



## ***Good Housekeeping***

In these times of uncertainty, we urge you to consider taking stock of your financial life as one way to gain back control and comfort. Now more than ever, it is time to consider if there are changes to your plans, your goals, your comfort with risk, and your financial organization that should be reflected in your planning.

At Ropes Wealth, our daily work is speaking and now “zooming” with you about your financial affairs. The best way to be prepared for those discussions and to maximize the impact of your relationship with any advisor is to come to the table with your questions, your concerns, your hopes, and your fears. Those discussions are by far the most productive in that the meeting becomes less about the market, and more about how your goals can be achieved through a combination of market returns and thoughtful planning. For your next meeting, consider jotting down 3-5 key questions and send them to your advisor ahead of time so that the agenda of the meeting is set to what most matters to you.

Likewise, please understand that one of the most powerful ways to maximize a relationship with an advisor is to have them help you regain control over the financial organization of your life. Often clients will have one or two accounts managed with a key advisor, and then a string of accounts spread out along the boulevard of their lives, i.e. retirement accounts still with plans from previous employers, bank accounts with cash over the \$250,000 FDIC limit that was going to be used for an event that never happened, inherited IRAs from loved ones who have passed on, you name it. When markets become roiled, or when they offer the buying opportunity of a lifetime, it is difficult to be action-oriented, because the logistics to act are overwhelming.

We urge you to consider that now is the time to take stock of these loose ends, and make a plan for the summer that includes taking action to:

1. ***Share your total financial picture with a trusted advisor.*** It is incredibly important in times like these to have a handle on your liquidity, asset allocation, and investment strategy that reaches across all aspects of your financial life. While you may often focus on one or two critical financial accounts, do not make the mistake of neglecting others. For example, we at Ropes Wealth will often give our perspective on how all of your accounts fit into your full picture, including how an active 401(k) from your employer should be allocated or ways to maximize yield on cash holdings that insure safety and liquidity.

2. ***Get financially organized.*** While diversification (owning different types of assets that may respond differently in different market conditions) is good in investing, diversification is not often best achieved by having a proliferation of accounts at a slew of financial institutions. In fact, it often leads to duplication and inconsistency of strategy and higher fees. As well, we often find clients will make investments in certificates of deposit (CDs) across a number of banks that get stuck in a cycle of reinvestment and are not optimized for return. For example, did you know that you can own FDIC insured secondary market CDs in one financial account with your advisor and still maintain all of the benefits of the insurance coverage? If appropriate, we can provide support to you administratively to combine and consolidate these accounts so they are primed for action, and do not remain abandoned or disconnected from your long-term plan.

3. **Dust off your estate plan.** Pull out your estate planning documents, read them over, and make sure they accomplish what you want today. Often we hear from clients that their plans were done so many years ago and things have changed. Or (gulp) that they have never found the time to make a plan. A good rule of thumb is that every 5 years or after a big life event (such as marriage, divorce, starting a family), you should talk with your estate planning attorney and determine whether an update is necessary to stay current with changes in the law and in your wishes. And if you do not have an estate plan, please do take the time to make one.

4. **Consider a financial planning exercise.** At the moment, we are all asking those “what if” questions that are hard to face personally, let alone financially. Ask your financial advisor to help you manage the financial facts of those “what if” questions with a planning exercise that contemplates, for example, the unexpected death of a loved one, long-term at-home medical care, loss or changes to employment income, financial support for children or parents, etc.

5. **Talk to those you trust.** Of course, we always recommend regular check-ins with your financial, tax, and estate planning advisor teams to ensure an optimized strategy and planning for success. Please also consider sharing at least some components of that planning with those you love and trust so that they understand the careful planning you are doing with your financial life. Consider introducing them to your advisor teams and sharing the location of key documents and contact information, if needed.

Perhaps one positive we will take from the pandemic is giving ourselves the time and gift of financial organization and planning that too often gets lost in our sea of commitments and responsibilities. We at Ropes Wealth stand ready to help you with these aspects, and look forward as always to our conversations.

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