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Dear Dante:

If there's one thing we've learned over the years as financial advisors, it's that it's never too late to dream a new dream...or achieve one, either.

Recently, we read a story that proved just how true this is. Allow us to introduce you to a man named Manfred Steiner.

Back in late 2020, Steiner earned a Ph.D. from Brown University in physics. As you know, graduating from college is a great achievement. Graduating from an Ivy League school, even more so. Earning a Ph.D. in one of the most difficult and complicated subjects known to man? That's just staggering.

But none of that is what makes Steiner's story so noteworthy. What's noteworthy is that he did it all at the age of 89.

You read that right. A Ph.D. in physics at 89 years old!!! (That sentence probably deserves a few extra exclamation marks.)

When Steiner was young, he dreamed of being a physicist. But his family urged him to be a doctor instead, so he earned his medical degree and became a hematologist. He even served as the Head of Hematology at Brown's medical school.

Steiner's career was long and fruitful, and like many people, he decided to cash in his chips and retire at age 70. Thankfully for him, and for the world, Steiner understood that retirement isn't the end of a journey. It's the start of one.

More specifically, retirement is a chance not only to do what you've always wanted to do but be what you've always wanted to be. And Steiner still wanted to be a physicist. So, he set about becoming one. It was a lifelong goal, and he still had a long life to live. Back to Brown he went, taking one or two classes each semester. (Because, hey, retirement is also about relaxing.)

In a few years, he earned his bachelor's degree – but he wasn't finished. As he puts it, "I thought, 'Why not continue now? I might as well get a Ph.D. It's always been my dream. I wanted this.'"<sup>1</sup>

So, he kept taking classes. Kept reading books. Kept doing homework. Kept writing papers. Kept passing tests. (No word on whether he availed himself of the other joys of college life – we suspect he was too busy.) Slowly but surely, he mastered the science of physics. Until, finally,

*nineteen years after retirement*, he wrote his dissertation on “Corrections to the Geometrical Interpretation of Bosonization”.<sup>1</sup>

We confess, we don’t know what that means – but it was the final step in earning his PhD. (A dissertation, by the way, is more than just a simple essay or research paper. It’s an original work that “*contributes* knowledge, theory, or methods to a field of study”. Meaning that, in years to come, other students may well study Steiner’s writings to increase their own knowledge!)

In some ways, we think that’s the coolest thing of all: That no matter how old you are, you can not only achieve your goals, but can also add to the collective knowledge of the world.

“I was elated,” Steiner said after receiving the honor. “I mean, I made it! I really made it.”<sup>1</sup>

So, what is the world’s newest octogenarian physicist going to do now?

Simple: Do physics!

As Steiner says, “I’ve reached what I’ve always wanted. Now, I want to do it. I know I’m going to be 90 soon, but physics is what interests me, and this is what I want to end my life with.”<sup>1</sup>

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Every January, many of us set new goals and make new resolutions. Some people question the point of this endeavor. After all, not everyone succeeds in what they want. But whether we’ve tried something and failed...

Or if we once had a goal but were forced to put it aside for other concerns...

Or if we simply didn’t dare to dream at all, because the star we sought seemed too far away...

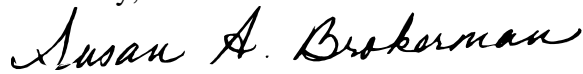
It is never too late to start. It is never too late to dream. And it is *never* too late to *do*.

Manfred Steiner proves it.

So, as we enter a New Year, Dante, go and dream that dream no matter what it is or where you are in life. There’s no doubt in our minds you’ll achieve it. After all, why not?

It’s just physics.

Sincerely,



Susan A. Brokerman, ChFC  
Vice Chair of the Board, Branch Manager



James Q. Sellers, CFP  
Executive Vice President, Branch Manager

<sup>1</sup> “89-year-old retiree earns Ph.D. in physics from Ivy League school,” *CBS News*, November 22, 2021.  
<https://www.cbsnews.com/news/manfred-steiner-89-retiree-physics-phd-ivy-league-school/>

<sup>2</sup> “Dissertation vs Thesis: Key Differences,” *Wordvice*, <https://blog.wordvice.com/dissertation-versus-thesis-key-differences-3/>