

Staying focused on what's important in the new year

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Steps to help prepare for the year ahead



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The harsh shriek of smoke detectors awoke my family one night in October 2013. We stood outside our home for hours and watched it burn, destroying nearly everything we owned. Thankfully, everyone was safe, but that night was a life-altering experience.

Ultimately, I gained invaluable lessons that made me a stronger, more resilient person, wife, and mother. There was absolutely nothing I could do to stop the flames from ripping through my home. But how my family and I responded to that crisis — and how we moved forward with gratitude and helped our children rebuild their sense of home — was something I could control.

Focusing on what is within my control has become a mantra and one that is critical when thinking about your finances. Current events these days may give you more cause for hand-wringing than optimism. An uncertain election this fall. Geopolitical unrest on multiple fronts. Predictions of an economic slowdown. It's enough to have many in the investment world crying, "Fire!"

You and your family can help stay grounded and confident in the long-term health of your portfolio by staying connected with your advisor. As we begin the new year, I encourage you to take action to help you feel prepared for the year ahead.

Three steps to consider for the new year

Plan: The beginning of the year is always a good time to meet with your advisor to refresh the conversation about your goals or let your advisor know about changes to your situation. Ensure that you have a balanced portfolio that can help you weather economic uncertainties. This is also a good time to consult with our estate planning specialists and wealth planning advisors, who can help you prepare for your family's future, as well as any changes.

- **Income and wealth transfer taxes:** You may need to consider planning for possible changes that could affect these taxes. For example, the [higher estate/gift tax exclusion](#) many have taken advantage of in recent years is scheduled to be cut after 2025.
- **Liquidity:** If you're concerned about the markets and your ability to access cash quickly in the event of an emergency, your advisor can help develop strategies to increase your liquidity.
- **Charitable giving:** How will you give back this year? Creating a plan for giving helps you make a meaningful, long-lasting impact.

Stay the course: Wells Fargo Investment Institute does predict a moderate global economic slowdown in 2024. With that knowledge, you and your advisor can create a portfolio intended to withstand those conditions. But we don't have a crystal ball, and no one can predict what crises may pop up throughout the year. I favor sticking to your strategy. Knee-jerk reactions to the latest major news story can derail your investments.

- **LifeSync®:** If you haven't already, download the Wells Fargo Mobile® app to utilize [LifeSync](#), which allows you to track your portfolio's performance and your progress toward achieving established goals.

Communicate the plan: I recommend not letting the year go by without having a conversation with your family about your financial strategies, planning, and expectations. I believe it's especially important to engage the next generation — no matter their age — in an open dialogue that builds trust and also makes your values clear.

- **Consult our specialists:** Take advantage of our Family Wealth and Culture Services to help you navigate family dynamics, family decision-making, and more.

The reality is that the challenges facing our economy are outside the control of any one person. In 2024, we need to focus on what is within our control and what really matters: our well-being and our loved ones.

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