Kate Brown

PLANNING IS A PROCESS

... Not a Product

Written by Beth Miller • Photography by Daniel Smyth

Are you on track to achieve your financial goals? Some people equate financial planning with fear, worrying they will be forced to budget or stumble upon unpleasant news.

"I believe we have the opportunity to deliver great news and give clients their dream goals by prioritizing," says Kate Brown, CFP, Vice President, Senior Wealth Planner at Fort Washington Private Client Group.

Brown is different from most financial planners in that she utilizes a psychological approach with her clients. The investment world is typically left-brain oriented, but Brown appeals to the right hemisphere through visualization and counseling.

A first meeting doesn't involve an overwhelming array of numbers; clients (and their partner or family members) are presented with psychologically developed topics and asked to prioritize what's most important.

"Oftentimes this is the first time the client and their spouse have talked about these subjects," says Brown. "The sign of a good meeting is when one partner turns to the other and says 'I know I haven't told you this before, but …' and shares a new insight."

For example, a client recently wanted to plan her major purchases. Brown asked her to imagine the ideal future and describe what picture came to mind.

"She immediately said she saw a large log cabin on a lake, with a big front porch and her grandchildren running through a sprawling lawn," says Brown. "That image was one she wanted for herself and her grandchildren to experience in the future."

Transparency and trust is developed within the first meeting. After the client's goals are established, Brown and her team at Fort Washington Private Client Group bring information to the table so that the client can make an educated decision.

"We don't impose our own feelings or opinions; we put the focus on the client and let them choose the path they feel will take them closer to their grand goal," says Brown.

Strategies are important, but Brown emphasizes that planning is a process and not a product. A wealth planner could grow a client's money exponentially, but if the client's life goals were never identified then a huge opportunity has been wasted.

"Like anything, a plan is only as good as it is implemented," says Brown. "I don't believe in questionnaires because dreams are too big to fit in a box. Here at Fort Washington, we function as a team to guide the client's experience and ultimately deliver individualized expertise."

Brown has been a wealth planner for more than 14 years and has lived in Cincinnati for six years. She works with families, executives, attorneys, doctors and ordinary people in the community.

"I love working with people. Having the opportunity to share the emotional side of my clients' legacies and explain how their wealth may affect the future is so important," says Brown. "At Fort Washington, we share our expertise by translating life through money." ❖

Fort Washington Private Client Group is located at 303 Broadway, Suite 1200, Cincinnati, OH 45202. For more information, call 513.361.7000 or visit their website at www.fortwashington.com.