

WOMEN NEED TO TAKE THE WHEEL

THE FINANCIAL DECISION
MAKING WHEEL

WHY WOMEN NEED A WILL: The Financial Power of Attorney

My parents divorced when I was about five years old and I lived with my mom and two sisters for a majority of my childhood. So you could say my childhood home was a woman lead household which was somewhat common in the 1970's; however, a woman lead household is much more common now. Now, versus in the 1970's, what "women lead household" means is different. A woman lead household nowadays is either a single parent household where the woman is holding down the fort and a household where the primary breadwinner is the woman.

Being raised in a woman lead household really allows me to appreciate how and why **women have unique needs when it comes to estate planning.**

Especially the planning around finances. Especially now.

Why now?

-) Now 70% of women with children under age 18 work outside the homeⁱ
-) Now 40% of women with children under age 18 are primary earners in the homeⁱⁱ
-) Since 2015 women control more than ½ of the personal wealth.ⁱⁱⁱ
-) By 2020 women are expected to control 2/3 of personal wealth.^{iv}

It is clear, women are now in the driver's seat of not just their own financial decision-making landscape, but the driver's seat of the majority of households in the US. And they need to put their hands on the wheel.

What does "putting their hands on the wheel" mean for women?

This means creating an estate plan that will keep their vehicle moving in the direction they want to go in the event they get sick or injured. Paying special attention to the **Financial Power of Attorney** in their plan.

The main document in any estate plan that speaks to finances is the Financial Power of Attorney, sometimes referred to as durable power of attorney. It is a legal document that designates a person to manage finances and/or conduct financial transaction on behalf of another. The document may allow that management immediately (as soon as signed properly) or only if the person signing the document is incapacitated (i.e. too sick or injured to manage their finances). The specific powers can be very, very numerous or it can be very limited.

How does this document help a woman put her hands on her financial wheel?

Women clearly now manage more money than men. By “manage” I mean women are making more decisions about money and finances than ever before; the day to day, the week to week, all the way out to the decade to decade choices about money and finances. They are driving the decisions.

But so many women have not put their hands on the wheel yet. They do not have a plan yet to keep their vehicle heading the right direction if they get sick, they get injured or they lose the ability to manage their finances due to dementia or other neurological disease. They do not have a plan to protect their decades or choices!

Women need to designate at least one person to keep their vehicle moving in the right direction. Preferably women name one person and a backup!

Why? Women uniquely need a plan because we outlive spouses. Women are controlling more wealth than ever before. Women are going to need to protect and preserve that money for long term care expenses. Women need to feel safe in the knowledge they have a plan if something happens. Women need to know their household will keep running without them, even if only temporarily.

Because we understand women lead households and how choices are made in that environment, we have a unique way we approach planning for women. We know we need to look to resources that are likely not thought of in traditional planning firms not lead by an attorney raised by a single mom. We know the impact of not having that plan when the car veers a little bit. We know women want to know there is someone to take the wheel for them, if ever needed.

Call us at Atlanta Wills + Trust Law Group and let us help you put your hands firmly on the wheel by getting an estate plan that allows your financial choices to be protected in the event of injury or illness.

Atlanta Wills + Trusts Law Group by Refeca Law LLC is a boutique wills and trusts estate planning law firm located in Alpharetta, Georgia. We help clients in the surrounding cities of Johns Creek, Milton, Cumming, Suwanee, Duluth, Roswell, Sandy Springs, Marietta and other North Fulton metropolitan Atlanta communities. Call us at (770) 508-6525 today to see how we can help you put a plan in place in case life veers a little.

ⁱ U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2014.

ⁱⁱ Pew Research Center, 2013.

ⁱⁱⁱ *Financial Concerns of Women*, by BMO Wealth Institute, 2015.

^{iv} *Id.*