

EXPERT INSIGHTS ON KEY TRENDS SHAPING THE FUTURE

The Next Era in Financial Planning





Financial planning is entering a new era—one defined not only by rapid technological advancement but by a redefined sense of purpose.

Over the past 25 years, the profession has matured from a value-add service into a vital, human-centered discipline that touches every facet of people's lives. Today, the possibilities before us are expansive, with new tools and a deeper understanding of the emotional and behavioral dimensions of money.

This report offers a lens into that transformation, drawing on the insights of industry leaders to chart the course forward. It is both a reflection on how far we've come and a call to imagine what's possible when innovation and empathy move in step.

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About the Research

This industry study was commissioned by eMoney Advisor, a leading provider of financial planning technology solutions and services, and executed in partnership with 8 Acre Perspective, an independent research firm.

eMoney

8 acre
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CUSTOM STRATEGIC RESEARCH

Methodology

Individual interviews were conducted May–June, 2025 with 19 experts from diverse vantage points in the industry:

- Wealth management executives
- Financial planning industry leaders
- Strategy consultants
- Academics
- Technology providers

Participating Industry Experts

Name	Firm/Role
Hannah Moore, CFP®	Amplified Planning, Founder; Founder of The Externship; Guiding Wealth, Chief Executive Officer
Greg Furer, CFP®, CRPC®, CPFA	Beratung Advisors (affiliate with LPL Financial), Chief Executive Officer
Yelena Melamed	Catchlight, Head of Product and Co-Founder
Nicholas DiLisi	eMoney, Head of Technology
Craig Iskowitz	Ezra Group, Founder and Chief Executive Officer
Ed O'Brien	Fidelity Investments, Head of Fidelity Institutional Technology
Alisa Stendaro	Fidelity Investments, Vice President, Market and Business Intelligence
Dennis Moore, CFP®	Financial Planning Association (FPA), Chief Operating Officer, Interim Chief Executive Officer
Tim Chaves	Jump AI, Co-Founder and Chief Operating Officer
Patti Brennan, CFP®	Key Financial (LPL Financial), Chief Executive Officer, Financial Planner
Ben Henry-Moreland, CFP®	Kitces.com, Senior Financial Planning Nerd
Dr. Mark Tenenbaum	Kitces.com, Director of Advisor Research
Amy Young, CFA	Microsoft, Director, Capital Markets Industry Advisory
Joel Bruckenstein	T3 (Technology Tools for Today), Founder and President
Dr. Stuart Heckman, CFP®, CFA	Texas Tech University, Associate Professor of Practice and Ph.D. Program Director
Danny Lohrfink	Wealth.com, Co-Founder and Chief Product Officer
Dr. Bradley Klontz, CFP®	Your Mental Wealth Advisors / Creighton University, Financial Psychologist, Author

Two additional wealth management executives participated in the research but requested anonymity.

Introduction

Financial Planning Is Set to Change Lives—at Scale

As new technology continues to redefine what’s possible in financial planning, a pressing question is often asked: **Will the human advisor still matter?**

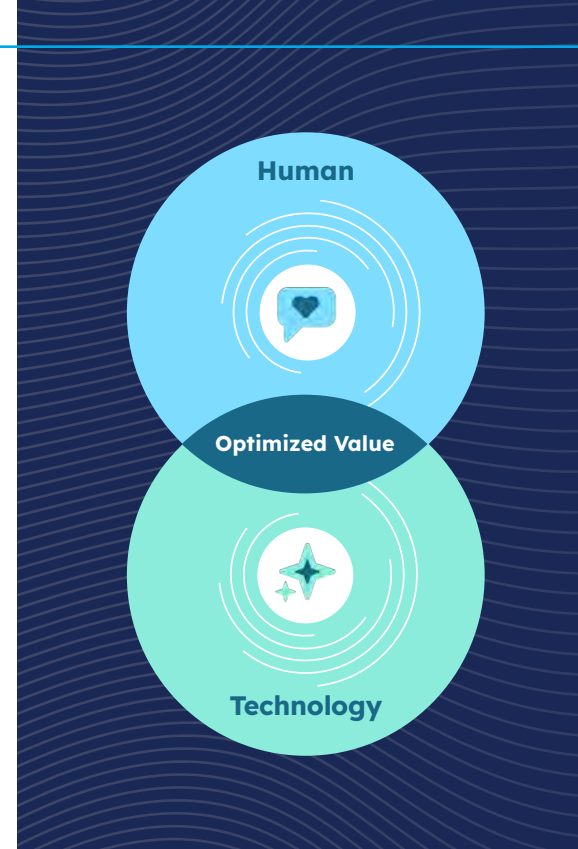
Our interviews with industry experts suggest a future in which technology doesn’t replace the financial advisor but **amplifies their value**. Effective financial planning will be delivered at the intersection of intelligent automation and human connection.

As AI and automation redefine what’s possible, the human elements of trust, empathy, and understanding will become more valuable than ever.

Technology providers and forward-thinking advisors will empower a future where financial planning is both widely accessible and deeply personal.

Read on to explore:

- The journey that brought us here
- AI’s role in the next evolution of financial planning
- Why human connection remains irreplaceable
- How financial psychology and purpose-driven leadership will define the path forward for the profession



“They pair together so well. I don’t think technology replaces [the human element]. I think it enhances [it].”

—**Hannah Moore**, Founder, Amplified Planning;
Founder of The Externship; Chief Executive
Officer, Guiding Wealth

A Profession Reimagined

How Financial Planning Became Essential, Empathetic, and Esteemed

Wealth management and financial planning look very different today than they did 25 years ago—the result of several powerful shifts that have redefined the industry.

Product-centric → Planning-led

Wealth management has evolved from a product-driven, transactional model to a service-oriented approach centered on client needs.

Advisors have transitioned from the role of stockbroker to investment manager, to goal-based planner, and now to holistic financial planner—reflecting a broader, more client-centered approach. Fee compression and growing client expectations have compelled advisors to deliver value that extends well beyond investment management.

“It’s all been part of this flow away from a transaction, sales-based model, into something where the advice and relationship with clients is the thing that’s valued.”

—Ben Henry-Moreland, Senior Financial Planning Nerd, Kitces.com

Basic → Holistic

Financial planning has expanded from covering basic financial matters to delivering holistic guidance that considers the full scope of a client’s life, goals, and well-being.

Financial planning, which once focused on simple transactions, now engages clients in deeper conversations about money fears, personal goals, core values, and the legacy they hope to leave. Planning has evolved from addressing siloed topics to offering comprehensive guidance that considers the full scope of a client’s financial and personal life.

The aim is no longer just to improve financial outcomes, but to help clients achieve a better life overall—integrating well-being, purpose, and fulfillment into the planning process.

“There is this trend toward more holistic, comprehensive advice. We’re not just trying to help people live better financial lives, we’re trying to help them live better lives period.”

—Stuart Heckman, Associate Professor of Practice and Ph.D. Program Director, Texas Tech University

◀ ◀ ◀ A look back

Static → Dynamic

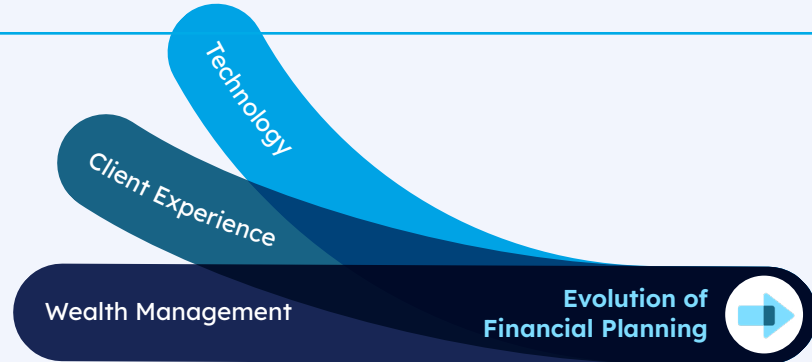
The financial planning experience has evolved from static and episodic to dynamic and ongoing.

The financial plan now serves as the central pillar of ongoing advisor-client engagement, evolving continuously rather than being delivered as a single, comprehensive document. Advisors and clients work together through interactive planning sessions, fostering deeper collaboration.

The expansion of digital engagement—accelerated by the Covid pandemic—has further driven the adoption of collaborative planning tools, enabling more flexible, real-time communication and decision-making.

“The introduction of more dynamic financial planning helps advisors and clients create a plan that continues to stay current, and that actually becomes a part of the conversation, more than a document that was produced and put on the shelf.”

—Ed O’Brien, Head of Fidelity Institutional Technology, Fidelity Investments



Technology has been the enabler of change.

Technology has been the driving force behind the transformation of financial planning through multiple advancements:

- **Cloud-based software** has enabled faster, more seamless service that streamlines implementation, integration, and support.
- **Advisors and clients now benefit** from unprecedented access to data, thanks to account aggregation and the broader digitization of daily life.
- **The tools available have evolved** from simple notepads to advanced financial planning software capable of sophisticated analysis at scale.
- **Modern user interfaces and interactive decision-support tools** have further enhanced the advisor-client experience, making planning more engaging, collaborative, and impactful.

“You had pen and paper for the longest time, then you had a slide rule, then calculators. Then we get into computers and Microsoft Excel. Then you get into planning software like eMoney. You can see that hockey stick motion, and it’s about to go straight vertical with AI.”

—**Danny Lohrfink**, Co-Founder and Chief Product Officer, Wealth.com



As a result, financial planning has evolved from a little-known field to being recognized as a valued profession.

Academic institutions now offer established undergraduate and graduate financial planning programs, many of them CFP Board-registered, reflecting the growing importance of the field.

Further, CFP Board has invested in the CERTIFIED FINANCIAL PLANNER® certification by partnering with universities and colleges across the nation to deliver curricula covering the 70 Principal Knowledge Topics, more recently integrating financial psychology, and expanding educational reach. This commitment is reflected in the rising number of CFP® professionals, with year-over-year growth accelerating in 2024 compared to 2023¹.

At the same time, investor awareness and demand for comprehensive financial planning continue to climb, signaling a robust future for the profession.

“Just like people go to their doctor, people are going to start going to their financial planner more regularly. The impact it’s going to have on society is what excites me the most.”

—**Dennis Moore**, Chief Operating Officer,
Interim Chief Executive Officer,
Financial Planning Association (FPA)

Financial Planning's Next Evolution

AI Isn't Just a Tool—It's the Catalyst

Looking forward, excitement is building around the expanding impact of financial planning, fueled by technological advances, especially AI.

AI is already enhancing scale and efficiency for early adopters. It assists with meeting preparation, CRM updates, note-taking, and follow-up coordination. Looking ahead, AI opens new possibilities: elevating analytic capabilities, proactively surfacing risks and opportunities, and informing decision making. Advisors equipped with AI can deliver more plans to more people, more efficiently, and with greater personalization.

AI Use Cases Today



Productivity tool

- Automating tasks
- Meeting prep
- Summarizing meetings
- Capturing notes
- Data gathering / entry
- Coordinating follow up tasks

“What we see today is a productivity tool. Folks are incorporating [AI] into their CRM systems to take meeting notes, schedule emails, send happy birthday emails to their clients, and things like that.”

—Alisa Stendaro, Vice President,
Market and Business Intelligence, Fidelity Investments

A look ahead



Future AI Use Cases



Elevated analytic capabilities

- **Shift from rules-based, deterministic financial planning software** to more flexible, probabilistic software
- **More sophisticated trade-off analyses** factoring in all aspects of the client's life
- **Integrating data from additional sources** (e.g., biometrics, smart watches, apps, smart home devices)



Informing actions

- **Querying one's full book of business:** Conversational Q&A systems can surface insights (e.g., what is the top concern clients have discussed in meetings?), creating efficiencies in client service.
- **Highlighting opportunities and risks:** Detecting patterns and anomalies allows AI to alert advisors and clients to emerging opportunities or potential pitfalls, prompting proactive action.
- **Providing behavioral coaching:** AI-generated insights can help advisors show clients the long-term impact of decisions, reinforcing positive habits and discouraging detrimental ones.
- **Recommending customized next steps:** Proposing personalized action plans based on large client datasets can ensure advice is relevant and targeted.
- **Enhancing client engagement:** Through scenario modeling and visualizations, AI can help clients better understand their options, empowering them to participate more actively in decision-making.



Democratizing financial planning

- **AI will also make planning accessible to historically underserved investors.** Traditional advice models often exclude younger and less affluent investors, but AI presents the possibility of a lower-cost model for those with less complex planning needs.

“The traditional model of financial planning does not scale. It requires too much human effort. What inspires me is the opportunity for technology to be able to scale that service, so that we can make it available to people who really need it.”

—Amy Young, Director, Capital Markets Industry Advisory, Microsoft

“AI is going to bubble up opportunities and risks. Like a doctor at the bedside. I want to understand when that client is going to crash. There's data, there's bloodwork, there are X-rays that we can monitor and understand if someone is at risk. We need to apply that to financial planning.”

—Patti Brennan, Chief Executive Officer, Financial Planner, Key Financial (LPL Financial)

Advisors Win on What Can't Be Automated

Trust, Empathy, and Connection

While technology is reshaping the operational aspects of planning, it is also reinforcing the value of human connection. “Being human” is increasingly seen as the advisor’s competitive advantage as the pace of technological advancement accelerates.

Technology will inform—but humans will inspire. Technology will automate workflows, suggest optimizations, and shift the way financial plans can be delivered. Advisors will retain the uniquely human ability to contextualize information, facilitate hard conversations, help clients emotionally process information, and empower decisions that align with each client’s values and vision.

The Value of the Human Advisor



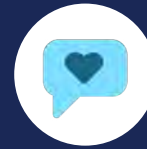
Empathy and trust



Support through life transitions (e.g., divorce, retirement, inheritance)



Purpose discovery



Emotional intelligence to guide clients through difficult decisions



AI “overseer” to ensure output aligns with client needs

“AI is forcing us to become more human. The only thing that matters is how human you are in your human interactions. And the only thing a machine can’t do is human interactions.”

—Greg Furer, Chief Executive Officer, Beratung Advisors

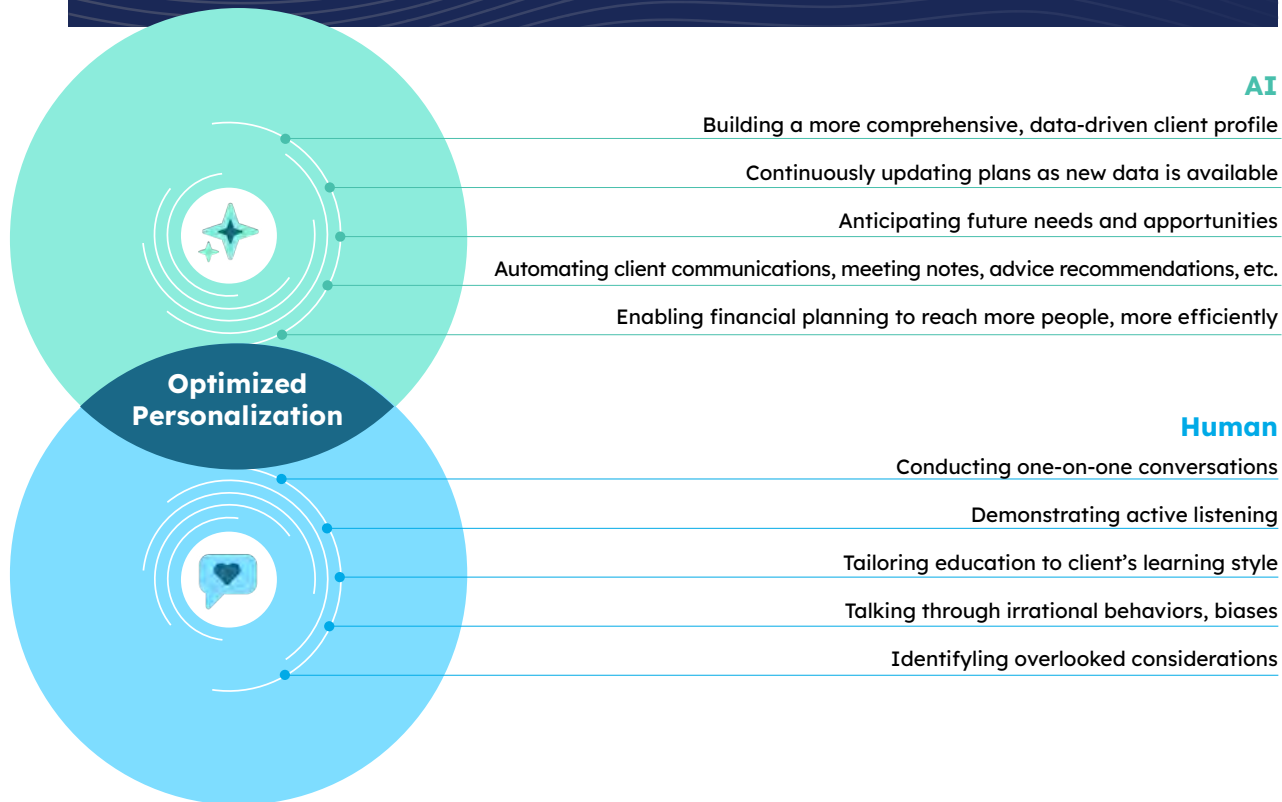
Where Algorithms Meet Empathy

The New Era of Personalized Financial Planning

Consumers have come to expect services tailored to their unique circumstances, preferences, and behaviors. AI enables personalization in advice by analyzing spending patterns, risk behaviors, and lifestyle data.

Advisors who combine emotionally intelligent conversations with data-driven insights will create deeper, more meaningful relationships.

Optimized personalization lies at the intersection of data and human insight.



“You’re building trust, you’re building relationships, you’re building a knowledge base, and then to use AI to supplement that client engagement is a great thing.”

—**Alisa Stendardo**, Vice President,
Market and Business Intelligence,
Fidelity Investments

“The human needs to know what to be thinking about. From the relationship standpoint, the best advisors need to be educators. They need to synthesize complex topics and explain it to clients in a way that makes them comfortable.”

—**Danny Lohrfink**, Co-Founder
and Chief Product Officer,
Wealth.com

Financial Psychology (FinPsych) Is Emerging as a Foundational Pillar

The Lens Through Which Modern Planning Must Be Delivered

Financial Psychology (FinPsych)

The human side of money:

Focused on understanding why people behave the way they do with their finances. It examines the relationship individuals have with money, as well as the patterns, emotions, and cognitive biases that influence financial decisions and contribute to overall financial wellness.

As AI pushes advisors to “be more human,” FinPsych is becoming central to modern financial planning.

Historically underutilized, FinPsych is now being integrated into CFP® certification coursework and planning tools. Advisors are beginning to apply FinPsych to better understand client behavior, reduce financial stress, and guide better decision-making.

FinPsych is inherently human, but AI can enhance its impact.

AI can support FinPsych by identifying behavioral patterns and nudging clients toward better outcomes. However, the advisor’s ability to listen, empathize, and engage in difficult conversations is essential to bring FinPsych to life.

Embracing FinPsych isn’t optional—it’s the next skillset every advisor needs.

Education—such as workshops and role-playing advisor-client conversations—will be key to preparing and training advisors to leverage FinPsych in client relationships.

NextGen advisors are primed to embrace FinPsych, having been trained in it through the CFP® certification curriculum. And FinPsych aligns well with their desire to do meaningful work and make a lasting impact in the lives of their clients.

“CFP Board now has designated a significant portion of the exam to become a CFP® professional to the psychology of financial planning, and that’s had a real big and growing impact in the field.”

—Brad Klontz, Financial Psychologist, Author, *Your Mental Wealth Advisors* / Creighton University

“Experienced advisors who are certified financial planners and have had the right education are very well equipped. And if you look at all the stats, people that have been through an intensive education process get better results for their clients.”

—Joel Bruckenstein, Founder and President, T3 (Technology Tools for Today)

Designing a Profession with Purpose

Elevating Financial Planning for the Next Generation



The problem

The profession faces a looming talent gap.

- Entry barriers remain high:
 - New advisors may be required to build their own book of business from day one
 - Entry-level, tedious work results in low job satisfaction and high turnover
 - There is a slow ramp-up to meaningful compensation
 - Senior advisors have to prioritize clients over talent development, limiting support for entry-level advisors
- Many students remain unaware of financial planning as a career path

“You don’t come out of law school and build your own book. You don’t come out of med school and build your own practice. You don’t come out of engineering and try to find clients. There’s not a single other profession that doesn’t have some form of a salary apprentice program, and that’s where we have to go.”

—**Greg Furer**, Chief Executive Officer, Beratung Advisors

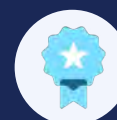


The solution

To attract and retain talent, the industry must invest in education, mentorship, and career development opportunities.

- Education on modern financial planning to build awareness, convey its meaningful impact and debunk the “Wall Street” perception
- Internships and externships to help students refine their professional interests
- Exposure to all aspects of the business (e.g., client engagement, portfolio design, practice management, planning tools and technology)
- Clear career tracks to boost advisor motivation, engagement, confidence, and retention
- Increased representation across gender, ethnicity, and socioeconomic backgrounds to enhance diversity of perspectives and build a profession that better reflects the communities it serves

The outcome



A profession recognized for its noble mission of improving lives—one that attracts and retains committed, diverse talent, fosters long-term loyalty, and accelerates the development of skilled, ready advisors.

“We’re hopefully helping people understand, what is this field? How can I build my career here? What is the right role for me? What are the next steps? Really helping to give them a jump start on that.”

—**Hannah Moore**, Founder, Amplified Planning; Founder of The Externship; Chief Executive Officer, Guiding Wealth

Advisors and Innovators

Partners in Shaping the Next Chapter of Financial Planning

Experts foresee the next era in financial planning being shaped by how well humans and technology advance together. The advisors and innovators who keep purpose and human connection at the core—while embracing the power of technology—will lead the profession into its most impactful chapter yet.

To bring this vision to life, leaders in financial planning technology must commit to driving progress across five key dimensions:



Seamless integrations

Industry experts emphasize that eliminating data re-entry, multiple logins, and disconnected systems is critical to improving efficiency and reducing frustration. A unified, centralized platform not only streamlines operations but also enhances the advisor experience, freeing them to focus on client service rather than technology workarounds.

“Integrations that work well between different providers is still one of the biggest challenges. Someone who can solve that problem would be very popular.”

—**Ben Henry-Moreland**, Senior Financial Planning Nerd, Kitces.com



Embedded AI

AI will become a seamless part of advisors’ daily workflow, automating analysis, surfacing personalized insights, and guiding timely actions—freeing advisors to focus on the client relationships and strategic planning that drive client success.

“I would continue to emphasize AI. That could be internally built AI, or it could be integrating with companies like ours that are meant to be the AI orchestration layer.”

—**Tim Chaves**, Co-Founder and Chief Operating Officer, Jump AI





FinPsych applications

FinPsych tools are being developed to profile clients, equipping advisors with insights into clients' decision-making patterns and emotional drivers—enabling more effective guidance, stronger relationships, and better long-term outcomes.

“eMoney is very curious and interested in how we are going to incorporate things like AI and behavioral finance into the software more formally, and that is going to have a big impact going forward on the profession.”

—**Stuart Heckman**, Associate Professor of Practice and Ph.D. Program Director, Texas Tech University



Client-facing capabilities

The advisor-client relationship will remain collaborative and dynamic, with innovation focused on empowering clients through interactive tools, real-time insights, and transparent plan access—deepening engagement and building lasting trust.

“Given we’ve continually returned to that increasing emphasis on collaborative planning, the degree to which vendors can make their tech work in a client-facing capacity—not only just a view-only portal—is important.”

— **Mark Tenenbaum**, Director of Advisor Research, Kitces.com



Getting more plans to more people

Expanding access to financial plans will be a key priority for future technology, leveraging automation and scalability to enable advisors to deliver high-quality, personalized guidance to more people—bridging the advice gap and driving broader financial well-being.

“I feel bullish about the long-term need for financial planning and this idea of automation and AI that can help scale it to get it into more households, more families.”

—**Ed O’Brien**, Head of Fidelity Institutional Technology, Fidelity Investments



Experts urge advisors, advisory firms, and technology providers to approach their work with curiosity, embrace innovation, and act as partners in advancing the advisor-client relationship. Doing so will shape the future of planning and elevate the profession as a whole.





eMoney

Let's shape the future together

Connect with eMoney to learn how we're empowering advisors to thrive in a changing landscape.



Call **1-888-362-4612** 
or visit **emoneyadvisor.com** 
to learn more.

Sources:
¹ Investment Advisor Association Snapshot 2025 Report



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