



# Coffeebreak

12/2022

Make Someone's Holiday

The Legacy of Two Matriarchs

Self-Realisations from Being a Part-Time Digital Nomad

Year-End Financial Checklist



Providend



# Dear Valued Client,

Bustling airports, snake queue line at the Immigration and Customs of airports or Causeway, and longer waiting time for taxis are a few distinct signs that post-covid travel has resumed with full force. Three years has passed since Coronavirus disease (COVID) pandemic reared its ugly head in December 2019, quickly spread to many countries and declared as a global pandemic in March 2020 by the World Health Organisation (WHO). Many of us breathed a sigh of reliefs when we heard that Singapore announced significant relaxation of COVID-19 protocols this year and many countries took their turns to gradually open their borders with minimal travel restrictions.

COVID-19 pandemic has changed our lives and our society whether we like or not. We have read, witnessed or even experienced significant increase in mental health struggles. Companies are transforming the way they run business and adapting to shift in behaviors of their customers and employees. Employees are given opportunities to embrace flexible work arrangements or work from anywhere as we commonly know it. At Providend, we provide such opportunity and put the trust in our staff to get their work done while living their life. Do not miss the article by our own Lead of Brand Management in this edition as she reflected on the solo adventure working from Down Under.

As we start to travel again with our friends and family members during this holiday season, or just to slow down from the daily pace of our lives as we draw closer to the end of year 2022, let us treasure each moment we have with our loved ones and live each day in gratitude. Whether it is reflections of what we have experienced in the passing year or preparations of what we would like to achieve in a new year, we need to remember to first align our plans, financial plans or life plans, back to our life purpose and life goals. A wise man once said that "We only die once but we live everyday".

Wishing everyone a Blessed Christmas and a Prosperous New Year.

Warmest regards,  
Chief Operating Officer

**Moon Shary**



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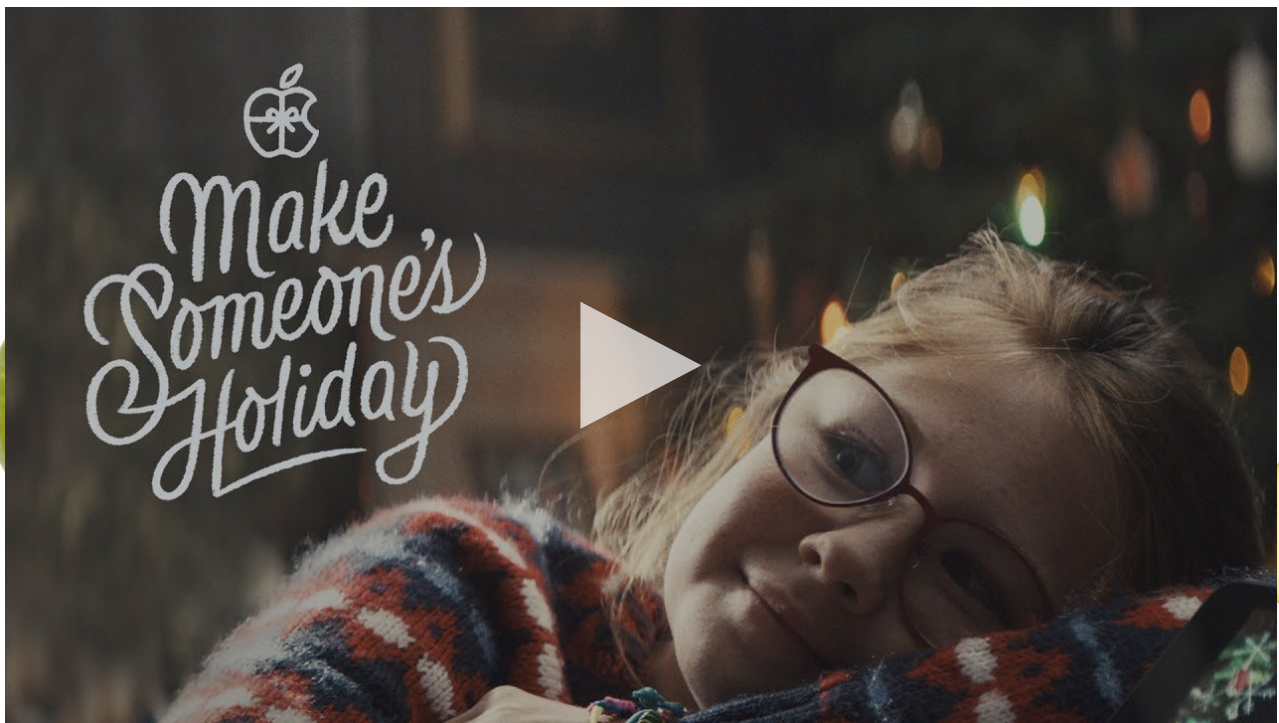
Year-End Financial Checklist



01

# Make Someone's Holiday

Apple's iPad Christmas Ad





# 02

## *The Legacy of Two Matriarchs*

Eleanor Ng, Associate Director of Advisory Team

A close relative died recently, at age 89. She is survived by two biological sons and many daughters. Two years before, her mental capacity started to deteriorate. In her living years, she had drafted three Wills, bequeathing her property to whichever son who accompanied her to the lawyers. All three Wills were done secretly without any consultation with any of her many daughters, nor was she ever willing to discuss her wishes or intentions with them.

It was not until after her death that the content of her Will was revealed. I could not help but wonder if she really understood what she was affixing her thumbprint to. Was she of sound mind? Did the Will reflect her true intentions or was it influenced by someone else, including her sons? If she had known of the possible

consequences of the final Will, what would she have done differently?

Fast forward 3 years, although the estate is probated, to date, the matter is still unresolved because both sons are still engaged in a court battle over her estate.

The situation with the Will of my mother-in-law, 88 years old this year, is in stark contrast. Her Will was drafted years ago. Recently, she has had her Lasting Power of Attorney (LPA) certified and registered with the Office of Public Guardian. She has always communicated her wishes clearly to all her children. Although she has not carried out Advance Care Planning nor knows of the existence of the relevant documentation, she has clearly expressed her wishes for her care should she be in poor health.



When she came upon a windfall, she openly gave a sum of money to each of her grandchildren and her children, keeping sufficient for her retirement and her “vices”. As a result, her children stayed emotionally close to her and continue to check in on her frequently.



*My mother-in-law.*

As an empty nester, I started spending more time with my mother-in-law. During a recent visit, she showed me a copy of her Will and also shared with me her intentions. I was embarrassed, as I always see my position as her daughter-in-law. However, she assures me that I am very much her daughter. She treats me the same as she treats any of her children.

Whether we like it or not, we are all leaving a legacy. Our legacy is a combination of how we live our lives, the impact we have on others

and how we prepare our loved ones to move on with their lives when we are not around. Most of the time, people assume that legacy planning is the same as estate planning. But legacy planning is more than leaving gifts, possessions or money. (For more details on estate planning, you can visit [this link](#).)

As I reflect on how these two matriarchs lived their life, what can I learn about legacy planning?

You can be very successful in your career and personal life, but if you leave a mess upon your passing, someone, usually a family member, will have to clean it up. For example, if there is no Will, the probate process will likely be more tedious and costly. The probate process also occurs at the worst time as the family is still grieving. In addition, if proper estate preservation is not taken care of, the size of an estate can be eroded because of liabilities, guarantees, prolonged medical expenses, etc. Your loved ones may also not know how to start the probate process if the estate is left in a mess. I use the analogy of going to someone’s kitchen to cook a meal... now where is the spatula?

The above are issues that can occur if estate planning alone is not thought through. However, legacy planning, as compared to estate planning, entails thinking about the following:

1. The values we want to impart to our loved ones,
2. The planning of the transfer of wealth and assets, and
3. Ensuring that the heirs are happy and benefitting from the inheritance that we leave behind.

Like throwing a stone into a pond, the ripples embody the effects of how we conduct these tasks continue into the next generation.

In my close relative's case, the family members do not know what her real intentions were for her property. In my mind, she must be grieved to see the state of the relationship between both her sons. Instead of harmony, there is strife and unhappiness. It has been said that death and taxes are certain. But the timing of death is not. The time to clarify one's estate issues is *before*, not *after*.

### **So, what are the requirements for sound legacy planning?**

Legacy plans have to be communicated.

My mother-in-law has already scored an A\* in this regard. There is no second-guess of her intentions. In fact, it is very much her character not to cause inconvenience to her children since she values family harmony and unity. It was critical for her that her wishes are transparent and fair.

Start by thinking through your goals and values. My mother-in-law also valued family gatherings, especially cooking big meals together. She is a fabulous cook and by showing how her famous dishes are prepared to all her sons and daughters-in-law, she has ensured that her recipes live on long after she passes on.

By clarifying your goals and values, your beneficiaries will not feel unprepared or overwhelmed by the awesome responsibility of preserving/growing the inheritance. Or worse, lose it all as they do not understand the "heart" sweat that goes into amassing the wealth. Share with them the thinking behind the gifts, especially so if the amounts given are unequal. It is important to let them know

that the financial gift is just an expression, and not a measure, of your love for them. Any amount is a bonus and should not be taken as an entitlement. The end outcome is to have a harmonious family where there is mutual love and respect. Share with your children your decisions and allow them to share their concerns, input and feedback, even though it is your money and they are not the ones making the decisions.

### **Is property a good asset gift as a bequest?**

It depends. Property, especially if it is a family home, brings with it many associated emotions and memories. So, the conversation should begin by asking how the children feel about inheriting the property. Ultimately, an appropriate gift should enhance their lives rather than create strife.

Share with them if it is your desire for the property to be sold. What will be the circumstances for the property to be sold? How are the proceeds going to be used? Unlike buying a property in the name of the adult child, inheritance of property assets does not attract stamp duty and additional buyers' stamp duty. But if the beneficiary should inherit and subsequently sell the property within 3 years, the person would have to pay the applicable seller's stamp duty. The inherited property would be added to that beneficiary's property count should she/he proceed to buy another property.

### **Gifting during one's lifetime**

Rather than gifting after you pass on, there are many advantages to gifting during one's lifetime. For starters, you can observe for yourself how your gift has helped or transformed your loved ones. Whether the amount is big or small, you can observe how your gift was received and you can make your

decisions on future gifting based on how your loved ones regarded your prior gifts.

An additional advantage is potential mentoring by the gifter. The gifter, perhaps a parent, may set up a joint investment account with the receiver, maybe a child, through a financial institution such as Providend. This would give the child an opportunity to work with Providend as their portfolio manager when the parents start gifting. It also offers the parent an opportunity to see how the child relates to money. There can be conversations about finances and investment philosophy. The parents would be more comfortable, ultimately, in passing their estate to the child after seeing how the child handles money during their lifetime. It also gives a child a good head-start in being financially literate and comfortable with money prior to a need to discuss estate transfer.

### **The greatest legacy you can give your children is your own financial independence**

Looking at how both matriarchs lived their lives, these are the lessons I have gleaned from. Both of them amassed their wealth by saving their hard-earned pennies. My close relative amassed her wealth over a lifetime of frugality and selling many things big and small. She was a small entrepreneur and sold whatever opportunity presented: Eggs, plants, nasi lemak, etc.

In her younger days, my mother-in-law made and sold kuehs in her coffee shop. She also rented out part of her coffee shop for income. Through prudence, she was able to amass sufficient wealth to buy a freehold apartment as a family home. By being financially independent, she never needed to depend on her children to provide for her and my father-in-law. She has lived a productive and meaningful good life. She said to me, "Life need not be complicated. Contentment and happiness are most important." Coming from someone who has lived through the Japanese invasion of Singapore in the 1940s and was under the subjugation of her then father-in-law, she is indeed a strong woman with a forgiving spirit. I think, unlike my close relative, she knows the true value of money. The purpose of money is to enable one to have purpose and to achieve one's life goals. Money should be an enabler, shouldn't it? This is a true legacy.





# 03 Self-Realisations from Being a Part-Time Digital Nomad

Nataly Ong, Brand Experience Lead

*(This article is a sequel to my previous article detailing **Why I Choose to Take My Job on the Road**)*

Beyond the simmering excitement behind the nerves for the solo adventure I was embarking on, I often wondered and over worry about two things:

1. Not having anyone around to hold me accountable for my missteps
2. If my introverted ways would lead to me feeling lonely on the road

## **#1 Not having anyone around to hold me accountable for my missteps**

I must admit that I have some travel quirks that only those who love me will tolerate.

For one, I like travelling without a plan and preferably without having to check google maps half the time. I enjoy navigating new places by drawing my own city map in my head and annotating landmarks unique only to me.

Anyway, in the spatial domains of urban geographies, most cities follow the usual urban grid system which also makes wayfinding much easier without google maps – 3 consecutive right turns and find yourself back at the original spot where you were.

But many times, even with the grid system as an underlying structure, urban forms are resultant extensions of people's way of life which can turn out way more organic than we think.

Thankfully, nothing too disastrous happened throughout the trip without much pre-planning work done although I did almost get stuck overnight in a suburban mall, with a 4% phone battery life, zero Uber in the immediate 5km radius, a very ugly tan line and just 2 hours left to scramble my way home before sun sets.

All in search of a nature trail that guarantees 100% sighting of baby wallabies.

Priorities, I know.



## **#2 If my introverted ways would lead to me feeling lonely on the road**

While I didn't have anyone to chat with on long car rides to the countryside and there was no one sitting across the table from me during mealtimes, I found my time alone on this trip being surrounded by a colourful kaleidoscope of fond memories from the past.

When I go for my daily morning run past the dog park that seems almost the size of a football field, I remembered how my dog would wait outside my room patiently from 5pm onwards everyday without fail and how his eyes would lit up immediately when he sees me closing the lid of my laptop.

When the Airbnb TV suddenly stopped working one day, I remembered the interesting conversation my two year old nephew had with my dad, trying so hard in his limited toddler English to convince my dad that it is time to stop watching TV and go take an afternoon nap.

When I succumbed to my Mala cravings on my last week in Melbourne, I remembered the time when a few of us in the office made it a point to have Mala for lunch every Wednesday, coining it Mala Wednesday with a real cool hand sign.

Through this period of solitary, I also managed to establish genuine, if fleeting, connections with an entire community of people I probably wouldn't have otherwise.

From the car rental receptionist who offered me a complimentary upgrade to the friendly museum docent who offered to charge my phone in the backroom to the jovial Ben Franklin impersonator who offered me directions on the street.

I may have been very much alone on this trip but I have definitely not felt lonely.

At least not till my last day in Melbourne.

I was taking a long stroll along the Yarra river towards Flinders Street station, soaking in all that Melbourne city had to offer when I first caught a familiar tune.

It was my wedding march-in song.

Beautifully played by a street busker with ruffled blonde hair wearing a blue and grey flannel shirt right outside the National Gallery of Victoria. He looked like he has a curious past and the music coming from his old, wooden guitar triggered a strong nostalgic emotional response from deep within me.

In a rare moment of vulnerability, I teared. Because I realised I missed my husband so much and I wished he had been right here with me on this adventure.

Life is nuanced and if this trip has taught me anything, it's that joy and sadness can exist at the same time.

Working from anywhere is great because you get work done while living your life but the truth is, that hundredth mesmerising sunset is just less mesmerising when you are not accompanied by the people you love.

It occurs to me that I may just be guilty of 'materialism' that takes on a different form. Instead of an addiction to money, status and possessions, I crave for experiences and freedom. And the end result is the same. Our relationships, our connections to what is real, sometimes take a backseat.

And for the first time in the two months I was away, I quietly wished that I was home.



# 04

## Year-End Financial Checklist

- The deadline to contribute to the Supplementary Retirement Scheme (SRS) for you to enjoy tax relief in Year of Assessment (YA) 2022 is 31 Dec 2022.
- GST will increase to 8% on any item bought from 1 Jan 2023 onwards so if you need to make any big purchase, do consider doing it before then.
- Be mindful of how you are using your bonus as it can be saved towards your retirement and/or contribute to your children education fund.
- Reflect on your past year and think of the goals you want to focus on for the new year.
- Last but definitely not least, take stock of all the successful actions you've taken and celebrate those successes.







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## See You Latte!



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