VALUABLE INFORMATION
that SENIORS must know!

Your Personal Financial Help Center

RETIREMENT EDITION

The information in this book can help you earn or save thousands of dollars in your retirement!

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YOUR PERSONAL FINANCIAL HELP CENTER

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About the Author

Mr. Sankin is a financial author, columnist, and a consumer advocate for investor education. He has been interviewed on NBC, CNBC, and in many publications like Money Magazine and The Wall Street Journal. He is an industry arbitrator for the Financial Industry Regulatory Authority (FINRA) for over twenty five years, specializing in securities.

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Chapter One:
Social Security

One of the most important retirement assets are your Social Security Benefits. On August 14, 1935, the Social Security Act was signed into law providing a social insurance program designed to pay retired workers age 65 or older an income during retirement. Here are some basic facts regarding Social Security:

- 9 out of 10 individuals age 65 and older receive Social Security benefits.
- Social Security represents about 34% of the income of the elderly.
- 48% of married couples and 71% of unmarried persons receive 50% or more of their retirement income from Social Security.
- In 1940, the life expectancy of a 65-year old was an additional 14 years. Today, it is an additional 20 years.

One of the greatest benefits provided by Social Security is that it can provide a lifetime retirement benefit that may be adjusted for inflation each year. In order to qualify for Social Security Benefits, an individual must meet some basic requirements:

- You must have 40 credits of covered work, with a maximum of 4 credits earned annually. In 2019, you must earn $1,360 in covered earnings to get a Social Security or Medicare credit and $5,440 to get the maximum of four credits for the year.
- You must attain 62 years of age unless collecting as a widow(er). Widows and widowers can begin getting

Social Security benefits at age 60, or at age 50, if disabled.

- You must apply for the benefit. You will not receive benefits if you don't file an application.

A critical decision you will make regarding your retirement plan will be determining when to apply for Social Security benefits. Determining when to apply for your Social Security benefits depends on a number of factors that can include:

- Other sources of retirement income
- Overall retirement savings
- Health and anticipated longevity
- Marital status
- Widow(er) benefits
- Work level
- Your ability to work (earn a paycheck) past retirement age
- Tax consequences (e.g., up to 85% of Social Security benefits can be taxable if income limits are exceeded)

Your *Social Security Statement* is a key document in planning your retirement income. It is a personal record of the earnings you have paid Social Security taxes on during your employment years and estimates the benefits you and your family may receive. You should review your Social Security benefit statement for accuracy to make sure personal information and earnings are correct. Your benefits are intended to be used in conjunction with your other retirement assets and pensions, if any, to provide your income during retirement. Your statement will also show benefits available to you and your family in the event of your disability or death prior to reaching retirement age.

Unfortunately many people apply for benefits as soon as they qualify. Normally, once you apply for benefits you are locked in for life. If you choose to begin receiving your benefits before your full retirement age, you will receive a reduced benefit. Simply stated, the earlier you file for Social Security benefits, the more likely you are to receive less in total lifetime benefits. Also, know that taking benefits early can have a significant impact on survivor benefits.

Full Retirement Age, is the age at which you can apply for Social Security benefits and not receive a reduced amount. If you were born in 1944 or earlier, you are already eligible for your full Social Security benefit. If you were born from 1943 to 1960, the age at which full Social Security benefits are payable increase gradually to age 67 based on your year of birth. At age 70, you qualify for maximum benefit. From full retirement age to age 70, you can receive Delayed Retirement Credits. For people born in or after 1943, this credit will increase your benefit by 8% each year you delay taking Social Security beyond your full retirement age until you reach age 70. No additional credit is given past age 70.

Navigating Social Security can be a complicated process and it is critical to take the time to evaluate your specific situation and options that are available. Depending upon your full retirement age, you may have certain claiming strategies available that have been changed by the Bipartisan Budget Act of 2015. This act is phasing out the use of the Restricted Application. The Restricted Application allows an individual born by January 1, 1954 to file for spousal benefits while their own benefits earn Delayed Retirement Credits. This is a very powerful strategy and should not be overlooked. Before applying for benefits, you may want to consult with a financial professional familiar with Social Security provisions whom you trust.**

Information for this chapter compiled with the use of ssa.gov. This information is provided for educational purposes and is based on 2019 data. This information is subject to change. Certain exclusions and limitations may apply. Not affiliated with the United States government or Social Security Administration.

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* Marc Kiner is the co-founder of the National Social Security Advisor (NSSA®) Certificate program. The mission of the NSSA® program to education advisors about the Social Security increasing value to clients.

Chapter Two:
Medicare

Medicare is health insurance for people age 65 or older, people under 65 with certain disabilities, and people of any age with End Stage Renal Disease (ESRD).

What are the different parts of Original Medicare?

- Medicare Part A (Hospital Insurance)
- Medicare Part B (Medical Insurance)

To receive Medicare Part A and/or Part B services, you must be a U.S. citizen or be lawfully present in the U.S. Medicare provides this coverage with a choice of hospitals, doctors, and other providers that accept Medicare assignment. In most cases, the beneficiary will pay the deductibles and co-insurance.

Medicare Part A (Hospital Insurance) includes:

- Inpatient hospital care
- Skilled nursing facility care
- Hospice care
- Home health care

Most beneficiaries do not pay a monthly Part A premium if you or your spouse paid Medicare 40 quarters of Medicare taxes while employed.

Medicare Part B (Medical Insurance) includes:

- Medical care provided by doctors and other health care providers
- Outpatient care
- Home health care
- Durable medical equipment
- Some preventive services

In most cases, if you do not sign up for Medicare Part B when you first become eligible, you will have to pay a late enrollment penalty for as long as you have Part B. The monthly premium may go up 10% for each 12-month period that you could have had Medicare Part B but did not sign up for it. A penalty exception may occur if you or your spouse is still covered by a group health plan.

Medicare enrollment begins three months before your 65th birthday and three months thereafter. If you are currently receiving Social Security benefits, you do not need to do anything as you will automatically be enrolled in Medicare Parts A and B. In most cases, your effective date will be the first day of your birth month. If you are not receiving Social Security benefits, then you will need to sign up for Medicare by visiting a local Social Security office, calling the Social Security Administration at 800-772-1213 or online at http://www.socialsecurity.gov/medicareonly.

Medicare Supplement Insurance (Medigap)

Medicare Supplement insurance is sold by private insurance companies. Medicare Supplement policies cover a range of copayments, coinsurance, and deductibles that are not generally covered by original Medicare. Important steps in reviewing Medicare Supplement Insurance coverage include selecting a plan type (the amount of desired coverage), an affordable premium and the insurance company. Medicare Supplement policies make the costs of health care more predictable and stable.

Medicare Supplement Insurance policies are generally standardized plans. The policies are commonly referenced by the Plan letter; e.g., A, B, C, D, F, G, K, L, M, and N. (Certain states use alternative references to their plans.)

The best time to buy a Medigap policy is during your Medigap Open Enrollment Period ("OEP"). This six-month period begins on the first day of the month in which you turn 65 and enrolled in Medicare Part B. After this enrollment period, you may not be able to purchase a Medigap policy due to underwriting. And, if you are able to purchase one, it may cost you more.

If you delay enrolling in Medicare Part B due to group coverage (you or your spouse), your Medigap OEP will not begin until you sign up for Part B.

Medicare Part C (Medicare Advantage Plans)

A Medicare Advantage Plan ("MA") includes all of the benefits and services covered under Medicare Parts A and B, and usually include Medicare Prescription Drug Coverage (Part D). Medicare Advantage Plans are operated by private insurance companies that have a contract with the federal government (Medicare). When a Medicare beneficiary opts to enroll in an MA Plan, they still have all of Medicare's rights and protections and must continue to pay their Part B premium. However, the member's health care coverage and claims payments are managed by the plan. Some plans include extra benefits such as vision, dental and/or a gym membership.

The types of Medicare Advantage Plans include:

- Health Maintenance Organization ("HMO")
- Preferred Provider Organization ("PPO")
- Special Needs Plan ("SNP")
- Private Fee-for-Service ("PFFS")
- Medicare Medical Savings Account ("MSA")

Benefits and cost-sharing vary by the plan type. In some cases, the member may also need to pay a monthly plan premium along with the applicable plan deductibles, coinsurance and copayments. Costs may be higher when using out of network providers.

Medicare Advantage Plan enrollment requirements include:

- Beneficiary must live in the plan's service area
- Beneficiary must have Medicare Parts A and B
- The applicant cannot have End Stage Renal Disease (there are some very limited exceptions)

Joining or Switching Medicare Advantage Plans:

The Initial Enrollment Period ("IEP") lasts for seven months and begins three months before turning 65 and three months after turning 65. Medicare has an Annual Enrollment Period ("AEP") that begins on October 15th, ends on December

7th with the new coverage beginning on January 1 of the following year.

Medicare does allow for a Special Enrollment Period ("SEP") in certain circumstances; e.g., moving from your plan's service area, losing employer or union coverage and other exceptional circumstances.

Medicare Part D (Prescription Drug Plans)

Prescription drug coverage is available to everyone on Medicare through a Medicare Prescription Drug Plan ("PDP"). A PDP adds drug coverage to Original Medicare, some Private Fee-for-Service Plans, and Medicare Medical Savings Accounts. An individual must have Medicare Part A **and/or** Part B to join PDP. If an individual decides not to join a Medicare prescription drug plan when first becoming eligible, they will likely pay a late enrollment penalty if they join at a later date.

Medicare Prescription Drug Plans are approved by Medicare and are managed by private companies. Some Medicare Advantage Plans (Part C) offer prescription drug coverage. The costs vary by plan and include a monthly premium, annual deductible and copayments or coinsurance. Depending on earnings, some people may incur a monthly income-related adjustment.

Plans must cover a range of drugs that are in each category. Coverage and rules vary by plan and prescription drug access is managed through formularies, prior authorizations, step therapy and quantity limits.

Part D eligibility requirements include:

- To be eligible for a Prescription Drug Plan, the consumer must have Medicare Part A and/or Part B
- To be eligible to join a Medicare Advantage Plan with drug coverage, the enrollee must have Medicare Parts A and B
- Beneficiary must live in the plan's service area

Joining or Switching Prescription Drug Plans:
The Initial Enrollment Period ("IEP") lasts for seven months and begins three months before turning 65 and three months after turning 65. Medicare has an Annual Enrollment Period ("AEP") that begins on October 15th, ends on December 7th with the new coverage beginning on January 1 of the following year. Medicare does allow for a Special Enrollment Period ("SEP") in certain circumstances; e.g., moving from your plan's service area, losing employer or union coverage and other exceptional circumstances.

Late Enrollment Penalty:
If a beneficiary waits to enroll into a Part D plan, the penalty is an additional 1% of the base premium and will be calculated for each month eligible and not enrolled. This penalty will be included as long as the beneficiary has drug coverage.

What is Creditable Coverage?
The Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services ("CMS") states that prescription drug plans are "creditable" when they meet or exceed the government's standard Medicare Part D drug guidelines. An employer or union benefits administrator

will let their associates know if they have creditable coverage. VA benefits are not considered to be a Medicare Part D plan.

Information for this chapter compiled with the use of cms.gov and the Medicare & You 2017 handbook. This information is provided for educational purposes and is based on 2016 data. This information is subject to change. Certain exclusions and limitations may apply. Not affiliated with the United States government or the federal Medicare program.

Chapter Three:
Life Insurance

Insurance, in simple terms, is a contract between a policy owner, either a person or company, and an insurance company. The insurance company tells the policy owner that, in exchange for money (premiums), the policy owner will transfer the financial risk and burden from themselves to the insurance company. The insurance company gives the policy owner guarantees that under the terms of the contract (policy), if certain conditions are met, the insurance company will fulfill their obligations to the policy owner.

When you talk about insurance, there are many categories. In this chapter I'm going to review only one category: life insurance. I will discuss the different types, and how and why it is used as financial protection and as a source of income for your retirement.

THE VALUE OF LIFE INSURANCE

Does anyone depend on you financially? Consider your individual circumstances and the quality of life that you want for your beneficiaries. Then decide what type of life insurance to purchase and how much you need. Life insurance is not an investment as there is no financial risk; there is a guaranteed death benefit.

The Basics

Beneficiary – the person or persons designated to receive the money – called the **death benefit** after the individual dies.

Underwriting – most companies use this process to decide whether or not to sell life insurance to someone and how much to charge them. Sometimes a physical exam is necessary before a policy is issued. Underwriting guidelines vary by insurance company and may consider several factors including:

- Age
- Gender
- Medical condition
- Tobacco use

Guidelines on choosing the right type of life insurance

Single adults may want life insurance to cover their own final expenses. Do you support someone like an elderly parent? Think about obtaining permission to purchase a policy and being responsible for the premium. This may help cover the loved one's final expenses.

Parents should consider life insurance because their children depend on their incomes. Couples should consider insuring both parents even if only one has a job. Are you taking care of a special needs child? Life insurance can help with the child's future care – no matter their age.

Younger couples planning to start a family should consider purchasing life insurance when they are younger because it usually costs less.

Older people who are grown and independent will need insurance to cover their final expenses and possibly leave a legacy.

There are two major types of life insurance - **Term and Cash Value**. Both provide specific benefits when the insured dies and while the policy is in force. Remember – it is important to provide full and accurate information on the application. Life insurance policies have a two year contestable period and if the policyholder dies within this period of time, the insurance company may investigate the cause of death and review the information written on the application.

TERM INSURANCE

Term life policies are typically less expensive and less complicated than cash value policies. Term policy coverage lasts for a specific period of time such as one, five, fifteen or twenty years or until the person has reached a certain age. The cost of term insurance increases with age and usually does not include a savings component. If the policyholder dies during the term, the insurance company pays the death benefit.

The length of the term may correlate with the years that you are financially exposed. Examples include:

- Payments on a recently purchased motorhome to enjoy your retirement years
- A new primary residence or a vacation home
- A second mortgage to remodel your current home
- A new boat

WHOLE LIFE INSURANCE

Cash value life insurance policies usually cost more due to the additional features and benefits. The main feature of all whole life insurance is the savings component that grows over a period of time and may be withdrawn, invested, or borrowed against during the policyholder's lifetime. Initial premiums for this type of insurance are usually higher because of the savings feature. A portion of each premium is placed into an account that grows over a period of time (**cash value**). This amount may grow at a fixed interest rate, be tied to indexed interest rates, or increase if the stocks, bonds or other securities used as investments increase.

A policy may allow a withdrawal from the cash value, used as collateral for a loan or used to make future premium payments. When the policyholder dies, beneficiaries may receive the policy's death benefit or the benefit plus any remaining cash value. It generally takes at least three to five years for a policy to build cash value. It is generally recommended to maintain a whole life policy for a long period of time.

Whole life insurance should be considered if you need coverage for the rest of your life. This includes:

- Final expenses (burial, outstanding medical bills, credit cards, etc.)
- Estate taxes
- You have a permanent dependent such as a child with special needs
- Leave a legacy to your family, a special charity or provide a college alumni donation

UNIVERSAL LIFE INSURANCE

Universal life insurance is designed to offer many of the same benefits and features of a whole life policy but allows the flexibility to adjust premiums and coverage.

A flexible premium universal life policy allows the policy owner to change the amount of the premium, death benefit or cash value, at any time, within the policy contract limits. This means that depending on the terms of the policy, you could increase, decrease, or even skip a payment depending on the premium that you have paid into the policy, the policy's cash value and any loans or withdrawals that you may have taken.

Universal life insurance is attractive to those wanting a life insurance policy that offers:

- Flexible premium amounts and the scheduling of premium payments
- Insurance protection for your entire life
- Policy loans per the contract's guidelines
- Tax-deferred potential cash value gains

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Chapter Four:
Long-Term Care

When we talk about investing for retirement, we must also talk about 'what if' situations. Most people only consider an amount of money they will need to cover their normal expenses during retirement. That amount of money becomes meaningless if you or your spouse becomes ill. That is why you must consider long-term care insurance.

Long-term care insurance, also known by the initials LTC, helps provide for the out-of-pocket expenses of long-term care not covered by health insurance, Medicare or Medicaid.

Long-term care is basic assistance that an individual needs to carry out activities of daily living (ADLs). ADLs include cooking/eating, dressing, bathing, moving around, and using the restroom.[*] Additional services and support known as instrumental activities of daily living (IADLs) include work around the house, assistance with taking medication, washing dishes, and grocery shopping.[**]

According to the U.S. government, seventy percent (70%) of people turning 65 may use a long-term care service during their lives.[***] The older a person gets, the more likely they are to need long-term care.[****] By 2050, the number of people that

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* U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. http://longtermcare.gov/the-basics/what-is-long-term-care/. November 22, 2016.

** *Id.*

*** U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. http://longtermcare.gov/the-basics/who-needs-care/. November 22, 2016.

**** *Id.*

are anticipated to use paid long-term care services in any setting is expected to double.[*****]

A number of people mistakenly think Medicare will cover all of their long-term care expenses. One-third of people have done no planning for their long-term care needs.[******]

Over 8.7 million people need some sort of long-term care service, including home health agencies, nursing homes, hospices, residential care communities, and adult day service centers.[*******] This number is expected to increase to 12 million people by 2020.[********] Approximately 63% of the people who need long-term care are age 65 and older.[********] Of the older population who receive long-term care, approximately 30% have substantial long-term care needs.[********] The amount paid annually for long-term care services is estimated at between $210 billion and $317 billion.[********]

***** American Association for Long-Term Care Insurance. http://www.aaltci.org/long-term-care-insurance/learning-center/long-term-care-statistics.php. November 23, 2016.

****** Poll of individuals age 40 and older. AP-NORC University of Chicago. http://www.longtermcarepoll.org/Pages/Polls/long-term-care-in-america-expectations-and-preferences-for-care-and-caregiving-research-highlights.aspx. November 23, 2016.

******* Harris-Kojetin L, Sengupta M, Park-Lee E, et al. Long-term care providers and services users in the United States: Data from the National Study of Long-Term Care Providers, 2013-2014. National Center for Health Statistics. Vital Health Stat 3(38). 2016. p.34.

******** Genworth Financial, Inc. https://www.genworth.com/edocs/public?docid=%7BF2A34ACA-6953-401D-B830-C88EB0BF4E47%7D. November 28, 2016.

******** February 2015 data. Family Caregiver Alliance. https://www.caregiver.org/print/45. November 22, 2016.

******** *Id.*

******** Harris-Kojetin L, Sengupta M, Park-Lee E, et al. Long-term care providers and services users in the United States: Data from the National Study of Long-Term Care Providers, 2013-2014. National Center for Health Statistics. Vital Health Stat 3(38). 2016. p.2.

According to Genworth, the national median monthly costs in 2016******** are as follows:

Nursing home care (private room)	$7,698
Nursing home care (semi-private room)	$6,844
Assisted living facility	$3,628
Home health aide	$3,861
Adult day health care	$1,473

The national median rate for a home health aide is $20 per hour.******** Over the past five years, the cost for a home health aide has increased over six percent.******** The average person thinks the cost of in-home care is 50% less than the actual costs for this care.********

This information is provided for educational purposes. This information is subject to change. Certain exclusions and limitations may apply.

******** Genworth Financial, Inc. 2016. https://www.genworth.com/about-us/industry-expertise/cost-of-care.html. November 22, 2016.

******** Genworth Cost of Care Survey 2016. Genworth Financial, Inc. https://www.genworth.com/dam/Americas/US/PDFs/Consumer/corporate/131168_050516.pdf. November 28, 2016.

******** Genworth Financial, Inc. 2016. http://investor.genworth.com/investors/news-releases/archive/archive/2016/Genworth-2016-Annual-Cost-of-Care-Study-Costs-Continue-to-Rise-Particularly-for-Services-in-Home/default.aspx. November 28, 2016.

******** *Id.*

Chapter Five:
Annuities

When you are thinking about retirement, one of the first questions you may ask yourself is, "How do I accumulate enough money to make sure I don't outlive my money?" Annuities may be an option that can help you reach your retirement goal. An annuity is a contract with an insurance company. All annuities have one unique common feature that differentiate them from other financial products. With an annuity, the insurance company promises to pay you an income stream for a specified period of time. The amount of money the insurance company will pay you will be determined by a number of factors that can include your age at the time payments start and the period of time of which payments will be made.

Another benefit of an annuity is that you are required to name a beneficiary. At the time of your death, your beneficiary will directly receive any benefits of the annuity. It will not go into your estate, therefore, bypassing probate. This benefit will save your heirs time and money. Another potential benefit of an annuity is that it may be judgment proof in case of a legal dispute with creditors. This will depend on certain factors including your state of residency and the length of time you own the annuity.

Certain annuities begin paying income immediately after their purchase. These annuities are referred to as **Single Premium Immediate Annuities or SPIA**. When the insurance company is provided a lump sum of money for the SPIA, it will pay you a set amount of money for a specified period of time, which may also be a lifetime. When considering your retirement income, having guaranteed income for life is a significant benefit to have.

Another type of annuity is referred to as a **Deferred Annuity**. A deferred annuity allows an individual to defer taking any payments or income from the account while having the ability to accumulate growth or interest tax-deferred. With deferred annuities, you can make a single payment to the annuity, which is referred to as a single premium annuity, or it can be funded over a series of payments also referred to as a flexible premium annuity. The funds can be taken at a later date through several different distribution methods.

There are several types of deferred annuities which can include:

- Fixed Annuities provide a guarantee of your money with a minimum guaranteed interest rate for a fixed period of time. The rate is declared by the issuing insurance company. An insurance company may offer an incentive or bonus rate for the first year and then guarantee a minimum rate for the remaining years.
- Indexed Annuities are a type of deferred annuity and are a variation of a fixed annuity with the ability to have interest and growth that is linked to the change in a market index. An individual is allowed to have the guarantee of principal and interest without downside risk if the market would go down. The interest rate is guaranteed to never be less than zero.
- Variable Annuities earn investment returns based on the performance of subaccounts. The value of variable annuities may fluctuate up or down depending on the

conditions of the stock market and the allocation of the subaccounts. Typically, there is no guarantee of your principal or interest with a variable annuity.

Many annuities may offer additional benefits and features that may provide opportunities to reach your retirement goals. Some annuities may offer premium bonuses which provide a lump sum amount to your annuity value. These bonuses may be for the initial payment and as well for subsequent payments if it is a flexible premium annuity.

Various annuities may include or have optional riders available at an additional cost to provide further retirement benefits. These riders may include Guaranteed Income Benefit riders, Enhanced Death Benefit riders, and other riders that retirees may evaluate to meet their objectives. In my opinion, purchasing guarantees and riders that are offered with annuities are an important consideration when investing for your retirement.

If you withdraw some or all of your annuity money too soon, you may be assessed with a surrender or an early withdrawal charge. Some annuities may not have this charge if your withdrawals fall within the withdrawal privileges. Many annuities allow for a 10% free withdrawal privilege after the first contract year. Typically, you are allowed to access your monies in the annuity through either annuitization, full withdrawals, partial withdrawals and other withdrawal privileges associated with riders that the annuity may have.

As I stated before, I suggest you speak to an insurance or financial professional to review all the pros and cons, cost, and riders, which will meet your needs and risk tolerance.

If you have any questions or concerns about your annuity or financial advisor, contact the following agencies:

- National Association of Insurance Commissioners (www.naic.org)
- FINRA (www.finra.org)
- North American Securities Administrators Association (www.nasaa.org)
- National Association of Fixed Annuities (www.nafa.com)

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Chapter Six:
Identity Theft

Identity theft is the fastest growing crime in the United States. Last year, approximately 15 million Americans became victims of identity theft, which cost them a total of 16 billion dollars. Nearly half of identity theft victims find out about their losses within 3 months, and less than one-fourth find out that they are identity theft victims within four years. It takes victims, on average, between 1 and 243 days to rectify the damage done by identity thieves. Almost half of victims have difficulties in obtaining loans and credit cards as a result of identity theft.

Individuals should protect themselves against identity theft by protecting their personal information, especially highly sensitive items, like bank accounts and social security numbers. Even if identity thieves are able to obtain one piece of confidential information, they can still do significant damage.

Therefore, it is important for individuals to recognize how their personal information is stolen, and what they can do to prevent this from occurring.

Although the best way to prevent identity theft is to use an identity theft service, individuals can further reduce their chances of becoming identity theft victims by following these commonsense prevention tips:

1. **Don't carry your Social Security card** in your wallet or write it on your checks. Only give out your SSN when absolutely necessary.
2. **Protect your PIN**. Never write a PIN on a credit/debit card or on a slip of paper kept in your wallet.

3. **Watch out for "shoulder surfers".** Use your free hand to shield the keypad when using pay phones and ATMs.
4. **Collect mail promptly. Ask** the post office to put your mail on hold when you are away from home for more than a day or two.
5. **Pay attention to your billing cycles.** If bills or financial statements are late, contact the sender
6. **Keep your receipts.** Ask for copies and incorrect charge slips as well. Promptly compare receipts with account statements. Watch for unauthorized transactions.
7. **Tear up or shred** unwanted receipts, credit offers, account statements, expired cards, etc., to prevent dumpster divers getting your personal information.
8. **Install firewalls** and virus-detection software on your home computer.
9. Individuals should also photocopy all of the documents in their wallets in case of theft. That way, if their wallet is stolen, individuals can quickly retrieve numbers.
10. Individuals should not click on links from financial institutions, even if they appear to be legitimate - these emails could be from identity thieves trying to obtain, or "phish" for, confidential information. It is always best to go to the financial institution's domain web address.
11. Destroy all checks, debit cards and credit cards upon closing an account - thieves can easily obtain these things, and run up bills fraudulently.

12. Individuals should cancel any inactive credit accounts, and limit the amount of credit cards. This will make it easier to keep tabs on all credit activity.
13. Keep account numbers and passwords in a safe place.
14. Individuals should never have their banks send new checks to their homes - thieves can easily snatch them. Instead, individuals should opt to pick up their new checks directly from the bank.
15. Always obtain a free yearly credit score from Trans Union, Experian or Equifax, and analyze it for any suspicious activity.

Because identity theft is one of the largest and fastest growing crimes in the U.S., it is important for all individuals to protect against it. The best way to do this is to sign up for a reputable identity theft protection service, and to protect all confidential information by following the above common sense tips. If individuals follow these tips, they will greatly reduce the chances of becoming a victim of identity theft.

This information is provided for educational purposes. This information is subject to change. Certain exclusions and limitations may apply.

Chapter Seven:
Tips for Seniors

Here are some general tips for seniors in selecting insurance, annuities, and other options:

1. Determine your short-term and long-term financial goals.
2. Determine your risk tolerance.
3. Maintain a balanced and diversified portfolio.
4. It is a general rule of thumb for a senior to invest conservatively while weighing risk against security.
5. Communicate your objectives to your agent/advisor.
6. Review your investment goals periodically.
7. Make sure you read and understand your statements.
8. Determine the best time to take your Social Security
9. Develop a spending plan when you enter retirement to watch your expenses.
10. Consider life insurance as a death benefit and a source of money depending on the policy.
11. Maintain sufficient insurance coverage.
12. Understand the product, including the cost and terms of the plan.
13. Make sure the product is right for you.
14. Ask questions throughout the process.
15. Review your insurance and investments at least annually.
16. Review your credit reports to ensure they are accurate.

17. Consider the possibility of appointing a power of attorney you trust in the event of the possibility that you become unable to handle your finances at a later date.
18. Watch out for “red flags” like an offer that seems too good to be true or an offer that requires an immediate answer. Report fraud and abuse to the appropriate people and authorities.
19. Protect your personal information.
20. Organize your important documents and keep them in a secure place.
21. Be careful to avoid wire transfer scams or paying money to claim a so-called prize.
22. Never give out your bank account information or credit card number to someone you don’t know.

This information is provided for educational purposes and does not constitute investment advice. Investment strategies and insurance options vary.

Chapter Eight
Enjoy a Stress Free Retirement

I hope you found the information in this book educational and informative. In today's financial world, there is no "one-size fits-all" solution to guarantee you will enjoy a retirement without stress and worry. While we can point to all the factors beyond our control, political, financial, and life in general, our parents and grandparents have faced the issues and problems of their day, and our children and grandchildren will have issues different, yet similar to, those we currently face.

One of the most frequently used financial clichés is: *"People don't plan to fail, they fail to plan"*. The reason a statement like this becomes a cliché is the element of truth is expresses.

It is paramount that you become an informed consumer, especially when it comes to building and protecting your and your family's financial future.

Understand the financial products you purchase and own and how they work. Educate yourself on retirement topics like Social Security, taxes, legal, and financial issues that can improve or impact your family's future quality of life.

Find an insurance professional to help you create your unique retirement plan, remembering another adage: *"An ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure"*. Find resources for proper monetary , legal, tax, and insurance advice that you trust and understand your goals.

If you have not already begun, I hope this book helps you start down the path to a secure future. GOOD LUCK!