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Spring has sprung! For many of us, the coming of the warmer weather signals that personal income tax time is here. As you deal with 2018 receipts and returns, it may be a good time to consider actions you might take regarding your 2019 tax bill. If you haven't recently reviewed tax-minimization techniques in your investment strategy and would like more information, I would be happy to be a resource. It may be as simple as fully contributing to your TFSA, or perhaps there is an opportunity for income-splitting with a family member. If you have any tax-related investing questions, please get in touch. Enjoy the warmer days ahead!

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## INVESTING & THE ART OF PATIENCE

Why can it be difficult to have patience when investing?

We are living in a world where instant gratification has become a way of life. We expect fast service and instantaneous results. We are regularly exposed to influences such as on-demand television or one-click internet shopping. Studies have shown that most people are not willing to wait more than two seconds for a website to load.<sup>1</sup> How quickly we forget that less than 20 years ago, most Canadians didn't have access to high-speed internet.<sup>2</sup>

But it's not just the world around us that feeds our need for immediacy — our cognitive tendencies are often biased towards instant gratification. In the "Marshmallow Experiment", conducted by Stanford University over 50 years ago, kids were given the option of an immediate marshmallow, or two marshmallows if they could wait 15 minutes. Most said they would wait for two; yet, less than one-third of that group made it long enough for their reward. A follow-up outcome was particularly interesting: 20 years later, those who were able to wait for the second marshmallow demonstrated better overall life successes in areas such as academics, health and economic well-being.

The marshmallow experiment offers some insight for investors. Building wealth often depends on having discipline and self-control. Long-term investing involves delayed gratification and patience. It may be easy to forget that bouts of short-term volatility and market pull-backs are a normal part of the process, as most of us are hardwired to favour instant gratification. But this can be damaging: Do you sell too soon if markets take a temporary downturn? Do you allow your emotions to rule during volatile times? When the markets temporarily fall, are you tempted to make changes to your portfolio instead of allowing it the time to grow?

Having a longer-term focus means looking beyond the challenges of today, which will eventually be overcome. Equity markets and economies are cyclical, after all. After a volatile December for both Canadian and U.S. markets, the media was focused on recessionary talk. Ongoing trade tensions between the U.S. and China, as well as Brexit separation anxieties, were closely being followed. Yet this was quickly muted after significant January and February gains. In the U.S., the Federal Reserve took a less aggressive stance in its monetary policy, downplaying its position on the prospect of further interest rate rises. This, combined with an upbeat U.S. earnings season, as well as a delayed tariff deadline for U.S./China talks, provided much relief to investors.

Here at home, GDP growth has slowed, there has been softness in certain segments of the housing market and the oil and gas sector continues to struggle. While certain voices of the media continue to express worry that Canada is headed for recession, some of the indicators we've seen in past recessionary environments aren't there. Corporate results, while mixed, have largely met expectations, the labour market is still solid, and cash levels on many corporate balance sheets remain healthy.

As we have seen in the past, markets and economies will continue to adjust and move forward in spite of the short-term noise. Keep your eye on the horizon and don't overlook the value of patience in achieving your long-term goals.

1. [www.akamai.com/us/en/multimedia/documents/content/akamai-performance-matters-key-consumer-insights-ebook.pdf](http://www.akamai.com/us/en/multimedia/documents/content/akamai-performance-matters-key-consumer-insights-ebook.pdf); 2. [www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/daily-quotidien/030923/dq030923b-eng.htm](http://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/daily-quotidien/030923/dq030923b-eng.htm)

# KEEPING PROBATE FEES IN PERSPECTIVE

In some provinces, probate (estate administration) fees may need to be paid on death. Probate is the process by which a court confirms the validity of the will of the deceased individual and the appointment of the estate representative. This confirmation protects estate representatives and institutions who proceed on the basis of the court order in the event that another will is later found to be valid. The fees vary by province — in most cases, they are based on a percentage of the value of the estate.

Some people try to minimize these fees. Sometimes probate fees will not apply. For example, if property is not part of your estate or doesn't pass through your estate on your death, then generally, probate fees won't apply. Registered plans and insurance with designated beneficiaries pass outside your estate. Property registered as joint with right of survivorship (called "joint tenancy") with others may not form part of your estate when you die.

But keep in mind that there may be dangers involved in trying to minimize probate fees. It might actually lead to greater financial implications or other headaches. Particular care must be taken when a beneficiary or joint tenant is not your spouse. For instance, joint tenancy means permanently giving up full ownership of your asset, which may include its control. If a joint tenant encounters financial difficulty, creditors may force the sale of a jointly-owned asset against your personal wishes. There is always risk of a falling out in any relationship, not only with a spouse but others.

There may also be equalization issues. Suppose you have two grown children as your only heirs and you designate child 1 as the beneficiary of your Registered Retirement Savings Plan (RRSP) in



an attempt to bypass probate, leaving the rest of the estate to child 2.<sup>2</sup> When you die, the tax on the fair market value of RRSP assets will need to be paid by the estate, reducing the amount that is passed on to child 2. If this has been overlooked, inequities between the intended division of assets may result.

Saving a few dollars in probate fees may result in other taxes. For example, putting an asset such as a house in joint ownership with a non-spouse may save future probate fees, but if that individual already owns a principal residence, they may be subject to capital gains tax on the sale of the property.

At the end of the day, keep perspective: probate fees may be little more than a nuisance in the broader scheme of effectively settling your estate. Should you require assistance with this, or any other estate planning matters, please get in touch for an introduction to someone who can provide support.

1. Based on provincial legislation as of Jan. 2019; 2. Not applicable in Quebec. This article is intended to provide general information only and should not be construed as specific tax or legal advice. Consult legal and tax advisors to understand the implications for your situation.

## THE ROAD TO 2050...

In less than 270 days, the third decade of the third millennium will begin. Since the start of 2000, there has been a distinct shift in global economic power as China is well on its way to becoming the world's dominant economy.<sup>1</sup> Global economic order is expected to continue evolving and will likely change the way we think about investing over the coming decades.

**What will the world look like in 2050?** Some analysts have predicted that the world economy could more than double in size, with emerging markets being one of the growth engines. Most economists believe that China will dominate as the largest economy, with many other countries, including some emerging economies, surpassing Canada in productive output.

The chart below shows China's rapid ascent to becoming one of the leading nations as measured by Gross Domestic Product (GDP), as well as Canada's comparative position. It also provides an economic projection for 2050.<sup>2</sup> GDP is commonly used to measure economic growth; nominal GDP compares the value of goods and services produced by an economy at current market exchange rates.

By the Decades: Top 5 Nation Leaders in GDP Output in US\$B (Indexed to 2018 Dollars)

1990			2000			2010			2018*			2050 Estimate		
1. USA		5,980	1. USA		10,285	1. USA		14,964	1. USA		19,391	1. China		49,900
2. Japan		3,133	2. Japan		4,888	2. China		6,101	2. China		12,238	2. USA		34,100
3. Germany		1,765	3. Germany		1,950	3. Japan		5,700	3. Japan		4,872	3. India		28,000
4. France		1,269	4. UK		1,648	4. Germany		3,417	4. Germany		3,677	4. Indonesia		7,300
5. Italy		1,177	5. France		1,362	5. France		2,643	5. UK		2,622	5. Japan		6,800
17. Canada		594	9. Canada		742	10. Canada		1,613	10. Canada		1,653	17. Canada		3,100

\*Based on Dec. 31, 2017 figures. Note: 1. China is the world's largest economy in GDP purchasing power parity terms, adjusting GDP for price level differences; 2. <https://www.pwc.com/gx/en/world-2050/assets/pwc-the-world-in-2050-full-report-feb-2017.pdf>  
Source: World Bank data as of 1/31/2019; <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/ny.gdp.mktpp.cd>

# SUPPORTING THE ELDERLY: PREVENTING ABUSE

The financial abuse of the elderly is wide-ranging. From scams, to fraud and exploitation — it isn't always perpetrated by strangers and can even occur at home by acquaintances or friends. If you are concerned about elderly parents or relatives, here are some warning signs to look for:

- **Unusual financial activity** — Unexplained account activity, including withdrawals or credit card charges, may indicate financial abuse.
- **Missing valuables** — Lost items may indicate abuse, but this may sometimes be easily dismissed if a person suffers from cognition problems. Helping to locate missing valuables can determine if the issue is simply confusion, or if it signals a larger problem like abuse.
- **Appearance of a new friend** — A new companion may be cause for concern if warning signs are present, such as unusual financial activity or missing personal effects.
- **Changes to important legal documents** — Unexplained changes to important documents, such as a will or power of attorney documents, may indicate that a senior is being coerced.

While there are often signs, elder abuse may be hard to uncover and can continue for long periods of time. Victims may become secretive because they feel ashamed or fear retaliation. One way to help prevent abuse is to take steps in advance to protect the vulnerable:

**Prevent isolation** — Form a wide support network of family, friends



and professional advisors to help identify problems and intervene where necessary. Widening an elderly person's network can provide support from trustworthy sources.

**Check in** — Call and visit as often as possible or find a trusted confidante to check in. This can identify warning signs that indicate abuse. Listen closely when the elderly person shares information. Ask questions and never dismiss potential red flags.

**Offer support** — Offer simple support to review finances, such as scanning of bank or credit card statements to make sure things are in order. Or, provide support for larger projects, helping to update financial documents or conduct a credit check.

**Put safeguards in place** — Plan ahead and grant a power of attorney to a trusted individual. Consider appointing a professional (such as a trust company) to work alongside a family member to help provide a safeguard.

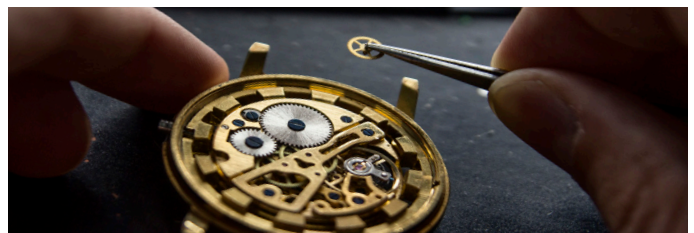
## RETIREMENT PLANNING: TIMING YOUR OAS BENEFITS

Part of your retirement planning should include considering the timing of various income streams, such as government benefits including Old Age Security (OAS). The decision of when to start receiving OAS will depend on an individual's particular situation, including current/future income sources, life expectancy and envisioned retirement, among others. Here are some things to consider as you think about the timing of OAS payments.

**Don't Forget the Clawback** — Unlike the Canada Pension Plan (CPP), the OAS is clawed back at a rate of 15% if net annual income is greater than \$77,580 (2019) and fully eliminated when net income reaches \$125,696. As such, it may make sense to begin OAS at age 65 — the earliest age at which it can be received — in the six-year window before mandatory withdrawals from the Registered Retirement Income Fund (RRIF) start at age 71 and increase income.

**Consider the Timing of Other Income Streams** — Unlike the CPP, you cannot start benefits early; however, you can delay until age 70. The benefit increases by 0.6% for each delayed month (for a maximum enhancement of 36%). While the payout is larger to delay, some people struggle with the unknown: will you live long enough to make the deferral worthwhile? Consider that delaying OAS is often less lucrative than delaying CPP: The maximum monthly OAS payment is \$601.45 (Q1 2019), leading to a maximum delayed enhancement difference of around \$216/month. This compares to the maximum monthly CPP payment of \$1,154.58 (in 2019), with a maximum additional amount by delaying of around \$485/month.

**Preserve Benefits Through Pension Income-Splitting** — If you have a



spouse/common-law partner, splitting eligible pension income may help to keep income below the threshold level and enhance the family unit's ability to avoid the OAS clawback. Be aware that this could also work in reverse by negatively affecting the spouse's eligibility.

**Plan to Defer but Change Your Mind?** — If you encounter a shortened life span, there is a little-known provision that allows for a partial retroactive payment of OAS. It may also apply if an individual changes their mind and wants to start OAS earlier. If you are above the eligible age and have not applied, you may request an effective start date that predates an original application date, but only for 12 months preceding the application date.<sup>1</sup>

### WE ARE HERE TO HELP

As you plan for the timing of your various income streams, remember that we are here to provide assistance.

1. [canada.ca/en/employment-social-development/corporate/service-canada/reports/oas.html](https://www150.canada.ca/en/employment-social-development/corporate/service-canada/reports/oas.html)  
This article is intended to provide general information only and should not be construed as specific tax or legal advice. Consult legal and tax advisors regarding the implications for your situation.



# SEVEN INVESTING BEHAVIOURS (TO AVOID)

It has been said that one of the most important qualities for an investor is temperament. Here are some investor behaviours that can paralyze the journey to success, meant to be a light-hearted take on the original seven capital vices: pride, lust, sloth, wrath, gluttony, envy and avarice. One of our main roles as advisors is to help support investors to avoid falling into these behaviours:



**1. Sloth** — A lazy approach to investing, which can prevent individuals from achieving long-term gains or better after-tax returns. Examples: Keeping substantial funds unnecessarily in liquid form or not fully contributing to tax-advantaged accounts like RRSPs or TFSAs.

*Perspective: Time and the profound effects of compounding can benefit those who continue to invest steadily and keep their assets working hard for them.*

**2. Pride** — Refusing to adapt, despite markets being dynamic and ever-changing. The prospects for certain companies, industries and even asset classes can be attractive today but not tomorrow.

*Perspective: There are times when portfolio adjustments can be beneficial, so it is important to not become too connected to a particular security or asset class.*

**3. Avarice** — Speculating on the day's market darling or "hot" tip in the hope of quick profit.

*Perspective: Portfolios are often created to benefit an investor's specific needs and objectives. While following the herd or speculating on short-term quick wins may look attractive, high potential returns are often associated with high risks.*

**4. Fear** — Reacting to volatile equity markets, which can hinder sound investment decision making.

*Perspective: Fluctuations are a regular occurrence in the equity markets. Drops in portfolio values can be difficult to stomach, but they are part of the process of longer-term investing. Some investors reduce the short-term pain by not regularly following portfolio values, leaving the day-to-day scrutiny to those who manage the investments. Others turn fear into an opportunity, using lower prices during a downturn to build portfolios.*

**5. Forgetting Taxes** — Neglecting the impact of taxes, which can needlessly cut down on investment returns. Don't forget that a dollar earned in one way is not always worth the same as a dollar earned in another way — the after-tax returns on different securities or from different accounts can vary widely.

*Perspective: There may be opportunities to minimize tax implications across different aspects of wealth: current income, investments, retirement and estate planning. Some examples: use tax-advantaged accounts or income-split with a spouse.*

**6. Indecision** — Putting off an investment program until tomorrow hoping that the outlook will improve or a better opportunity will come along.

*Perspective: Financial markets will always be filled with uncertainty, and in doing so, one of the greatest assets is lost: time. Using tactics such as dollar-cost averaging or systematic withdrawal programs can help to encourage regular investing.*

**7. Self-Loathing** — "I'm never going to reach my retirement goals", say those who are often defeated before they begin. Studies continue to show that many Canadians don't even have a financial plan for retirement.

*Perspective: Consider that those who have a plan in place have an advantage over many others. Planning, perseverance, long-term thinking and the power of compounding can work wonders!*

WITH THE COMPLIMENTS OF...

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