

The Despas Advisory Group Investment Focus



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Investing and the Art of Patience

It may be easy to overlook the importance of patience in investing. Instant gratification has become a way of life. We've been conditioned to expect instantaneous results through influences like on-demand television and one-click shopping. Many of us aren't willing to wait more than two seconds for a website to load.¹

The rapid rise of the markets hasn't helped to nurture our investing patience. The anomaly of a pandemic, combined with unprecedented actions taken to combat it, has distorted market and economic cycles.

Last year, in just 22 days, the S&P/TSX Composite Index (TSX) forfeited almost nine years of gains, yet it took only 200 trading days to return to prior highs.² The S&P 500 Index rebounded to previous highs in record time—just 107 trading days. Consider that over the past 40 years, it has taken an average of 380 days for the TSX to recover from just a 10 percent drop. Similarly, this past summer, it was reported that the pandemic-related recession was the shortest ever on record in the U.S. and lasted only two months.

History has also shown us that the TSX experiences a correction of at least seven percent each year, on average. Yet, for most of this year when equity markets have shown any sign of pulling back, retail investors have been quick to buy the dip.

After a year in which markets have largely trended upwards, it may be easy to forget that advances do not always happen at a constant rate. Over 40 years, the TSX has had an average rate of return of around 6.3 percent. Yet, it's worth pointing out how few of the annual returns fall close to this long-term average: just 20 percent of annual returns were between 5 and 10 percent, and almost one-third were negative.³ Patience, through time in the markets, helps to provide predictability in investment returns.

We have required a particular amount of patience as we fight the evolving pandemic. Recent reports have indicated a slight setback to Canada's economic growth figures for this past spring, suggesting our road to recovery may be longer than many anticipated. Patience will still be needed: the economy has yet to normalize, largely due to an uneven reopening and the threat of the delta variant. Yet, there are also factors to suggest continued asset price support. In the U.S., higher inflation rates appear to be moderating and sustainable. And, central bankers appear to be embracing the theme of patience. In the U.S., while a slow taper in asset purchases may be on the horizon, there is no threat of increasing short-term interest rates in the near term.

For most investors, the objective is to create wealth over the longer term, and not for tomorrow. As we look forward, continue to stick to the principles set out in your plan, and don't overlook the importance of patience in achieving your longer-term investing goals.

1. Akamai Technologies – 2014 Consumer Web Performance Expectations Survey • 2. S&P close at 2/10/20, 3/16/20, 8/10/20; TSX close at 2/20/20, 3/23/20, 1/7/21 • 3. S&P/TSX Composite Index 10/29/80 to 4/30/21

The Season of Giving: “Doing Good” and Benefitting Your Taxes

Many of us wish to support charities that are important to us. In “doing good,” it can also work to your benefit in the form of a tax credit. Here are just a handful of options:

Cash Donations – Any donation to a qualifying charity results in a tax receipt that entitles the donor to a tax credit. The federal credit is 15 percent of the first \$200 donated per year and 29 percent (or 33 percent*) beyond this threshold. After taking provincial tax into account, the total benefit may exceed 40 to 50 percent, depending on province of residence. This credit can be pooled with your spouse to be claimed by whichever spouse can best use it to their advantage. Moreover, donations can be carried forward for up to five years. Charitable donations are limited to 75 percent of net income in any year except upon death. Donations of up to 100 percent of net income are allowed for tax purposes in the year of death and the year preceding.

Donating Appreciated Securities – Gifting publicly traded securities with accrued capital gains to a registered charity not only entitles you to a tax receipt for the fair market value, but also eliminates the associated capital gains tax. If you wish to do this for the 2021 tax year, let us know well in advance of the year end as donations must be made before December 31 and settlement times may vary.

In-Kind Gifts – You may consider donating personal property which a charity can then convert to cash. For example, by donating a used car to charity, you may be eligible to receive

a tax receipt for its appraised value. Special tax rules may apply to in-kind gifts so check with a professional tax advisor on how to best handle the situation.

Private Foundations – Individuals with more substantial assets may consider establishing a private foundation as a vehicle for charitable activities. Money paid into the foundation may result in an immediate tax benefit while the foundation can direct future gifts as it sees fit. However, the ongoing cost of the foundation may be a disadvantage.

Donor-Advised Funds or Community Foundations – These may be cost-efficient alternatives to establishing a private foundation by eliminating certain legal and administrative costs, while still allowing you to direct donations and achieve tax benefits. With a donor-advised fund, the contribution will be deductible in the year it is made, but funds can be distributed in future years and you may be able to direct how funds are invested by the charity until their distribution.

If you require assistance, please contact the office. For larger gifts, seek the advice of a tax advisor as it relates to your situation.

*To the extent that an individual has taxable income taxed at the federal rate of 33 percent.

Supporting the Cost of Higher Education: Tapping the RESP

With the return of autumn, many families have turned their attention to school. If (grand)children are off to pursue post-secondary education, the rising cost of higher education may be top of mind. As investors, we have the opportunity to assist (grand)children with education at all levels. For starters, we can provide advice about money, teaching the fundamentals of saving, investing and taxes. We may also choose to put aside financial resources to support the cost.

A Registered Education Savings Plan (RESP) is an excellent starting point. Under this federal plan, up to \$50,000 can be contributed per child beneficiary. While contributions to the RESP are not tax-deductible, investment income within the plan is tax deferred—that is, no taxes are payable while the assets remain in the plan. When payouts to the student are made for approved educational purposes at a qualifying institution, only then will the income be subject to taxes and in the hands of the child. In most cases, the student will have a low marginal tax rate, so the taxes owing will be low or non-existent. A key attraction is the Canada Education Savings Grant. The government will match 20 percent of annual RESP contributions to a maximum grant of \$500 per beneficiary per year (or \$1,000, if unused contribution room exists from a previous year), with a lifetime limit of \$7,200 per beneficiary.

If you have an RESP beneficiary attending a qualifying program, congratulations! In brief, here are some withdrawal considerations:

Track RESP withdrawals according to their source. There are three sources: i) grants, ii) contributions and iii) accumulated income (AI)—income or gains made on contributions and grants. Grants and AI may be paid out to the beneficiary

as an Education Assistance Payment (EAP), taxable in the student’s hands. Generally, any unused grants will be clawed back and unused AI may be subject to a penalty tax. Original contributions can be withdrawn, tax free, at any time, or paid tax free to a qualifying beneficiary. When withdrawals are made, you will need to specify how much comes from each bucket.

Think about how you will time withdrawals. Consider drawing EAPs early when a child’s income is low (depending on summer jobs and co-op programs). It may be beneficial to spread EAPs over several years to make use of tax credits, such as the basic personal amount and tuition tax credit.

Deplete the account, before it’s too late. While you can only withdraw \$5,000 of EAPs in the first 13 weeks of enrolment, there is generally little restriction after that period while enrolled. Be aware that for payments received after a beneficiary is no longer enrolled, unused grants may need to be repaid and AI payments may be subject to a penalty tax. There is a six-month grace period after enrolment has ceased that allows for RESP withdrawals to qualify as EAPs.

Explore alternatives if a child will not attend school. The RESP can remain open until the end of the calendar year that includes the 35th anniversary of its opening. If plans have changed, there may be options to transfer the RESP to a sibling or transfer AI to a parent’s Registered Retirement Savings Plan, subject to various conditions.

For more information, see: canada.ca/en/revenue-agency/services/tax/individuals/topics/registered-education-savings-plans-resps.html

Estate Planning: The Benefits of Giving While Alive

Estate planning often involves preparing for what happens after death. Yet, consider that giving while living can also play a complementary role within an estate plan. While the obvious personal benefit is the satisfaction of seeing your gift at work, consider that there may be other benefits, including financial ones, from giving while alive:

Reducing the family's "overall" tax bill – If adult (grand)children are in a lower tax bracket than you, there may be tax benefits from transferring investable assets to them. Any annual investment income will be taxed at their lower marginal tax rate instead of at your higher marginal rate. This may reduce an overall lifetime family tax bill. Be aware that gifts to spouses or minors may result in negative tax consequences as any income generated from gifted property or capital gains from gifts to a spouse can be attributed back to you.

Simplifying or reducing your future estate – By gifting assets during your lifetime, you may reduce the size of your estate and thus the burden of managing assets by others later, especially as it relates to real estate or other investments. This may also reduce capital gains taxes at death, as well as probate/estate administration taxes in provinces where applicable.

Maximizing lifetime charitable donation credits – You may receive greater tax benefits by making charitable gifts annually and over time to enable use of the charitable donation credits to reduce your tax liability, as opposed to having a large donation credit at death which may not be fully utilized.

Potentially reducing future estate conflict – If you wish to distribute your estate in a manner in which some beneficiaries will receive a greater proportion, gifting during your lifetime may help to potentially avoid a situation in which a dissatisfied family member disputes your will.

Other Options to Consider

There may be other ways to pass along assets while living. One consideration may be contributing to a Registered Education Savings Plan for the benefit of (grand)kids. If the child has reached the age of majority, funds may be gifted to be put in their Tax-Free Savings Account.

Keep in mind that, as with any gift, once it has been given, you have relinquished control. If you wish to maintain control there may be other vehicles, such as a trust, that can be viable alternatives to a gift. Also, careful planning will ensure that you continue to have sufficient funds for your own retirement. As always, we recommend seeking advice from legal and tax professionals regarding your particular situation.

Inflation: How Has Purchasing Power Changed?

Over thirty years ago, a Big Mac hamburger cost around \$2. Today, it is over triple the price. Throughout that time, average family income has only risen by 91.8 percent and the Consumer Price Index (CPI), the official measure of inflation, increased by 107 percent, or just 2.2 percent per year.

One of the most pressing questions in financial circles today is whether inflation will become a problem, or if current inflationary pressures are temporary as the central banks would like us to believe. Those who believe inflation may be more pervasive cite various factors that signal a potential shift: significant government stimulus, aging demographics in low-cost manufacturing geographies and empowered labour that puts upward pressure on wages and prices. Others suggest that inflation won't be able to maintain its recent pace after struggling to climb for many years, largely attributing it to pandemic-depressed prices.

How has purchasing power really changed? The chart shows the prices for select items in 1987 and today. While prices for many things have gone up, technology has made others more affordable: TVs are not only larger and thinner, but cheaper! What about your personal experience? Statistics Canada has released a personal inflation calculator at: <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/pub/71-607-x/71-607-x2020015-eng.htm>

Regardless of the path forward, the good news for investors is that the S&P/TSX Composite Index has gained over 430 percent throughout this time. If history is any indicator, equity markets continue to be a great way to grow funds for the future.



Changes in the Prices of Select Items: 1987¹ and 2021

	1987	2021	Change
Cdn. Family Income (Avg.) ²	\$37,118	\$71,200 (2019)	+91.8%
Cdn. House (Avg.) ³	\$129,702	\$716,000	+452.0%
Flat Screen Television ⁴	\$1,599 (32")	\$750 (55")	-53.1%
Top Apple Computer ⁵	\$9,150	\$7,400	-19.1%
Microwave ⁶	\$580 (680W)	\$140 (1100W)	-75.9%
Bottle of Dom Perignon ⁶	\$85.25	\$267.95	+214.3%
Big Mac Hamburger ⁷	\$2.05	\$6.77	+230.2%
University Tuition ²	\$1,137	\$6,580	+478.7%
Consumer Price Index ⁸	67.5	139.6	+106.8%
S&P/TSX Composite Index ⁹	3,729.30	20,035.30	+437.2%

1. 1987 data, Report on Business Magazine, Apr. 2012, pg. 13 • 2. StatCan T-1110019101; Undergrad tuition www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/daily-quotidien/200921/dq200921b-eng.htm • 3. CREA data • 4. Sony HD TV, [bestbuy.ca](https://www.bestbuy.ca) • 5. MacPro, [apple.ca](https://www.apple.ca) • 6. LCBO data • 7. [economist.com](https://www.economist.com) • 8. [bankofcanada.ca](https://www.bankofcanada.ca), accessed 03/21 • 9. At close on 6/7

Skyrocketing Real Estate Prices: What's Your Cottage Succession Plan?

For many Canadian families, going to the cottage or cabin each summer is a time-honoured tradition. As the season winds down, and with real estate prices at all-time highs and property in high demand, planning for a property's future succession has never been more important. Why? Many of us have owned our cottages for a long time and want to keep them in the family for future generations. However, to do this effectively, careful planning is essential.

Taxes Are Key

One of the biggest problems is that a cottage property is often not considered the principal residence* for tax purposes and any transfer of ownership may result in substantial capital gains taxes. With real estate prices hitting record highs in many markets, cottage properties are no exception. Take, for example, a property with an adjusted cost base of \$500,000 that may now be valued at \$1 million—such an increase in value would not be unusual in today's markets. Half of the capital gain of \$500,000 would potentially be subject to income tax. If you own the cottage when you die, your estate must pay this tax.** Will your estate be able to absorb this tax expense and still be able to look after your intended bequests without selling the property?

Transferring ownership to your kids before death does not get around this tax liability since the tax rules say that only transfers to a spouse can be made tax free under the spousal rollover rules. This is not to say such a transfer before death should never be made. There may be a couple of advantages. First, subsequent increases in value will be a matter for the new owners. Second, probate fees, if any, may be avoided on the value of the cottage. Other solutions involving trusts or other vehicles may also be of assistance.

Insurance May Help

Coming up with the estate funds to pay the taxes on a cottage transfer can be problematic. Insurance is one solution. A policy with the death benefit equal to the expected tax bill can be a way to fund the potential taxes. The proceeds are typically received tax free and not subject to probate fees (in applicable provinces). You might even arrange it so that the annual premium cost is paid by the eventual beneficiaries.

Who Wants the Cottage Anyway?

Of course, it should first be determined if your children actually want to keep the cottage in the family. Sometimes only one sibling may be interested. Some may not wish to have the obligations of upkeep, especially if they live too far away to use it. In addition, many family disputes can arise from joint ownership of a cottage. Who gets to use it during peak weeks? Who is responsible for cleaning or repairs? To avoid such problems, planners often recommend that the cottage be sold on the open market or be left to one child with a provision made for other siblings to receive equivalent value from the remaining assets of an estate.

Seek Advice

Passing along the cottage can be a complex matter. If you intend on minimizing taxes and avoiding family disputes, structuring the transfer deserves planning and forethought. Needless to say, every family situation is different and it is important to assess your own case carefully.

Don't assume that your situation is not significant. Don't assume that family will never fight over your assets. Do discuss your intentions and situation with all members of the family. Do seek advice from experienced estate planners and other professionals whom you trust.

As we are familiar with your financial situation and investment objectives, we can point you in the right direction and work with professionals in the field. Don't hesitate to call for perspectives.

*It may sometimes be advantageous to designate a cottage as the principal residence for some or all of the period of ownership if the gain is larger than on another residence. There may also be a mechanism to split the exemption and reduce the gain on both properties. Seek advice from a tax professional. **Except when the cottage is transferred under spousal rollover rules.

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