

## How I Am Different

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People sometimes ask how I am different from other financial advisors. I have to smile when I hear that because, after a few minutes of conversation, it's pretty obvious that I am not the smooth-talker that you might have expected.

My undergraduate and graduate school degrees were not in sales or marketing or even finance, but rather in electrical engineering. And in a lot of ways I know I fit the stereotype that many have of engineers—smart, analytical and detail-oriented—but perhaps a bit lacking as a conversationalist.

But if you are looking for an advisor who will spend a lot of time upfront asking questions and listening in order to thoroughly understand you and your family, your goals and objectives as well as your concerns and challenges, I will do that. I am a licensed pilot, so I recognize the importance of preparation, discipline and precision. I don't want to miss any of the small but important details that could mean the difference between your potential financial success and coming short of the mark.

Secondly, I apply that same disciplined, analytical approach and attention to details to managing portfolios for my clients. My Master's thesis was on low-noise amplifiers, which actually applies the same math used by Modern Portfolio Theory to design "low volatility" portfolios. Understanding the statistics behind the math gives me valuable insight into the real risk of loss that may be underestimated by Modern Portfolio Theory.

And that brings me to the third area where I believe I am different from other advisors. Because I understand the math behind losses in a portfolio, I place a great deal of importance on limiting risk. I spend a lot of time with clients talking about risk and how they feel about it, even using a risk response exercise to gain a better understanding of their risk psychology. As their portfolio manager, I would rather take some money off the table early than to try to overcome the effects of a big decline by staying invested in risk too long.

There are some interesting similarities between managing money and taking an extended road trip. When you get out on the highway, it's unlikely that you're going to be able to maintain a constant speed for the entire distance. Sometimes you have to slow down or even pull off the road altogether when weather or traffic conditions make the journey dangerous. My clients aren't so much concerned about how fast they arrive at their destination, and fortunately, they don't look to me to entertain them along the way. But they do want to know that their financial advisor thoroughly understands what they need to achieve financial success, and has the analytical skills and discipline to help them safely navigate through good markets and bad.

So if this approach makes sense to you, perhaps we should talk. But expect me to listen more, ask lots of questions and take copious notes.

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