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Individuals need to be their own most valuable player for their well-being.

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After a lifetime of earning and saving, one might expect a comfortable and financially secure retirement, especially with a reliable financial advisor – right?

“Life is rarely that simple or black-and-white and, unfortunately, neither is the financial realm,” says Bryan S. Slovon, founder and CEO of Stuart Financial Group in

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It's worth thinking on where your advisor is coming from, Slovon says. If they are not fully independent – as in not working for a large institution – their advice may be biased toward sales.”

Ultimately, each person must be his or her own best financial advocate. It may take a team of professionals in various fields to provide retirees with the good life, but individuals need to be their own most valuable player for their well-being. Slovon reviews basic measures to quarterback your life to financial wellness.

- **Listen to your doctor ... so to speak.** If you want to enjoy your golden years, good health is arguably the most important step – and it's cost-effective.

“More specifically, doctors often tell patients that they can be of service only in as much as patients are doing their part for good health,” Slovon says. “A healthy diet, exercise, regular doctor's visits, etc. are necessary. These things help provide good health. A similar kind of vigilance is required if you want to fully enjoy your money in retirement.”

- **Audit your current and future expenses; spell out your plan.** If you don't have a plan for your money then you're just hoping for things to work out. You can do better than that, even though changes in your plan will likely occur at some point. The most basic aspect of a financial plan includes understanding your current budget, which could be compared to expenses expected in the future. The more technical side of things, such as how to save on taxes and make your money go further, would benefit from analysis by a truly independent financial advisor.

- **Focus on your taxes, and perhaps tax-favored investments.** An important part of understanding your budget, and making it work better for you, is getting reliable professional analysis on your tax situation. You may be paying much more than is necessary. If you are expecting to retire in the near future, you may especially benefit from analysis of your tax budget.

Also, ask about investments that are tax-exempt and tax-deferrable. These include

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Bryan Slovon is the founder and CEO of Stuart Financial Group, (www.stuartfg.com), a boutique financial planning firm exclusively serving retirees and soon-to-be retirees in the District of Columbia metro area. He is a financial planner specializing in retirement planning and wealth preservation to a select group of clients. He currently holds his Series 65 license and is a Registered Financial Consultant as well as a Comprehensive Wealth Manager offering investment advisory services through Global Financial Private Capital, an SEC registered investment advisor.

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