Talking Points for Client Conversations

In times of volatile markets, for consistent messaging as well as to help you stay focused and confident, it’s helpful to have a set of talking points for your client conversations.

We suggest framing your conversations with clients based on what you know or believe; what you don’t know; what you cannot control and what you can control.

Feel free to add your own talking points to our list and rearrange them to an order that suits your message.

**What we know/believe**

- **About the financial markets**
  - Periods of economic and market uncertainty and volatility have been a constant over many, many years!
  - While the coronavirus (COVID-19) is new, our markets have recovered from previous panics, such as the 9/11 attacks; SARS (2003); swine flu (2009); Ebola (2014); and the Zika virus (2015-16), just to name a few from the last 20 years.
  - Because we know to expect market declines, we build them into the assumptions of our financial plans.
  - The stock markets will recover. During the four major bear markets of 1973-1974; 1987; 2000-2002; 2007-2009, the market bounced back dramatically from its lowest point.
  - Emotions (fear & uncertainty) can lead to impulsive, irrational (and ultimately detrimental) decisions. Investors who give in to fear and panic lock in negative returns.
  - Historically, investors who stay the course have been rewarded for their patience
  - Time in the market consistently outperforms trying to time the market
  - We entered this period with a strong economy and low unemployment, which should help when the recovery begins.
  - Current yields on 10- and 30-year Treasuries are at historic lows. Low interest rates are good for business recovery and for the stock market.
  - Low oil prices benefit consumers (gasoline) and U.S. manufacturing and transportation businesses.
  - Fear and panic can be worse than the actual event.

- **About Coronavirus (COVAD-19)**
  - If you’re reasonably healthy, you might get infected and you might get sick, but it is extremely unlikely that you would die.
  - Older adults and people with severe underlying chronic medical conditions (heart, lung disease, diabetes) are at higher risk for developing more serious complications.
  - Coronavirus symptoms are fever, cough and shortness of breath
  - According to the CDC, over 36 years, flu activity has most often peaked in February (15 seasons), December (7 seasons), January (6 seasons), and March (6 seasons)
If the coronavirus follows this pattern, it should show signs of slowing down by April.

According to the head of Italy’s equivalent to our CDC, the people there who have died did not die from the coronavirus; they died with the coronavirus. That is, they died of whatever preexisting medical issue they had prior to contracting the coronavirus.

**What we don’t know**

- How long this current market downturn will last
- How far coronavirus will spread in the U.S. or how many people will be affected
- How long it will take until we begin to see a decline in the number of coronavirus cases.
- Whether "it’s different this time."

**What we can’t control**

- Whether you or someone close to you will get infected
- What the market does on a daily basis
- How others around us will react to current events
- What events and activities are cancelled or postponed

**What we can control**

- Follow CDC guidelines for handwashing/hand-sanitizing, telecommuting and social distancing
- How closely we follow every news report and social media post about the virus
- How frequently we track market movements and/or the value of our account(s)
- How proactive we are in reaching out to clients – phone calls, emails, webinars, third-party research and commentary.