

Market Outlook:

The "experts"

Over 40 times per year I write this weekly market missive to share our view of current events and market diagnostics with clients, prospects, media, etc., as filtered through a sometimes biased but always quantitatively-based lens. I enjoy the process of analysis, your feedback on those views, and the indispensable creation of interactive dialogue that allows each side to build problem-solving solutions to various investment-related issues.

But it also occurs to me that the proliferation of opinions and market gurus has inflated significantly since I began writing these essays more than 3 decades ago. No longer is the flow of information limited to tomorrow's edition of the Wall Street Journal or the monthly editorial board of Look magazine (am I dating myself?). Today we are inundated by 24 hour news, instantaneous information transmission, and, unfortunately, too many talking heads on television telling us what they think, and what they think we should be doing with our money, our lives, and our ideals.

The crux of your belief as the reader of these informative pieces is that there must be some inherent value or action plan expressed by the author so that either his/her point of view is made very clear, or that your values and norms find some sort of resonance with the words and opinions you digest, whether you agree or not with the points being made.

This dynamic is as ageless as communication. It would take an eternity to read or hear *every* point of view about *every* piece of data. Furthermore, there just aren't enough correct prognostications to make sense out of every argument.

Sometimes one just has to find a favorite playwright, favorite musician, favorite author, favorite commentator and fit their patterns of persuasion into your everyday life sufficiently enough to build one's own comprehensive lifetime tapestry.

And yet, doesn't it seem as if there is always another "hot" topic du jour to consider (dot.com; bit coin; e.g.) trying to influence our norms and standards to accept "*just enough*" discomfort in our search for perfection that we stray from our comfort zone to take a plunge into the world of unattainable perfection.

Why?

Prediction and high expectation is the way our brains are wired. Curiosity is the core of intelligence. Additionally, we crave reward. There is nothing more detrimental to the human condition than uncertainty and upheaval. Our chemistry is not efficient when exposed to anxiety or distress. Certainly, a portfolio filled with convulsion or lack of structure is not likely to yield success. Thus, we are always seeking information or opinion about how to proceed next. Who better than the "experts" to tell us how and when.

Experts fill a need both for themselves and for you, their audience. The "analyst" in me, for example, loves to impart information; the inquisitive in you (sometimes) likes to listen.

Knowing all this, I believe that the key to a successful communication dynamic is *the outcome of the shared experience*. If throwing darts at an abstract target worked equally as well, there would be no need for the exchange. But knowing which buttons to push...and why/when...is a convention that has its roots in science and methodology, and which expresses a clearer path forward for the long haul.

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