

# PUBLICATION

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## Financial Wellness for Women: The 10 Rules of Investing

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**We have all heard that women tend to put everyone else's needs before their own. I have observed this first hand with busy clients, my colleagues, and myself. Of course, women putting themselves last can have many detrimental effects, including on our health, time management, self-care, and especially long-term financial security.**

I receive panicked calls regularly from friends on the eve of their first big trip without the kids wondering what they need to do to plan for guardianship of their children if their plane goes down. I hear colleagues say they do not know their credit score, how much is in their 401(k) (even if they know they need to max it out), and the ins and outs of our Firm's benefits. According to a recent *Forbes* [article](#), 61 percent of women would rather talk about their own death than money. The same article also notes that there are two key areas in which women fall behind: saving and investing. In an age when women are far outliving men, what steps should women take now to ensure their long-term financial security? How can women meet their personal and financial goals, achieve philanthropic goals, and teach their children how to become financially savvy adults?

These issues and more were addressed at a recent Baker Donelson New Orleans Women's Initiative event. Morgan Stanley Financial Advisor Beth Colón, CFP®, CDFA™, who focuses her financial advisory practice on serving women, provided valuable insights into how and why women should plan for their financial futures. The event raised many good questions about decisions impacting the financial wellness of women. With only a few prepared remarks, Beth spent the balance of her time fielding questions like, "Should I max out my 401(k) or invest in a 529 Plan for my child?" and "Should I pay off my student loan debt first or aggressively pay off my car?" Beth's answers were guided largely by her "Top 10 Rules of Investing" which include:

1. Pay yourself first
2. Have a spending plan
3. Know the basics
4. Diversification is key
5. Inflation erodes purchasing power
6. Turn off the "talking heads"
7. Have a plan
8. Create a system for saving
9. Create a system for distribution
10. Talk to your CPA about the tax code changes

Attendees left the event armed with information on how to make important financial decisions and empowered to face head-on many of the big life decisions that are often left on the back burner. In addition, each attendee received a folder containing a checklist of critical documents to prepare and include in the folder as well as easy forms to have on hand, including a consent to treat a minor for use by babysitters/caregivers, a HIPAA release (critical for parents with college-aged children in case of emergencies), and a basic power of attorney.

Baker Donelson's Women's Initiative is committed to creating an environment where women thrive. Helping our female attorneys and clients make informed decisions about their financial futures is only one way that we live that commitment.

