

The worst thing you can do right now is worry

It's been a painful couple months in the market. We get it! This big down swing sure hurts after enjoying a prolonged bull market. But the "loss" you see in your portfolio right now is only loss if you panic and sell at the wrong time.

This week, we want to talk you off the ledge. We want to reassure you that we practice WISE investing, not emotional, reactionary, or panicked investing. Our podcast this week is a bit longer, but it's worth a listen if you're nervous or discouraged.

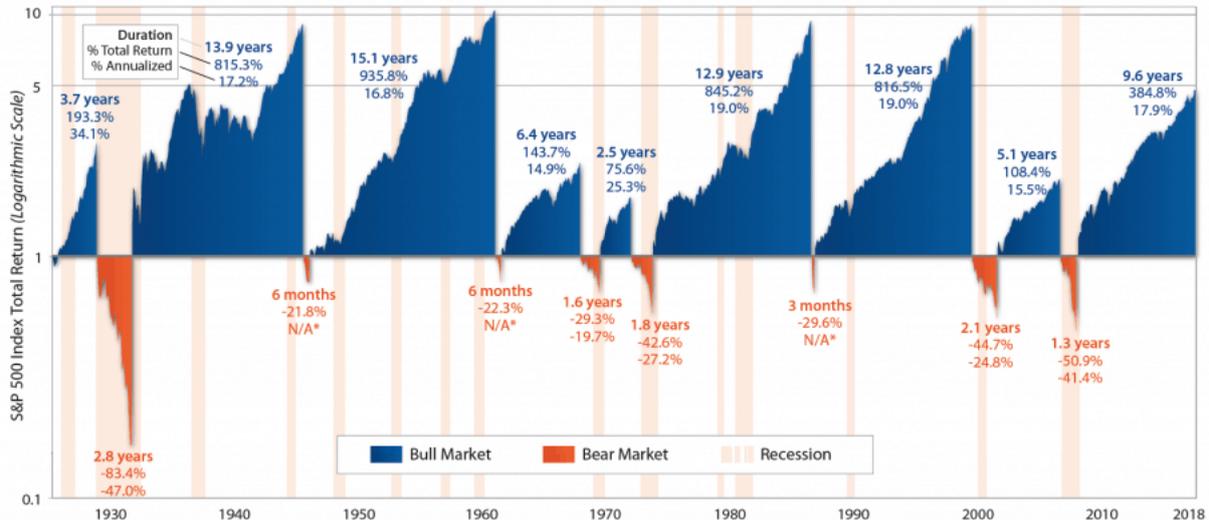
Here's to wise investing and a happy holiday season with loved ones,
Brett, Brian and the rest of our team at Iron Gate Global Advisors

Below are the mentioned graph and Mr. Market analogy mentioned in the podcast.

History of U.S. Bear & Bull Markets Since 1926

This chart shows historical performance of the S&P 500 Index throughout the U.S. Bull and Bear Markets from 1926 through September 2018. Although past performance is no guarantee of future results, we believe looking at the history of the market's expansions and recessions helps to gain a fresh perspective on the benefits of investing for the long-term.

- The average **Bull Market** period lasted 9.1 years with an average cumulative total return of 480%.
- The average **Bear Market** period lasted 1.4 years with an average cumulative loss of -41%.



Source: First Trust Advisors LP, Morningstar. Returns from 1926 - 9/28/18. *Not applicable since duration is less than one year. These results are based on monthly returns--returns using different periods would produce different results. The S&P 500 Index is an unmanaged index of 500 stocks used to measure large-cap U.S. stock market performance. Investors cannot invest directly in an index. Index returns do not reflect any fees, expenses, or sales charges. This chart is for illustrative purposes only and not indicative of any actual investment. These returns were the result of certain market factors and events which may not be repeated in the future. Past performance is no guarantee of future results. The information presented is not intended to constitute an investment recommendation for, or advice to, any specific person. By providing this information, First Trust is not undertaking to give advice in any fiduciary capacity within the meaning of ERISA and the Internal Revenue Code. First Trust has no knowledge of and has not been provided any information regarding any investor. Financial advisors must determine whether particular investments are appropriate for their clients. First Trust believes the financial advisor is a fiduciary, is capable of evaluating investment risks independently and is responsible for exercising independent judgment with respect to its retirement plan clients.

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Mr. Market

There is no one better to explain the concept of Mr. Market than Warren Buffett. He has taken advantage of Mr. Market time and time again by keeping calm when others were acting irrationally.

In the [1987 letter to Berkshire Hathaway shareholders](#), Buffett explains the concept for us.

Ben Graham, my friend and teacher, long ago described the mental attitude toward market fluctuations that I believe to be most conducive to investment success. He said that you should imagine market quotations as coming from a remarkably accommodating fellow named Mr. Market who is your partner in a private business. Without fail, Mr. Market appears daily and names a price at which he will either buy your interest or sell you his.

Even though the business that the two of you own may have economic characteristics that are stable, Mr. Market's quotations will be anything but. For, sad to say, the poor fellow has incurable emotional problems. At times he feels euphoric and can see only the favorable factors affecting the business. When in that mood, he names a very high buy-sell price because he fears that you will snap up his interest and rob him of imminent gains. At other times he is depressed and can see nothing but

trouble ahead for both the business and the world. On these occasions he will name a very low price, since he is terrified that you will unload your interest on him.

Mr. Market has another endearing characteristic: He doesn't mind being ignored. If his quotation is uninteresting to you today, he will be back with a new one tomorrow. Transactions are strictly at your option. Under these conditions, the more manic-depressive his behavior, the better for you.

But, like Cinderella at the ball, you must heed one warning or everything will turn into pumpkins and mice: Mr. Market is there to serve you, not to guide you. It is his pocketbook, not his wisdom, that you will find useful. If he shows up some day in a particularly foolish mood, you are free to either ignore him or to take advantage of him, but it will be disastrous if you fall under his influence. Indeed, if you aren't certain that you understand and can value your business far better than Mr. Market, you don't belong in the game. As they say in poker, "If you've been in the game 30 minutes and you don't know who the patsy is, *you're* the patsy."

Ben's Mr. Market allegory may seem out-of-date in today's investment world, in which most professionals and academicians talk of efficient markets, dynamic hedging and betas. Their interest in such matters is understandable, since techniques shrouded in mystery clearly have value to the purveyor of investment advice. After all, what witch doctor has ever achieved fame and fortune by simply advising "Take two aspirins"?

The value of market esoterica to the consumer of investment advice is a different story. In my opinion, investment success will not be produced by arcane formulae, computer programs or signals flashed by the price behavior of stocks and markets. Rather an investor will succeed by coupling good business judgment with an ability to insulate his thoughts and behavior from the super-contagious emotions that swirl about the marketplace. In my own efforts to stay insulated, I have found it highly useful to keep Ben's Mr. Market concept firmly in mind.

Following Ben's teachings, Charlie and I let our marketable equities tell us by their operating results – not by their daily, or even yearly, price quotations – whether our investments are successful. The market may ignore business success for a while, but eventually will confirm it. As Ben said: "In the short run, the market is a voting machine but in the long run it is a weighing machine." The speed at which a business's success is recognized, furthermore, is not that important as long as the company's intrinsic value is increasing at a satisfactory rate. In fact, delayed recognition can be an advantage: It may give us the chance to buy more of a good thing at a bargain price

