Estate Equalization: When Fair Doesn't Always Mean Equal

You've worked hard to build a comfortable retirement and create financial security for your loved ones. But when it comes to dividing your estate, equal doesn't always mean fair. For Ontario retirees with significant assets like a family cottage, a business, or investments, the question often becomes: how do you divide things fairly when not everything can be split evenly?

Equal vs. Fair — There's a Difference

Imagine one child wants the cottage you've owned for 30 years, another has helped run the family business, and a third lives abroad with no interest in either. Splitting these assets "equally" on paper might seem right, but it may create tension or resentment.

Fair estate planning considers your beneficiaries' involvement, needs, and your own values. It's not about playing favourites — it's about making sure everyone is respected and provided for in a way that makes sense.

How to Create Balance

- **Life Insurance**: A powerful tool to equalize your estate. You can leave the family cottage or business to one child and use a life insurance policy to provide an equivalent value to the others — tax-free and without dipping into your estate.
- **Clear Communication**: Let your family know your intentions ahead of time. Surprises in a will often lead to conflict.
- **Updated Valuations**: Ensure assets like property or businesses are properly appraised so equalization is based on current value, not assumptions.

A Smart Plan Prevents Future Problems

Estate equalization isn't just for the ultra-wealthy — it's essential for any retiree who wants to avoid disputes and protect family harmony. A personalized strategy can save taxes, reduce legal fees, and preserve your relationships.

Want help figuring out how to divide your estate fairly and wisely? Let's talk and put a plan in place that honours both your assets, and your family!