**Opportunities in the Market**

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When the stock market declines there are additional opportunities that can add value to your investment portfolio.

We have seen the market decline many times in the past. Think back to how you felt through some of those times both during the declines, and then after on the rebound.

How is this time different? Likely, your assets are a different value and you are in a different phase of life than past significant declines and rebounds. The feeling will therefore be different this time. We also have the added health concerns and change to our daily life that can amplify stress.

Reduce Financial Stress

I would encourage everyone, that if you are feeling stressed about your portfolio ask yourself these questions: 1) Do you feel comfortable with your portfolio design; 2) Are you taking the appropriate level of risk to make you feel secure both in volatility and achieving the growth objectives needed to fund your lifestyle? (Hint: Cash Flow Projections are a tool to help solve this!) 3) Do you understand your financial plan?

If your portfolio is well structured and your financial plan makes sense for you then I would provide guidance to comfort any insecurity you feel in this volatile market, otherwise, I suggest addressing these questions right away. Planning creates clarity, enables you to make better financial decisions, resulting in an improved financial future, and decrease financial stresses.

Market Opportunity

Once your financial plan is established, market volatility can create opportunities that if taken advantage of will make you wealthier. Some of these strategies may apply to you: 1) Non-registered investment accounts take advantage of tax loss harvesting opportunities. 2) Rebalance the portfolio to perform better in the short and long term. Rebalancing back to your target asset allocation, thereby selling fixed income investments to buy more equity investments. 3) Increase contributions into the market for more long term investing.

To help determine the appropriate amount of money to add to your investments, look at your budget with a sensitivity analysis and your cash flow projections for the future. The trade-off of spending now versus investing will become clearer through these two exercises.

Another strategy that may apply to you is this year the Canadian government reduced the minimum RRIF withdrawal that has to come out of this type of account (visit Canada.ca for more details and speak to a financial advisor). If you have a RRIF account and have not already taken the full minimum for the year, consider if you should reduce the minimum withdrawn. Individual circumstances apply for additional tax planning considerations, including your age, account size, other accounts you have, and your financial needs.

Take advantage of the opportunities! Look forward, out of the weeds of the daily volatility and stressors, and have a financial plan that can provide the clarity and structure that plans for the lifestyle you want to obtain and preserve.

Neighbours Magazine, Jennifer Watson's article submission April 27, 2020 for June Issue

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