HOLIDAY CHEAT SHEET · ANDREW BREWER, CERTIFIED FINANCIAL PLANNER™

How Do You Talk to Your Parents About Money?

Three questions, a checklist, and a January game plan. You don't need to know what they have. You need to know where it's written down.

Before You Sit Down

Ask about wishes, not balances

“What would you want if something happened?” opens more doors than “How much is in your IRA?”

START HERE

Skip the dollar amounts

This is about making things clean, not finding out what you'll inherit.

RESPONSIBLE, NOT NOSY

Expect a little awkwardness

Planners run “what if one of you dies first” every week. It's awkward for two minutes. Then it's just planning.

IT PASSES

Don't solve it at the table

You're not there to fix anything over dinner. Getting the conversation started is the win.

ONE QUESTION IS ENOUGH

What Are the 3 Questions to Ask This Holiday Season?

1

Where are your important documents, and who's your power of attorney?

The power of attorney gets overlooked most, because it's the one you need while you're still alive. If Mom or Dad gets laid up, someone has to be legally able to sign checks and pay bills.

DOCUMENTS ARE KEPT AT _____

FINANCIAL POA IS _____

2

When did you last update your beneficiaries?

Beneficiaries on IRAs, 401(k)s, and life insurance override the will. An old account with an ex or a late relative listed goes to that person, no matter what the updated will says.

LAST REVIEWED _____

ACCOUNTS TO DOUBLE-CHECK _____

3

What are your wishes?

Burial or cremation? Is there a plot, and is it paid for? It's the gentlest of the three, and it usually gets them talking about everything else.

THEIR WISHES _____

PLOT / PREPAID PLANS _____

EASY WAYS TO START THE CONVERSATION

“I was reading about how many people don't have a will. Do you two have one?”

“If something happened to you, who would you want paying the bills?”

“Have you thought about what you'd want for a funeral, or is that already planned?”

THE CHECKLIST

What Should You Find Out From Your Parents?

Check one box per row. “Not sure” is a perfectly good answer. It just tells you where to start.

WHAT TO ASK ABOUT	DO THEY HAVE IT?	WHO'S NAMED · WHERE IT'S KEPT
Will or trust Written when the kids were little? It probably needs an update.	☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Not sure	
Financial power of attorney Lets someone pay bills and sign checks if they can't.	☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Not sure	
Healthcare POA / directive Their wishes in writing, so siblings aren't left arguing over care.	☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Not sure	
DNR and end-of-life wishes Feeding tube, life support, resuscitation.	☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Not sure	
Final arrangements Burial or cremation, plot, prepaid plans.	☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Not sure	
Beneficiaries on every account IRAs, 401(k)s, life insurance, annuities. These override the will.	☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Not sure	
Long-term care plan Most people skip this one and “roll the dice.”	☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Not sure	
Where documents are kept Safe, file cabinet, attorney's office, digital folder.	☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Not sure	
Key contacts Attorney, financial planner, CPA, insurance agent.	☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Not sure	

What Should You Do in January If Something's Missing?

1. **Make a short list**
   Every “No” and “Not sure” above goes on it.
2. **Update beneficiaries**
   Usually fast. Often one form per account.
3. **Meet a planner first**
   Learn will vs. trust and probate before the attorney.
4. **Put a date on it**
   Pick a week in January and book it.

WANT A SECOND SET OF EYES?

Schedule a complimentary meeting with Andrew Brewer, CFP®, by phone, video, or in our office.

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