources believed to be reliable, the information should only be used when coordinated with professional advice. Securities offered through FSC Securities Corporation, Inc. MEMBER FINRA/SIPC © Mark Stevens Financial Services

