FONTANA FINANCIAL PLANNING EST MMXX

GET THE ADVICE YOU DESERVE

5 Questions to Ask Your Financial Advisor

The best financial advice looks at your whole picture — not just your investment account. Use these five questions to find out whether your advisor is proactively planning for you, or simply managing a portfolio.

1 *"What planning opportunities did you find when you reviewed my tax return?"*

Most advisors never actually look at a client's tax return — which makes it hard to give truly informed advice. Reviewing the return reveals the full picture and opens the door to strategies like well-timed Roth conversions, which are far riskier to recommend without knowing your specific tax situation. Missing this step often means missing a limited window to convert at little or no tax cost.

2 *"After reviewing my estate plan, are there changes I need to make to my account titling or beneficiary designations?"*

An advisor should check how your accounts are actually titled and who is listed as beneficiary — individual, joint, or trust — and confirm it matches your estate plan. It's more common than you'd think to find a trust that was never funded, or an outdated beneficiary such as a former spouse. A good advisor also keeps a simple summary of your estate plan on hand, so the key terms are easy to find years later.

3 *"What are the opportunities for me to give to charity more tax-efficiently?"*

There are real opportunities here — from gifting appreciated stock, to timing property tax and charitable payments around itemizing, to qualified charitable distributions once you're 70½. Recent tax law changes have also shifted how charitable giving is deducted, making this an area worth revisiting even if you've asked before. As with question one, this only works well when your advisor knows your specific tax situation.

4 *"What is my Social Security game plan?"*

Social Security timing is one of the most overlooked — and most valuable — conversations an advisor can have with you. The right advisor should be able to pull your (and your spouse's) actual Social Security statements and lay out, in plain terms, when each of you should file to get the most out of the system. Without a clear, personalized plan, it's easy to leave money on the table.

5 *"What are we doing to prepare for taxes caused by required minimum distributions and the 10-year rule?"*

Delaying withdrawals from a pre-tax IRA can quietly build toward a large future tax bill — both for you and, eventually, for your children, who now have just 10 years to empty an inherited IRA. Often that money comes out while your kids are in their peak earning years, at a higher tax rate than you'd pay today. A proactive advisor looks at Roth conversions now, with the next generation's tax bracket in mind — which ties directly back to reviewing your tax return, estate plan, and Social Security strategy together.

See How Your Advisor Measures Up

If you'd like to talk through your own answers to these five questions, we offer a complimentary introductory call — no obligation, just a clear look at where your financial plan stands.

SCHEDULE YOUR COMPLIMENTARY CALL

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