



WEEKLY COMMENTARY

For the Week of January 29, 2018

WEEKLY FOCUS

A S.M.A.R.T. Financial New Year's Resolution

We do it every year. Resolve to eat less, read more, stop spending or start meditating. How did 2017's financial resolutions work out for you? Since only 8 percent of people meet their goals, chances are you didn't accomplish everything you set out to do. Of course, it wasn't for lack of good intentions. Maybe life got in the way. Maybe you just bit off more resolutions than you could chew. Maybe this year you should take a more streamlined approach to your financial resolution.

It may be the end of January, but it's not too late. Put some time aside to really reflect on last year's financial resolutions before you settle on one for 2018. What went right? Where did things go wrong? Chances are, you'll find some areas that could use a little attention. But to maximize your chances of success, narrow your focus. Rather than five resolutions (and five ways to fail), choose just one, Specific, Measureable, Attainable, Realistic and Time-framed goal (S.M.A.R.T.).

Let technology help you achieve your resolution. If your goal is to save a specific amount for a vacation or major purchase, automate your account to transfer so much per paycheck or month into a savings account set up just for that goal. Make sure your goal can be achieved within a designated time frame and your regular withdrawals work with your budget. Having a single goal shaped by S.M.A.R.T. framing dramatically improves your odds of making it part of your lifestyle and achieving your purpose. And tell your family and friends about your goal; accountability helps keep you on track.

Financial lifestyle habits are less complex than many financial goals, but they're important to your overall financial health as well. Some habits to consider making a regular part of your life include:

- Checking your credit score at least quarterly
- Scheduling periodic family financial meetings
- Saving 15 percent of your gross income
- Using a credit card that offers the best rates
- Monitoring your retirement savings progress

When tackling larger, more complex goals, be sure to choose just one and follow the S.M.A.R.T. guidelines. Be consistent when making financial lifestyle changes.

Call our office today. We can help you focus on your financial goals and maximize your chances for success.

FINANCIAL FACTS

Bull Market Stats — Since bottoming on March 9, 2009 (just short of nine years ago), the S&P 500 has gained 401 percent (total return), an annualized 19.9 percent per year, and produced 198 all-time record closing highs. The most recent record close was on Friday, Jan. 19, 2018 (source: BTN Research).

Fewer College Students — There were 18.8 million college students during the fall of 2017 (both undergraduate and graduate students), the sixth consecutive year (2012-2017) that the total number of students declined on a year-over-year basis (source: National Student Clearinghouse Research Center, BTN Research).

Missing Out — Forty-six percent of Americans have no money invested in stocks today, either through the ownership of individual stocks, equity mutual funds or holdings inside a pretax retirement plan (source: Gallup, BTN Research).

WEEKLY COMMENTARY

THE MARKETS

Positive earnings reports and ongoing dollar weakness led to record closings for the three major indexes, which all closed their best four-week run since 2016. For the week, the Dow rose 2.09 percent to close at 26,616.71. The S&P gained 2.23 percent to finish at 2,872.87, and the NASDAQ climbed 2.31 percent to end the week at 7,505.77.

Returns Through 1/26/18	1 Week	YTD	1 Year	3 Year	5 Year
Dow Jones Industrials (TR)	2.09	7.77	35.60	17.52	16.72
NASDAQ Composite (PR)	2.31	8.73	32.72	16.30	18.97
S&P 500 (TR)	2.23	7.55	27.60	14.15	16.24
Barclays US Agg Bond (TR)	-0.02	-0.95	2.66	1.43	2.03
MSCI EAFE (TR)	1.50	6.54	28.93	9.72	8.25

Source: Morningstar.com. *Past performance is no guarantee of future results. Indexes are unmanaged and cannot be invested into directly. Three- and five-year returns are annualized. The Dow Jones Industrials, MSCI EAFE, Barclays US Agg Bond and S&P, excluding "1 Week" returns, are based on total return, which is a reflection of return to an investor by reinvesting dividends after the deduction of withholding tax. The NASDAQ is based on price return, which is the capital appreciation of the portfolio, excluding income generated by the assets in the portfolio in the form of interest and dividends. (TR) indicates total return. (PR) indicates price return. MSCI EAFE returns stated in U.S. dollars.



3820 Sheridan Drive | Amherst, NY 14226 | (716) 839-1234
1840 Winton Road South | Rochester, NY 14618 | (585) 244-9630
1708 Vestal Parkway East | Vestal, NY 13850 | (607) 748-1803

Securities offered through Securities America Inc., Member FINRA/SIPC and advisory services offered through Securities America Advisors, Inc. L&M Financial and the Securities America Companies are unaffiliated.

* The Standard & Poor's 500 (S&P 500) is an unmanaged group of securities considered to be representative of the stock market in general. The Dow Jones Industrial Average is a price-weighted index of 30 actively traded blue-chip stocks. NASDAQ Composite Index is an unmanaged, market-weighted index of all over-the-counter common stocks traded on the National Association of Securities Dealers Automated Quotation System. The Morgan Stanley Capital International Europe, Australia and Far East Index (MSCI EAFE Index) is a widely recognized benchmark of non-U.S. stock markets. It is an unmanaged index composed of a sample of companies representative of the market structure of 20 European and Pacific Basin countries and includes reinvestment of all dividends. Barclays Capital Aggregate Bond Index is an unmanaged index comprised of U.S. investment-grade, fixed-rate bond market securities, including government, government agency, corporate and mortgage-backed securities between one and 10 years. Written by Securities America, Copyright January 2018. All rights reserved. Securities offered through Securities America, Inc., Member FINRA/SIPC. SAI# 2009050.1