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AS MANY HAVE OFTEN SAID ABOUT insurance, you don't realize you need it...until you need it. This is especially the case with life insurance. Still, the best kind of setup may depend on your age and goals, along with your willingness to face the tough questions and—most importantly—answer them.

WHERE DO YOU WANT TO GO?

First, determine how close (or far) you are from your goals, says Texas Farm Bureau Insurance Agent Drew Pemberton, who is based in Collin County.

"When you're younger, you're looking at things like how long until your kids go to college," he says. "If one of you is staying at home, the costs can be even more difficult. If you have a big family who needs to be taken care of, you need to think about that today."

Even the budget-stretched have a few options to prepare for the catastrophic possibility that a spouse may die young; Pemberton recommends a term policy that's convertible to whole. "The longer you wait, the more the change in cost to convert it," he reminds. "But it's much easier than just deciding to get term and not having the option at all."

Pemberton is a big fan of whole policies because you only pay a set amount and its worth keeps growing long after you cut the last check. It's also easier for borrowing, allowing it to act as not just a safeguard for death but for other unexpected events in life.

Prepare for the next stage

Whatever stage you might be at in life, be sure to contact me for any reassessments or to plan for the future.

Contact me today:

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THE KIDS & THE PROPERTY

Another factor to consider is that when your kids leave home, you may not need as much insurance, says Pemberton, unless the family has a substantial amount of assets, leading to a heavy tax burden on inheritance.

"It's the same deal when you look at farmers with a good amount of land," he says. "They want to keep their farms going, but when they pass away, families without insurance may have no choice but to sell parts of the land to pay for taxes. A family shouldn't have to come to that kind of decision on something they've spent so much time building."

BUT DON'T WAIT TOO LONG ...

Regardless of the coverage you'll need, you must always be mindful of insurability, something which, on average, becomes much more difficult with each passing decade.

"Term policies can be bought in your 60s, but then you have to get an insurance company that's willing to cover you," he says. "If you have someone who did a 30-year term when they were young and now it's up, then you're almost starting from the beginning. You have to really ask yourself if insurance is for taking care of your family when they're in the house or will it also be needed to take care of your spouse as he or she becomes elderly...in the event something happens to you?"

LIFE AFTER WORK

Pemberton says retirement planning may also need a few tweaks, especially in the age of disappearing pensions and the possible shrinking of Social Security benefits.

"Annuities and retirement products within insurance purchases offer protection, but you have to gauge where you are in your financial life and what the likely future is," he says. "Do you have that pension or will you inherit? Also, how long do you want to work? People are retiring later and later—a lot just want to keep on working. You need to figure out what your lifestyle will be like."

There is another cost that many people don't consider, maybe because it brings the visualization of mortality so close to the surface. "Most people don't want to burden their survivors with having to pay off their final debts and pay for their funeral," he says. "But too many of them don't get a policy to make sure this doesn't happen. Life

insurance fills this need also."

Pemberton even admits that for some people, it just comes down to the fact that they don't want one more bill. Still, it can eventually disappear. "You can have a policy that can have the power to pay the premiums themselves out of the money you'd one day be paid out, alleviating another bill and worry."

QUALITY OF LIFE

For stay-at-home mother Jennifer Harris, 38, and her family from Providence Village, life insurance came down to one thing: a feeling of security. Her husband Justin, 32, a self-employed automotive and industrial repair specialist, received preferable rates because of his age, something that allowed them to do higher levels of coverage to ensure that their 8-year-old daughter, Emily, and 2-year-old son, Quinn, would be taken care of no matter what.

"We pay attention to our surroundings," she says. "It just takes one person close to you dying to remind you—you can think everyone will live forever, but it's just not true. There have been so many horror stories of 'would've, could've, should've' and we didn't want to end up being one of those."

Jennifer also liked opting for coverage that partly created savings for retirement, enjoying the fact that the money is put away without them even thinking about it. For a lifestyle that includes the outdoors, volunteering, and even recently having a 16-year-old foreign exchange student, Ida, stay with them, they want to continue to enjoy the life they've always known.

Pemberton said when Justin came in to apply for a policy, it was just one more reminder of what he wished everyone thought of: the future.

"As time goes on, their needs are going to change," Pemberton says. "You have to keep up with what even their children's goals are and how a family sees their future shaping and changing." ★



IF YOU ARE ...
In your 30s and in good health, apply for life insurance right away while rates are still low. In addition, consider a policy where some of your payment is put away for retirement for forced savings.

Around 50 with the possibility of inheriting, consider one premium permanent policy and, if you inherit that money, you may want to put it into an annuity for retirement.

Working until 75, then you can open up an annuity and add to it every year until you finally retire. "We have people who put money into their annuities every month from their income and it makes for a nice retirement when they're ready," Pemberton says.