

High Level Investment Report

Trusted Advice & Peace of Mind

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Save the Date: Tuesday May 2, 2017

Client Event: “Caring Matters” – with Dr. Amy D’Aprix

Dr. Amy is back in Lethbridge to host another great event for our clients and their families. This workshop will provide information and insights on the **topic of caregiving**. With over 8 million Canadians currently providing care to a family member or friend it is a timely subject to explore.

Watch for details and an invitation to follow shortly. **Feel free to bring family members or friends who may be interested in this event.**

Have you stuck to your New Years’ Resolution?

For the past two years, my Winter Newsletter has come out in the first month of the year, where I had fun with the New Years’ Resolution tradition in my titles.

In January 2015, my article was titled “**Exercise Caution in the Energy Sector**”, which discussed that while Western Canadians are typically positive on the oil industry, I felt it was prudent to stand back and **not get too excited to get back into energy** or try to pick a bottom too soon. The Ishares Energy Index ETF, which holds a basket of Canadian Oil Stocks, fell from around \$15 per share at the time of the article to approximately \$9 one year later and oil dropped from \$50 to below \$30 a barrel! And while 2016 was a strong year for energy shares, the Energy index ETF is still only back to \$12.75 and oil had returned to the \$50 level (as of March 17th).

In February 2016, my article was titled “**Watch your Waste**”, a pun on the diet resolution. That article discussed **budgeting and being more attentive to what you are spending** your money on as inflation would soon pick up, and could be a crunch to most budgets. Without spending wisely, people could either have to give up things they like to do, or find ways to do them at a lower cost. Inflation is now front and centre in most discussions in financial media.

Part of my role with clients is to **invest their money and guide them through market conditions**. Another part of my job is to **help clients manage their money, budget appropriately and get them to think about how they spend their money now and into the future**. I try to balance my newsletters to cover topics related to both.

So while we are now almost at the first days of Spring, I am late with my “Winter” Newsletter. So this year it gives me the opportunity to ask if you stuck to your New Years’ Resolutions, and whether you did or didn’t, I want to **propose a few ideas that I think are prudent for all of my clients to consider.**

New Years’ resolutions are normally set as a **goal to accomplish that we normally don’t do or if we did do, we wish we could stick with.** Exercise daily, stop eating ice cream at 9pm before bed, cut back on coffee, call your friends rather than sending a FaceBook message or a text are several good resolutions. **But what else could we be trying to accomplish that we don’t do often enough?**

The following are **3 things are good to start doing at this time of year,** and will take care of you and your family’s **financial health** at a bare minimum.

1) Meeting with Your Financial Professionals as a Couple:

This doesn’t only include me, but also your Accountants and Lenders. **Meeting jointly is extremely important** yet will be perceived differently for everyone. I do have clients who are single or widowed, I provide info shortly that I believe can be important. For my married clients, I do have clients who meet with me as a couple, and I also have clients who mainly have one partner involved in the relationship with me. Sometimes this is because the couple has taken a ‘**divide and concur**’ approach, where one spouse deals with investments and taxes, and the other looks after the household finances including bills and daily banking. In other situations, I believe only one partner is involved because one of the spouses just isn’t interested in “stocks”, or hearing about investing, so they don’t get involved too often, if ever at all.

However, in my view **when dealing with your wealth management plans, both partners should make it a priority to attend meetings together, at least occasionally.**

In the BMO Fourth Annual Valentines Day RRSP Study titled: **Canadian Couples At Odds on Who’s the (Retirement Planning) Boss,** it was found **that 87 percent of married persons or those in a serious relationship reported having discussions with their partner about retirement;** however, **just 25 per cent of these engaged in a detailed discussion** about retirement and **fewer than half covered key topics about what their ideal retirement will look like** and how they’ll achieve their retirement goals.



I want to make sure that all clients are aware that I am available to have full-blown retirement or estate planning fact finding discussions, building retirement cash flow plans, or simply illustrating what it would look like to take out money to use for an annual vacation years into the future. This is what I do daily, when it is what my clients want and are ready to work on.

I also want to mention for those clients reading this newsletter right now, and have **a spouse who might not be interested in meeting about their portfolio because they aren’t interested in the market, or possibly feel intimidated about the information regarding their money and goals,** **please have them read this newsletter.**

For those clients who aren’t as involved currently, **I am open to meet with you to discuss the “wealth” topics that you want to discuss.** It can be as simple as wanting to learn the basics of investing (Investing 101), so that you gain a comfort level with your finances. Your wife or husband might want to chat with me about the **Canada Goose Stock IPO** this month, but you would rather just buy yourself one of their parkas. For you, **you may rather want to discuss what will happen to you if your spouse passes away before you and you aren’t involved in any of the “money management” right now.**

It’s important to have built a **trusting relationship** because in these unfortunate circumstances, it is stressful and **I want my clients to feel they can trust that I will be able to help them through their difficult times.** At a minimum I want my clients to know that **I am focused on making sure you have the information and tools to feel comfortable and are getting the fullest value out of dealing with me as your financial professional.**

For my clients who are **single or widowed**, I do have clients who will introduce me to their adult children or other important people in their lives, so that they feel comfortable knowing that someone in their family has met me, and can reach me if needed.



2) Involve your spouse during this years “Tax-Time” if they aren’t already:

Typically, many of my clients have one partner who handles the taxes. Some clients even do their own taxes for the family. This is all fine and good, as long as the person completing these tasks is healthy and alive. For couples who have one spouse that has always handled all tax filings and typically just asks the other spouse to go to the accountants office and sign their return, **this year might be the year to start involving your spouse**. If you are doing your own taxes, this is even more important because if you pass away or can’t prepare them any longer due to illness, the other spouse could be lost. They may not even know where to get the information, or where the past tax filings are kept. **Therefore, working together to gather tax slips and compiling them for the accountant would be a good start**. Making sure the non-involved spouse knows the accountant, or knows who they could contact if they now had to take care of the tax filings, is very important.

3) Spring Cleaning will be here soon, tidy up all financial affairs:

After you have finished the tax returns, it will be **the season to organize, clean up and tackle spring projects**.

Financially there are projects to make sure to tackle as well. Some important items to put on your Spring “to do” list:

- **Dust off the old Will, Power of Attorney and Personal Care Directives**. Have a look inside and see when the Will was last reviewed. Maybe your child is now an adult, and your executor is no longer able to provide that task should they need to do so. [Discuss the main topics in Will planning as a couple, such as what your intentions are for leaving a legacy to your children or charity](#). Who is able to be in a position to act as your executor in your current stage in Life. These are important details that should not be overlooked.



- Simpler tasks, such as **going through your wallet and purse to see how many credit cards and department store cards you have built up** inside. Those cards you got convinced to sign up for so that you could get an extra 25% off your purchase at Christmas, cut them up! [Reduce debt and clean out anything that you don't need](#).
- Lastly, you should bring out your **home and auto insurance policies** and check your policy details. What is your deductible for your house insurance? If it is low, you are likely paying a pretty steep premium for your insurance. [Spring storms](#) are right around the corner so it would be a good time to review and make sure your policy is up to date. Touch base with your insurance provider and ask them what the cost difference would be if you increased your deductible. [What could you save per month?](#) Also ask them to “shop” your policy to other providers who could provide better pricing. Many insurance agents do this already for you, but you have to look after yourself sometimes.

It's a good time to get these and many other tasks out of the way, and my intention here is to **stress the importance of taking time to regularly work on your financial health.**

I encourage all of my clients to **take me up on my various offers above and send me an email with requests you might have at this time.**

If you are interested in an **"Investment 101" class, where a group of clients are interested in participating in a few lunch and learns in small groups**, I am open to **host these sessions** where we can go over any topics you have questions about or would like clarification.



One Final Note: Name Change

I am in the midst of a legal name change of my Last Name from Cockburn, to **"COBURN"**. I have other family members who had changed their last name spelling over 20 years ago, to reflect how the name is pronounced. As I have a 6 year old son, the current spelling can be a challenge, so my wife and I decided to make the change as well.

All the Best to you and your family, and I hope to see you at our upcoming client event if you can make it!

Take care,

Ryan Cockburn