BEACH CITIES®
ESTATE LAW

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When Life Pulls You in 2 Directions at Once

THE MODERN BALANCING ACT



There comes a point in life when it feels like everyone needs something from you at once. Your children rely on your time, attention, and financial support, while your parents are beginning to need help, too. One day, you coordinate school schedules, and the next, you help a parent manage medical appointments, bills, or difficult decisions about the future.

For many families, these responsibilities build gradually until the emotional and financial pressure becomes overwhelming. How can you possibly manage it all?

That's why July's recognition of Sandwich Generation Month resonates with so many people. The "sandwich generation" refers to adults caring for both their children and aging parents at the same time, an increasingly common reality.

Starting the Estate Planning Conversation

One of the greatest challenges I encounter is that many adult children have no idea whether their parents have an estate plan in place. They don't know whether documents exist, where they are, or who's supposed to step in if something happens. Those conversations can feel uncomfortable, especially when parents are private about money or future planning.

One of the easiest ways to open the door is by doing your own estate planning first. Once you've created your own plan to protect your family, it becomes much more natural to ask your parents whether they've done the same. Instead of feeling confrontational, the conversation becomes something you're both working through together.

When Caregiving Falls on One Person

Another situation I see often is when one sibling becomes the primary caregiver, handling appointments, medications, meals, and daily care for a parent. That responsibility can take a serious emotional and financial toll.

Estate plans can account for that reality. Some families decide that the child providing most of the care should receive additional compensation through the estate. The key is discussing it openly ahead of time. Waiting until after a parent passes away to address unpaid caregiving often leads to conflict, resentment, and expensive disputes. Having honest conversations early helps families set expectations before emotions run high.

Sharing the Burden

Caregiving doesn't have to fall entirely on one person. Families function better when they divide responsibilities realistically. One sibling may handle day-to-day finances while another manages taxes or medical coordination. In some cases, bringing in professional help, such as in-home care, a private fiduciary, or a geriatric care manager, can make an enormous difference.

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WHY PEOPLE KEEP AVOIDING ESTATE PLANNING

Even When They Know They Shouldn't

It's one of life's most predictable realities, but one of the most avoided conversations. Estate planning sits in the uncomfortable space where logic says, "You should do this," but emotion says, "Not today." Thus, people delay. Weeks turn into years, and before they know it, something essential remains undone.

Facing mortality feels unnatural.
Estate planning forces people to confront their own mortality, which can feel unsettling. That emotional discomfort is often enough to trigger avoidance. Psychologically, humans are wired to sidestep thoughts of death and prefer to focus on the present.

When estate planning brings up questions about incapacity, death, or what happens "after," it can feel overwhelming. Many people respond by choosing short-term emotional comfort over long-term preparedness and putting it off. This emotional resistance is a major barrier, not a lack of awareness.

Procrastination plays a large role.
Putting something off doesn't necessarily mean someone is just lazy. Sometimes, it's rooted in how we perceive effort versus reward. Estate planning feels like a heavy task with no immediate payoff or instant gratification.

As a result, people push it down their to-do list. Busy schedules reinforce this behavior, making it easy to justify delay with thoughts like, "I'll handle it when things slow down." Unfortunately, that "later" often never arrives.

Complexity creates mental overload.
Legal language, financial decisions, and unfamiliar terminology can make estate planning feel intimidating. After all, you have to make dozens of decisions, which creates what psychologists call cognitive overload. When faced with too much information or too many choices, the brain tends to shut down or avoid the task altogether. Even starting can feel exhausting, especially when forms or processes seem complicated or unclear.

Misconceptions can lower urgency.
A common belief is: "I don't have enough assets to need a plan." This misconception reduces urgency and gives people permission to delay. But when it comes down to it, estate planning is all about control, clarity, and protecting loved ones. Still, when people underestimate its importance, they mentally downgrade it from "essential" to "optional," increasing the likelihood of avoidance.

Emotional and family dynamics play a role.
Estate planning is extremely personal and can raise sensitive topics such as family relationships, fairness, and legacy. These conversations can feel uncomfortable or even conflict-prone. Rather than risk tension or difficult decisions, many people avoid the process entirely, and the emotional weight of these choices can feel heavier than the practical benefits of completing them.

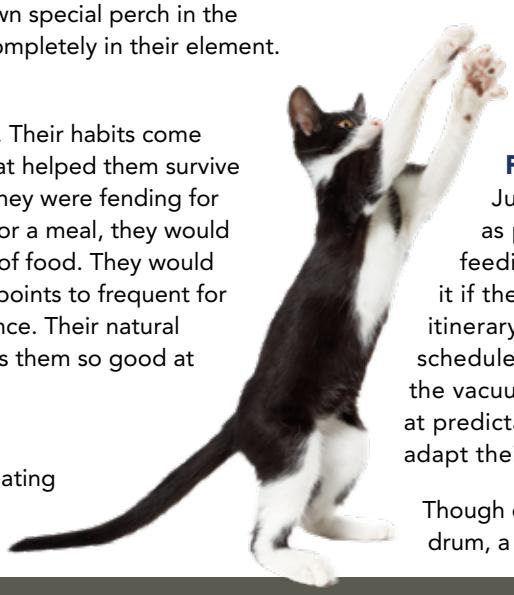
PURR-FECT TIMING

Inside Your Cat's Daily Rhythm

Our cats may act like effortlessly cool rulers of the home (with a flair for chaos), but deep down, they're creatures of *purr*-fect predictability. Felines thrive on consistency and crave routines that make them feel in control of their environments. From mealtimes that arrive right on cue to having their own special perch in the sun, routines help cats feel secure and completely in their element.

Born to Stalk
Domestic cats are still little lions at heart. Their habits come from their ancestors, and the instincts that helped them survive in the wild drive many of their quirks. If they were fending for themselves, instead of meowing to you for a meal, they would build routines to maximize the potential of food. They would scope out a watering hole, find vantage points to frequent for hunting, and always be prepared to pounce. Their natural hunting strategies are part of what makes them so good at anticipating what's next.

Pounce Planning
You can support their cat calendar by creating routines that speak to their wild side. Make mealtime a hunting ritual by dividing their food into smaller portions and using puzzle feeders that force them to work for it. Give them plenty of objects they can scratch, as that's how they naturally care for their claws. Cats like having places to rest or watch the world around them safely, so give them a variety of seating options. No two cats are the same, but they cherish time with their owner. Bond with them through regular play, grooming, and snuggles.



Flex the Feline Flow
Just like in the wild, sometimes things don't go as planned, so you need flexibility. If you're late on feeding time, for example, they can typically accept it if the majority of their day follows their normal itinerary. However, if other changes will cause a major schedule shakeup, introduce the big ones gradually. Say the vacuum cleaner scares your furry friend. Start using it at predictable times so they can better anticipate it and adapt their own plan.

Though cats will always pounce to the beat of their own drum, a little routine allows them to purr at their very best.

TAKE A BREAK

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BARBECUE
BASEBALL
CYCLING
FISHING
FIREWORKS
ICE CREAM
INDEPENDENCE
PARK
RUBY
SHADE
STARGAZING
VACATION

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Professional support also allows you to spend more meaningful time with your parent. Instead of constantly arguing about bills or paperwork, you can focus on simply being family. Also, don't forget about community support! Sometimes, that means carpooling with other parents, trading playdates, or leaning on trusted friends and relatives when schedules become difficult. Small forms of support can create much-needed breathing room.

Having Someone in Your Corner

One of the most valuable things an estate planning attorney can provide is guidance during uncertain moments. Other times clients call because they've suddenly become a parent's fiduciary and have no idea what to do next. Sometimes, they simply need reassurance that they're making thoughtful decisions during a stressful season of life.

My role is to help you understand your options, connect you with resources, and ease some of the pressure you're carrying. Many families don't even realize that professionals, support systems, and planning tools are available until they're in the middle of a crisis.

If you're part of the sandwich generation, know this: You don't have to figure it all out by yourself. We're here to help you protect your family, support your parents, and move forward with confidence.

- Angela Klenk

Chop, Stir, and Breathe

TURN EVERYDAY COOKING INTO MINDFULNESS

Most of us walk into the kitchen on autopilot, hungry, distracted, and already thinking about what's next. However, every now and then, we notice the rhythm of chopping, the way steam curls up from a pan, or the simmer of a pot. These are moments of mindfulness hidden in plain sight. No wonder research suggests that cooking goes beyond feeding a hungry stomach and can nurture your mind, helping you feel grounded, present, and emotionally balanced.

Cooking as a Sensory Experience

Mindfulness is all about engaging with the present moment, and cooking naturally pulls you there. The scent of garlic hitting a hot pan, the texture of dough under your hands, and the colors of fresh vegetables are all sensory triggers that draw your attention away from distractions and into the "now."

A Moment for You and Your Thoughts

Unlike passive activities, cooking gives your mind something structured yet creative to focus on. Following a recipe or experimenting with flavors provides a sense of direction, which can be especially calming during overwhelming moments. Studies show that this kind of focused activity can ease anxiety and improve emotional regulation, offering a steady anchor when thoughts feel scattered.

A Sense of Accomplishment

Turning ingredients into a finished dish can be incredibly satisfying. That sense of completion after seeing, tasting, and sharing what you've made can boost confidence and elevate mood. Cooking becomes more than a task; it becomes a small, tangible success in your day! Good food and an accomplishment; it's a win-win!



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INSIDE

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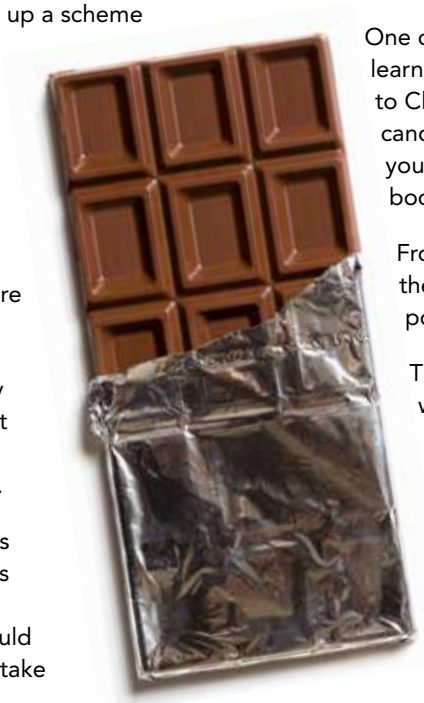
4 Death by Chocolate, Literally

CANDY-COATED CONSPIRACY

How a Sweet Treat Nearly Took Down Churchill

If you thought "death by chocolate" only meant indulging in too many sweets, here's a piece of history that's hard to swallow, literally. During World War II, Nazi operatives cooked up a scheme to take out British Prime Minister Winston Churchill using his sweet tooth against himself. They developed a killer candy: an exploding chocolate bar to smuggle into Churchill's War Cabinet dining room. So, how did an artist's sketch help British spies foil this murder plot?



As Nazi forces bombed Great Britain, they were busy coming up with other dangerous booby traps they could use against their enemies. During the war, the British intelligence agency M15 caught wind of the sneaky campaign that included plans to add explosives to everyday items like canned goods and shaving brushes.

However, one bomb took the cake. The Nazis created a chocolate bar with steel and canvas hidden underneath the tasty squares. When the unlucky recipient broke off a piece, it would trigger a bomb in seven seconds that would take out anyone nearby. They even branded it as "Peter's Chocolate," wrapped in foil and gold lettering.

One of M15's top intelligence chiefs, Lord Victor Rothschild, learned of the plans to deliver these combustible confections to Churchill in time to protect him. But, Rothschild feared the candy could still put the public at risk. So, he reached out to young artist Laurence Fish to draw sketches of various Nazi booby traps, including the candy bomb.

From a hidden bunker, Rothschild sent a quick sketch of the exploding chocolate bar so Fish could turn it into large poster images to warn people what to watch for.

The secret letter was later found in 2009 by Fish's widow, though many of his original drawings have been lost to time. In 2015, Rothschild's family located a collection of Fish's booby trap sketches tucked away in a chest of drawers.

Thankfully, Churchill survived to enjoy safe sweets until he passed away at age 90 in 1965.

This moment in history is living proof that sometimes the sweetest treats can hide a bitter surprise.