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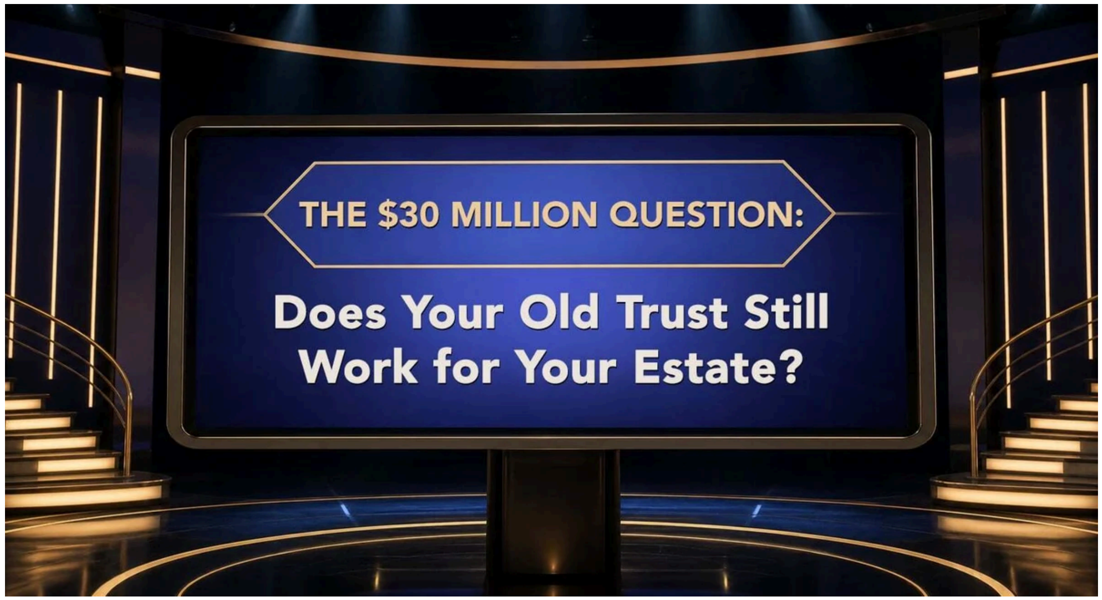
Financial **INSIGHT**



In an effort to make 2026 your most intentional year yet, it's time to consider this question: *When Was the Last Time Your Trust Was Reviewed?*

Here's something we see often…

A family sits down to review their estate plan, only to realize it was built for a completely different world.

Different tax laws. Different asset levels. Different intentions.

What once felt like a sophisticated, well-structured plan can quietly become overly complex or misaligned with today's reality. That's where many families find themselves.

Over the past decade, estate tax laws have shifted significantly.

What once required intricate trust structures to minimize estate taxes may no longer apply in the same way today.

With current federal estate tax exemptions at historically elevated levels (up to approximately $15 million per individual or $30 million per couple, under current law), many older trusts deserve a second look.

Think about this…

A plan built for a $5 million threshold may now be solving for a problem that no longer exists. And in some cases, that complexity may come at a cost.

Where Older Trusts Can Fall Short

Many legacy estate plans were designed to reduce estate taxes. While effective at the time, those structures can now create unintended consequences:

- Assets held in certain irrevocable trusts, such as bypass trusts (credit shelter trusts) or older A/B trust structures, may not receive a step-up in cost basis at death, potentially increasing capital gains taxes for heirs.
- Rigid distribution rules can limit flexibility for future generations.
- Outdated fiduciary roles (executors, trustees, powers of attorney) may no longer reflect current relationships or capabilities.

The Opportunity to Simplify

Today's environment presents an opportunity many families didn't have before: simplification. For estates that fall well below current exemption levels, it may be possible to:

- Streamline or unwind certain trust structures (where appropriate and permissible).
- Reposition assets to improve tax efficiency, including potential basis step-up at death.
- Align decision-makers with your current wishes and family dynamics.

Start with the Right Questions

A productive review starts with clarity. Let's take a look at these important questions:

- Who is currently named as your power of attorney, and does that still make sense?
- Who would your family call first in a moment of urgency or uncertainty?

- Are your executors and trustees still the right fit for the roles they serve?
- Does your plan prioritize flexibility, simplicity, and tax efficiency in today's environment?

A Plan That Evolves with You

Estate planning is a living framework that should evolve alongside your life, your family, and the regulatory landscape.

What made sense ten or fifteen years ago may no longer serve you or the people you care about most.

The good news is that small, thoughtful adjustments can often make a meaningful difference.

And importantly, these decisions take time and coordination, so it's best not to wait until an unexpected event forces the discussion.

A Conversation Worth Having

If it's been a while since your plan was reviewed, now may be the time to revisit it with fresh eyes. Simply click reply to this email or call the office to schedule a review.

Dustin Metcalf, CRPC®
President & Founder

CA Office: (760) 491-1499
WA Office: (360) 865-7365
Dustin@fourcfinancial.com

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Four C Financial | www.FourCfinancial.com | 73000 Highway 111, Suite 202, Palm Desert, CA 92260