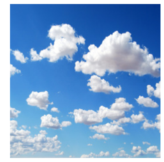
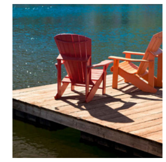
TD Wealth

Wealth Insights

TD Wealth Private Investment Advice

Summer 2025





The Speed of Change

Six minutes: that's the time the median individual investor spends researching a stock before purchasing it online, according to a recent *Wall Street Journal* article.[1]

It's no wonder the average holding period for a stock has dropped from around eight years in the 1950s to roughly five months today.[2] Technology continues to accelerate the speed at which we access, process and react to information—likely encouraging impulsive investor behaviour. Consider, for instance, that for every 100-millisecond improvement in load time, Amazon reportedly sees a one percent boost in revenue.[3]

Given this unsettling context, it's perhaps not surprising that equity markets moved with such rapid speed after April's "Liberation Day":

S&P 500 Large Moves After Liberation Day, April 2025

Apr. 2	-4.84%	Apr. 9	-3.46%	Apr. 20	-2.36%
Apr. 3	-5.97%	Apr. 10	+1.81%	Apr. 21	+2.51%
Apr. 8	+9.52%	Apr. 15	-2.24%	Apr. 23	+2.03%

Indeed, investor sentiment can quickly shift. While it's never easy to see portfolio values under pressure, a well-constructed investment plan with carefully selected holdings is designed to navigate short-term volatility. Through rigorous research and disciplined investment management, this approach helps us to remain committed to—and confident in—the longer-term growth potential.

This rapid change has not only been seen in the markets, but also in broader global shifts, driven by the volatile—and, at times, seemingly impulsive—policy stances of the U.S. administration. Are we entering a new era of structural transformation and global realignment?

While the breadth and global reach of the tariffs announced on Liberation Day took markets by surprise, observers remain divided on the consequences. Some suggest heightened recessionary risks, while others believe that unfolding policy responses will help avert a significant slowdown. After all, these are self-imposed measures that continue to evolve.

What's clearer is that the shift in U.S. trade policy has accelerated a move away from globalization toward a more "multipolar" world, where nations are increasingly focused on self-sufficiency and national security. This pivot may challenge the longstanding role of the U.S. as the dominant superpower. During April's volatility, a sharp selloff in U.S. Treasurys raised concerns—particularly as China, which holds about one-sixth of all foreign-owned U.S. Treasurys, has been increasing its gold reserves. At the same time, subdued demand for the U.S. dollar—once the default safe haven—has raised questions about its future as the global reserve currency.

As tariff policies continue to remain in flux, the economic effects may become more apparent in the months ahead. Yet, periods of disruption are a recurring feature of modern capital markets. Markets have long demonstrated the ability to adapt and progress over time. In a world where headlines can move markets in minutes, resisting the impulse to react emotionally is important. Above all, patience, perspective and participation continue to serve investors well.

1. https://www.wsj.com/finance/investing/buying-stocks-research-study-2a839a4a; 2. https://www.visualcapitalist.com/the-decline-of-long-term-investing/; 3. https://www.forbes.com/sites/steveolenski/2016/11/10/why-brands-are-fighting-over-milliseconds/

In This Issue

Sage Wealth Management
TD Wealth Private Investment Advice

To Our Clients:

If the spring reinforced anything, it's that we should expect the unexpected. While uncertainty is always part of the near-term outlook, the next 3.5 years under the current U.S. administration will likely bring continued policy shifts and unpredictability. April's market events were understandably overwhelming for many—but the rapid sentiment shift serves as a reminder of the importance of discipline in investing.

We remain grateful for your continued trust in our services and hope you take some time to enjoy these fleeting summer months.

Doug, Kiel, Azusa & Vivian

Summer Perspectives: Housing Affordability

A Home as a Retirement Plan? More Young Canadians Think So

The housing affordability crisis may be shifting views. Here are perspectives on relying on home equity for retirement.

With housing affordability increasingly out of reach for younger Canadians, views on homeownership and wealth building may be shifting. While older Canadians are less likely to look to home equity to support retirement, a growing number of young people expect home equity to fund at least part of their future retirement.[1]

Some homeowners consider downsizing as a way to unlock retirement funds, while others may look to borrow against their homes. However, there are reasons to exercise caution when relying on home equity for retirement. In brief, here are a handful:

You may not move. Today's older retirees are less likely to sell their homes before age 85. In fact, the sales rate for those over age 75 has been trending downward since the 1990s.[2] This may not be surprising. Selling a lifelong home can be more emotionally difficult than anticipated. Many choose to stay close to family, friends or their community to maintain independence. Some instead "downsize from the inside," by using only part of their home to lower costs like heating.

Low housing supply. While selling a home in today's market may be easy, finding a suitable replacement can be challenging given the limited supply of homes and rental properties.

Moving can be costly. The cost of moving—including real estate and legal fees, land transfer tax, staging or other expenses—can quickly add up. Additional costs with the next home, such as maintenance, repairs, monthly condo fees or rent (which can increase over time), can further erode the net financial gains of downsizing.

Housing Costs Over Decades: Why Kids Today May Have It Harder

	1984	2012	Today	% Change from 1984
Average home cost	$76,214	$369,677	$712,200*	+834%
Median family income	$48,500	$71,700	$107,663**	+122%
Price-to-income ratio	1.57	5.16	6.62	+321%
5-yr. fixed mortgage	14.96%	4.23%	4.70%***	–69%
75% mortgage value	$57,161	$277,258	$534,150	+834%
Monthly payment (25 yr.)	$711	$1,493	$3,016	+324%
Payment-to-income ratio	17.6%	25.0%	33.6%	+91%
Lifetime interest cost	$156,034	$170,704	$370,665	+138%

*National benchmark, April 2025: https://wowa.ca/reports/canada-housing-market. **StatCan Table 11-10-0190-01, 2022 figure (after tax) with 2.56% annual wage growth in 2023-25. ***Avg. major banks' five-year fixed rate, April 28, 2025. Historical data source: "2012 vs 1984: Yes, Young Adults Do Have It Harder Today," R. Carrick. Globe & Mail, 8 May 2012, B12.

Higher interest rates. Today, about 25 percent of retirees carry mortgages, with many seeing rates reset higher in recent years—a challenge for those on fixed incomes.[3] For those looking to borrow against their homes, options like a home equity line of credit (HELOC) or reverse mortgage have limitations. HELOCs, often secured before retirement when income is higher, typically carry variable rates that fluctuate with the market. Reverse mortgages generally allow borrowers to access home equity without monthly payments, reducing equity over time. These often come with higher interest rates and limited lender options as they aren't widely available in Canada.

1. https://rates.ca/resources/canadian-homeowners-expect-home-equity-fund-retirement; 2. "Canadian seniors not downsizing, partly owing to lack of options," S. Peesker, Globe & Mail, 02/12/24; 3. "Wealth tied up in real estate can hurt your retirement," R. Carrick, Globe & Mail, 11/30/23.

Managing Cash Flow for Unforeseen Times: Are You Prepared?

When it comes to wealth planning, the focus is often on investing and long-term wealth accumulation. Yet, having a plan for managing cash flow is also important to help you prepare for unforeseen times. A cash flow plan can help temper unnecessary financial stress during unexpected events like a temporary job loss or illness, while protecting longer-term financial goals.

Important for High-Net-Worth Individuals & Retirees Alike

A common misconception is that cash flow management matters only for those with limited assets. However, substantial wealth often involves managing larger financial obligations. Effective cash flow management can help you meet ongoing expenses, fulfil planned commitments and handle unexpected costs with little disruption.

Some investors assume they can simply sell investments to cover short-term needs. Yet this approach comes with trade-offs: selling assets on short notice can interrupt long-term growth, trigger unnecessary taxes or force a sale in a market downturn. For example, selling from a non-registered account may result in capital gains tax, while early Registered Retirement Savings Plan (RRSP) withdrawals not only trigger withholding tax, but are fully taxable and contribution room is permanently lost.

For retirees, managing cash flow may be even more complex. Many live on fixed incomes, relying on pension income, government benefits or Registered Retirement Income Fund (RRIF) withdrawals. Without careful planning, the timing or structure of withdrawals can lead to unexpected tax obligations or affect eligibility for income-tested benefits like Old Age Security. Moreover, taking on debt to cover shortfalls can be risky, particularly if interest rates rise or loans are reset at higher rates.

The Value of an Emergency Fund

An emergency fund can serve as the first line of defence in cash flow management. Typically, this is an amount equivalent to three to six months of living expenses, reserved for unexpected life events. Beyond a traditional cash reserve, a tiered approach to liquidity can balance accessibility and long-term growth. This may include: i) A reserve for short-term needs, such as a high-interest savings account or cashable GICs; ii) Easily accessible investments with lower volatility, such as short-term bonds or GICs; and iii) Longer-term investments to build wealth over time.

Some consider using a Tax-Free Savings Account (TFSA) as an emergency fund, as withdrawals are tax free and added back to contribution room in the following calendar year. However, there may be trade-offs. When it comes to marketable securities, a market downturn could reduce the value of TFSA investments at the very moment you need them. Selling investments at a loss locks in that loss, as only the withdrawn amount—not the original investment value—can be recontributed. Also important: you forgo potential future long-term, tax-free growth.

Investor Behaviour & Investment Outcomes

Navigating Choppy Waters: The Value of Discipline

Worth repeating: reacting emotionally to short-term headlines can work against longer-term success. Here's why.

In challenging markets, discipline can play a role in successful investing. A core part of our role as advisors is to remain objective, unemotional and focused—building portfolios based on research and fundamentals, with the understanding that occasional market or economic setbacks are a normal part of the investing journey.

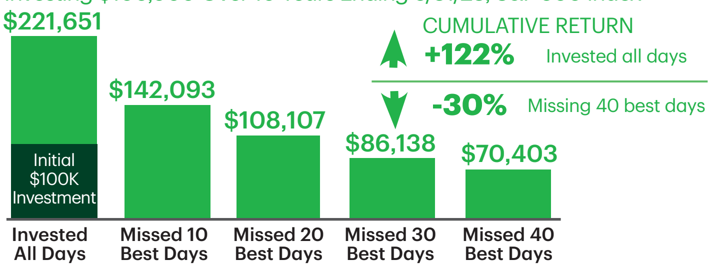
The dilemma, of course, is that human nature often compels us to want to take immediate action when faced with adversity. This instinctive response—rooted in our evolutionary drive for survival—can lead to decisions that hinder longer-term investing success.

While it might feel like the right response to exit the markets when things get tough, such as we saw with the dramatic market pullback in April, the opportunity cost of doing so—when markets reverse their course, often unexpectedly—can have a notable impact on future wealth. Ideally, we'd avoid the worst days, but these are nearly impossible to predict. Many of the strongest market days also tend to follow the weakest. The chart below shows how missing a handful of the best days can substantially reduce long-term returns. Ironically, doing nothing can sometimes be the best course of "action."

This dynamic isn't limited to the longer term. During the 2020 pandemic, when the U.S. stock market fell 34 percent in just 22 days, an investor who moved to cash at the bottom in March and remained on the sidelines until July would have seen a 2 percent decline (from 2018 to end of 2022). A disciplined investor holding the same balanced portfolio through that period would have seen a 21 percent gain.

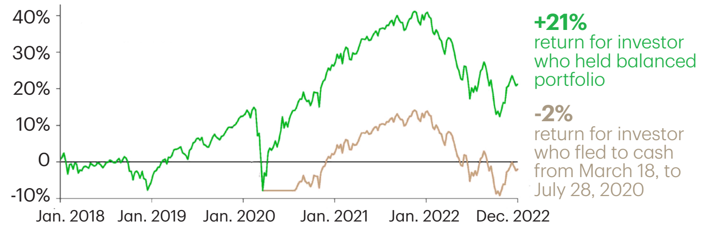
The Investment Impact of Missing the Best Market Days[1]

Investing $100,000 Over 10 Years Ending 8/31/23, S&P 500 Index



Source: Morningstar. Returns based on S&P 500 Index, for 10-year period ending August 31, 2023.

Impact of Shifting to Cash: 2020 Pandemic Market Drawdown



https://investor.vanguard.com/investor-resources-education/article/four-timeless-principles-for-investing-success; Balanced 60/40 portfolio—Stocks: MSCI ACWI; Bonds: Bloomberg Global Aggregate Bond Index.

A well-constructed wealth plan serves as a critical roadmap, but professional guidance can help navigate uncertainty and stay on course. One study suggests behavioural coaching alone may provide an average annualized return of 3.4 percent.[1] Don't underestimate the role of discipline and support in making informed decisions, managing risk and maintaining focus on longer-term wealth goals.

1. https://russellinvestments.com/-/media/files/au/support/voa/voa_report_2023.pdf

Cancellation of Proposed Increase to Capital Gains Inclusion Rate

Since the spring publication, the proposed increase to the capital gains inclusion rate was cancelled on March 21, 2025—after being deferred at the end of January. The government also announced it intends to maintain the increase in the Lifetime Capital Gains Exemption limit to $1,250,000, intending to introduce necessary legislation in due course.

Spring Recap From Doug and Kiel

Doug's Notes: Spring is such a great season in Vancouver. We have enjoyed some good times on the Gulf Islands as well as fishing around the province. Years ago, we were given a small root of my wife's grandparent's rhubarb plant. Boy, once those plants get going...they really grow! We may send rhubarb with any new account opening! Our big trip this summer is a journey through BC to the Yukon. We look forward to seeing parts of BC and Canada we've never seen before.

Kiel's Notes: This summer, my family will be recreating a camping trip that we made to Banff nearly 25 years ago. It was a Brady bunch excursion at the time, including my parents, sister, and three stepsiblings. This go around, we will be joined by new family members including six toddlers four years old and younger. While I am looking forward to creating memories with the little ones, I am not looking forward to the drive to get there!

Enduring Lessons From an Investing Legend

The Art of the Long Game: Farewell to CEO Buffett

At age 94, Warren Buffett announced his retirement. It marks the end of an era—but not the end of his enduring wisdom.

5,502,284%: This is the per-share market value increase of Berkshire Hathaway stock over 60 years.[1] As Warren Buffett recently announced his retirement, this extraordinary return represents the remarkable career of arguably the world's greatest investor.

Buffett is preparing to step down at the end of the year, at a time when Berkshire Hathaway's increasing cash reserves have drawn significant attention from market watchers. In his latest annual letter—eagerly awaited for Buffett's sage wisdom—and the last he will author as CEO—he addressed the topic directly:

"Despite what some commentators currently view as an extraordinary cash position at Berkshire, the great majority of your money remains in equities. That preference won't change."

From a strategic portfolio management perspective, Berkshire's cash position isn't surprising. Here's why:

Rebalancing — Berkshire's cash reserves grew significantly last year, largely due to profit-taking in a buoyant stock market. Notably, Buffett trimmed Berkshire's holdings in Apple—its largest common stock position both before and after the trim—at a time when technology stocks were driving market gains.[2] He also reduced the company's stake in Bank of America when U.S. financials were performing well.

Beyond simply following the principle of "buy low and sell high," this highlights the importance of portfolio rebalancing. When one stock grows so much that it dominates your holdings, it may be time to trim it to restore balance. The same principle applies to asset allocation, to maintain the right mix of risk and expected return to stay aligned with long-term goals.

Selectivity — With valuations climbing to record highs in 2023-24, Buffett acknowledged the difficulty in finding attractive investments: "*...very infrequently we find ourselves knee-deep in opportunities*." His classic value-investing approach—focused on buying quality companies at attractive prices—has made it harder to deploy capital. In bull markets, stocks can rise regardless of fundamentals. But in periods of slower growth and economic uncertainty, as we see today, thoughtful security selection becomes increasingly critical.

Other Factors: No Dividends, No Buybacks—For Now

Buffett has long chosen to deploy earnings into new investments rather than pay dividends, "*electing to reinvest rather than consume*" to take advantage of the "*magic of long-term compounding*." This helped Berkshire surpass a $1 trillion market capitalization in 2024.

The company also paused share buybacks for two consecutive quarters, suggesting Buffett doesn't view Berkshire's stock as undervalued, a noteworthy signal from someone known for repurchasing shares when prices appear attractive.

During Uncertain Times: Buffett's Enduring Wisdom

Given the current economic and market backdrop, it's worth repeating: successful long-term investing requires patience, discipline and perseverance. Volatility and economic uncertainty—including challenges that may feel new, like broad-based tariffs—are inevitable, but history shows that markets recover and often emerge stronger. In difficult times, it can be tempting to abandon a plan, but Buffett's approach reminds us that conviction and a longer-term focus can lead to lasting success.

Consider his bold move to inspire confidence during the Great Financial Crisis. In October 2008, during a sustained bear market when U.S. equity markets had already fallen 30 percent, he penned an op-ed titled "*Buy American. I Am.*"[3] At the time, his message may have appeared misguided, as the S&P 500 would go on to drop another 20 percent before bottoming. But Buffett remained steadfast: "*Most major companies will be setting new profit records 5, 10, and 20 years from now*."

He certainly wasn't wrong.

For Buffett's annual letter: berkshirehathaway.com/letters/2024ltr.pdf

1. https://www.bloomberg.com/news/newsletters/2025-05-05/after-buffett-s-5-500-000-run-a-new-era-for-berkshire-begins; 2. https://www.theglobeandmail.com/investing/markets/stocks/KO/pressreleases/30478569/despite-berkshire-selling-605000000-apple-shares-buffett-still-says-its-a-wonderful-company/#; 3. https://www.nytimes.com/2008/10/17/opinion/17buffett.html

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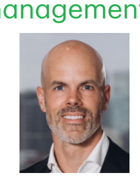

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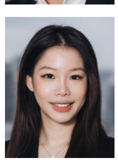

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