HARTFORDFUNDS

Our benchmark is the investor.®

# Media Replay

**Bear Holds Bull to a Standstill**
The New York Times
**June 1, 1960**
Dow Jones: 624

**Is the US Going Broke?**
TIME
**March 13, 1972**
Dow Jones: 929

**The Economy's High Blood Pressure**
The New York Times
**July 9, 1978**
Dow Jones: 817

**There's No Way Out of this Unemployment Crunch**
U.S. News & World Report
**March 14, 1983**
Dow Jones: 1,114

**Exploding Federal Debt—Why so Dangerous?**
U.S. News & World Report
**October 22, 1984**
Dow Jones: 1,217

**Warning: Further—and Maybe Bigger—Federal Bailouts Ahead**
TIME
**December 18, 1989**
Dow Jones: 2,698

**Is the Recession Over?**
The New York Times
**March 22, 1992**
Dow Jones: 3,276

**Retirement Rip-Off**
Forbes
**November 25, 2006**
Dow Jones: 12,280

**Joblessness Is Here to Stay**
Newsweek
**December 21, 2009**
Dow Jones: 10,414

**Coming Soon: "Invasion of the Walking Debt"**
The New York Times
**July 31, 2011**
Dow Jones: 12,132

**Oil's Drop and Economic Fears in Europe Hammer Stocks**
The Wall Street Journal
**January 5, 2015**
Dow Jones: 17,501

**A New Economic Era for China Goes Off the Rails**
The New York Times
**January 7, 2016**
Dow Jones: 16,514

**World Economy Shudders as Coronavirus Threatens Global Supply Chains**
The Wall Street Journal
**February 24, 2020**
Dow Jones: 27,960

**War, Inflation Knock World Economy Off Balance**
The Wall Street Journal
**September 23, 2022**
Dow Jones: 30,076

**The Mood of the American Consumer Is Souring**
The Wall Street Journal
**February 7, 2025**
Dow Jones: 44,303

Data Source: Google Finance, 2025
**See back cover for index descriptions**

# Déjà News

## Crisis of Today … or Yesterday?

Today's headlines may seem scary—so scary that "playing it safe" and not losing your money may seem like the only rational strategy. However, these headlines aren't exactly "new" news. In the past few decades, we've seen repeating patterns of crises including unemployment, economic downturns, and national debt concerns.

Yet, despite all these crises, the Dow Jones Industrial Average rose from 679 points in 1959 to over 44,000 in 2025. In fact, long-term investors who stayed the course and didn't lose sight of their financial goals have been rewarded.

### Contents



Please see back cover for source information.

**PAST PERFORMANCE DOES NOT GUARANTEE FUTURE RESULTS**

# The Daily Media Storm

We're exposed to an abundance of news, particularly economic news, via more outlets than ever before. In 2024, more people got their news from digital devices than TVs.[1] At times, it may feel overwhelming, as though we're caught in a media whirlwind.

This 24-hour news cycle provides an almost immediate record of what's happening throughout the world. Everyone loves a good story—the more dramatic or sensational, the more it sells.

However, this constant onslaught of news may make it difficult for people to digest this information or gain the appropriate perspective on what they read, see, and hear.

In reality, it's not all bad news—it's just that bad news can be easier to remember.

## How Much News Do We Consume?

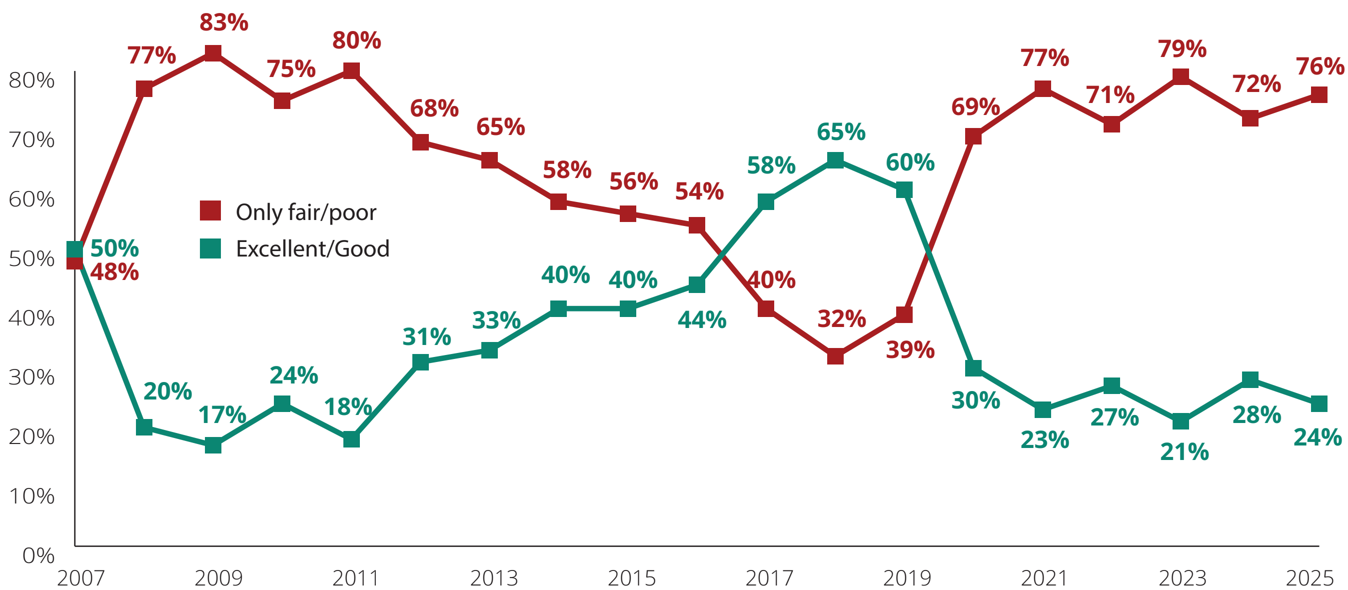
You may be surprised to learn just how much time we devote to staying informed. For example, a 2018 Nielsen study revealed that people 38 and older watch **30,103** minutes of news a year.[2]

From 2009 to the beginning of 2020, we experienced the second longest bull market ever.[3] Most Americans were feeling good about the economy—but, then, the pandemic dampened our optimism.

The S&P 500 Index rebounded from two bear markets in 2020 and 2022. And despite the market reaching all-time highs in 2025, 76% of people surveyed felt economic conditions were bad.[4]

## Views of the Economy Have Turned Sharply Negative[4]

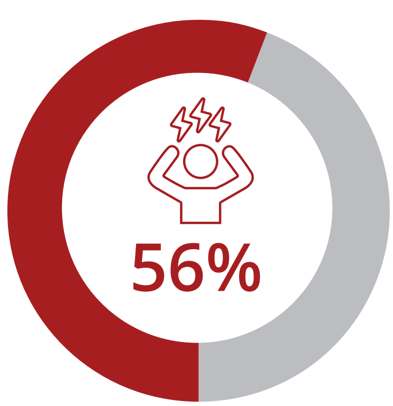
**% who say that economic situation in the country is ...**




## Staying Informed Can Cause Anxiety

A 2017 study found that people felt conflicted between their desire to stay informed about the news and their view of the media as a source of stress.

### % Of US Adults Surveyed That Said Following News Regularly Causes Them Stress[5]

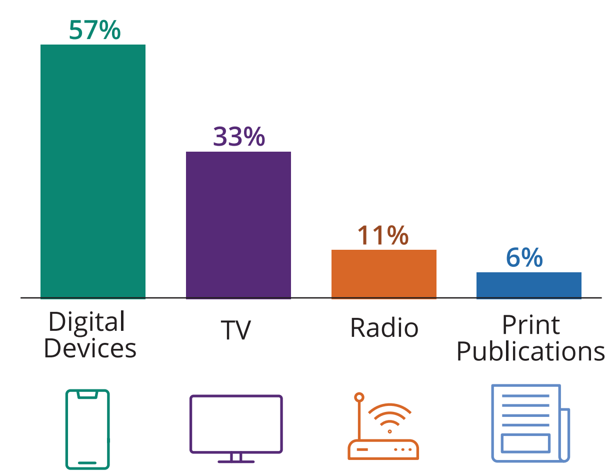



## Many Americans Get News From Digital Devices

When asked which of these platforms they prefer to get news on, more than half of Americans surveyed prefer a digital device, more than those who prefer TV, radio, or print.[1]

### News Platform Preferences

*% of US adults who often get news from...*

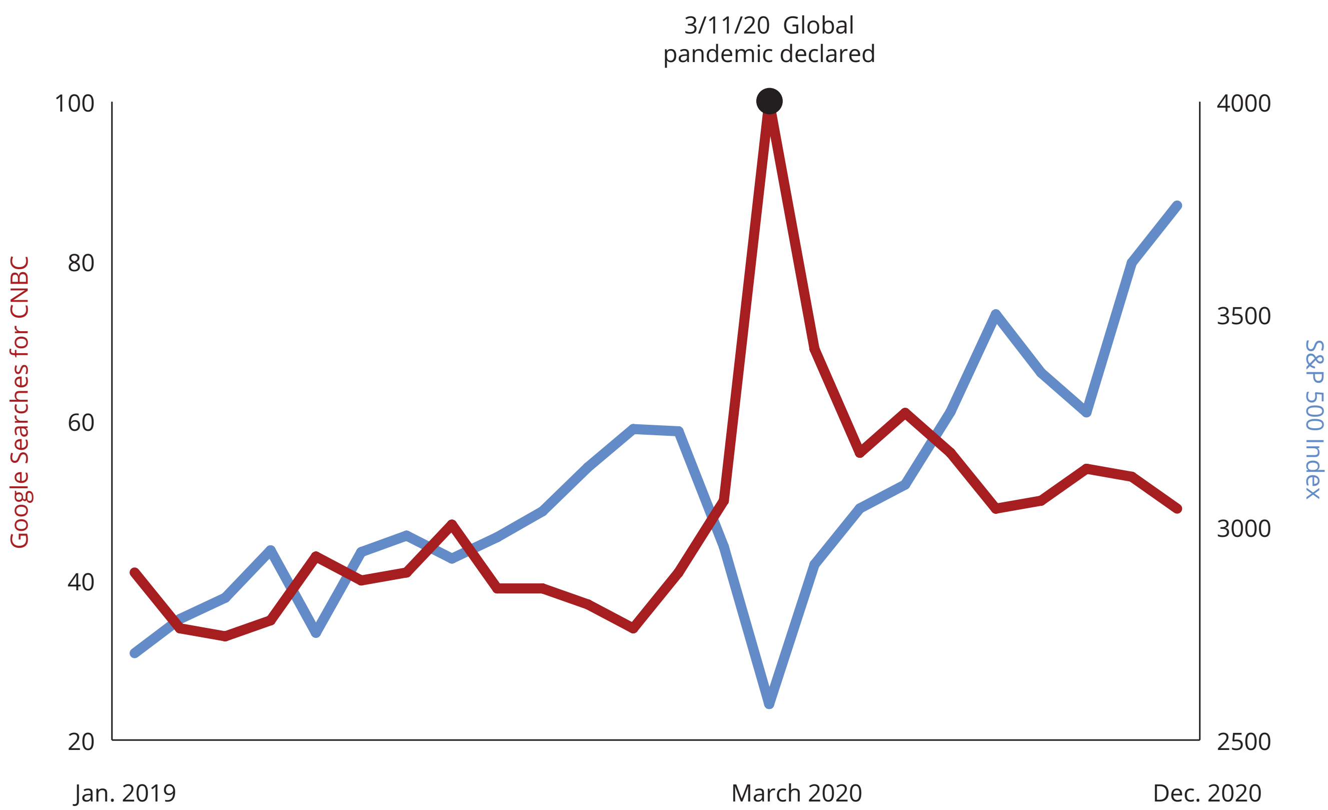


# We Can't Look Away

Evolutionary psychologists and neuroscientists would argue that humans ordinarily seek out news of dramatic, negative events. These experts say that our brains evolved in a hunter-gatherer environment in which anything perceived as threatening had to be attended to immediately for survival. Despite the fact that depressing headlines can make us feel uncomfortable, there appears to be a strong correlation between negative market performance and our curiosity about the news.

**When Markets Fall, We Search—Especially for CNBC**

Google Searches for CNBC vs. S&P 500 Index




This is a study of Google searches for "CNBC" compared with S&P 500 Index performance (see page 7 for Google search methodology). The blue line represents the S&P 500 Index and the red line represents Google searches. Do you see a pattern? There's a correlation between poor market performance and CNBC searches.

**On March 31, 2020, Google searches for CNBC reached their highest level since 2008**

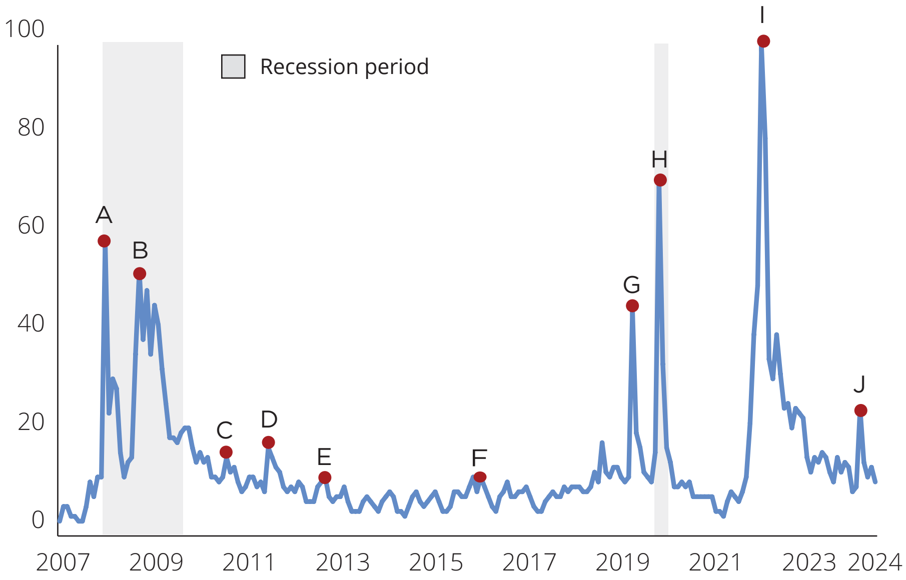
**See back cover for index descriptions.**
For illustrative purposes only. The performance shown is index performance and is not indicative of any Hartford Fund. Investors cannot invest directly in an index.

## Did You Google It?

Similar to CNBC viewership, the number of Google searches for "recession" increased during the turbulent time frame between 2008–2009, 2020, and 2022. When searches for recession are high, investor anxiety about losses is likely high also.

### Google Trends[6]

**Results for the Search Term "Recession" in the US***




A. 1/22/08: After the plunge in markets around the world, the Fed cuts interest rates by 0.75%—the largest single-day reduction in the Fed's history

B. 12/1/08: Dow plunges in response to a report that the economy is in recession

C. 9/20/10: Unemployment rises to 9.6%; 54,000 jobs lost

D. 8/5/11: Congress debates the federal debt limit. Standard & Poor's downgrades the US government's credit rating

E. 11/29/12: The US economy approaches possible fiscal cliff

F. 1/18/16: Oil prices fall below $28 a barrel from a record peak of $145 in 2008

G. 8/1/19: President Trump announces 10% tariffs on $300 billion worth of Chinese imports after two days of talks with no progress

H. 3/11/20: The World Health Organization declares a global pandemic

I. 6/7/22: A labor shortage, supply-chain disruptions, Russia's invasion of Ukraine, chaos in the energy market, and rising inflation

J. 8/5/24, global markets experienced a dramatic downturn triggered by Japan's unexpected interest rate hike and growing concerns about a slowing US economy.

*Google Trends Methodology: Google Trends enables you to compare the world's interest in various internet topics; it shows how frequently topics have been searched on Google over time. The numbers on the graph reflect how many searches have been done for a particular term, relative to the total number of searches done on Google over time. They don't represent absolute search-volume numbers, because the data are normalized and presented on a scale from 0-100. Each point on the graph is divided by the highest point, or 100. A rising line for a search term indicates a growth in the term's popularity.

MIT AGELAB
Life Tomorrow

## The Anxiety Effect

Insights from Dr. Joseph Coughlin, Founder and Director of MIT AgeLab

The MIT AgeLab provides insights to Hartford Funds about consumer behavior and decision-making, and trends in demographics, technology, and lifestyle. These trends impact the way people do business with financial-services providers and how they use financial advice.

### Investing Attention in the Negative

Anxious investors are more apt to devote their attention to information that is negative.

When faced with the choice between information that could potentially inspire optimism vs. information that paints a dismal future, the anxious client will opt to focus on the latter.

### If It's Not Clear, It Must be Bad

To further complicate matters, anxious investors process ambiguous information differently. Information that isn't crystal clear is more likely to be perceived as bad or even threatening, fueling their pessimism.

### Risk Aversion: "Just Don't Lose It!"

Today's investor is more likely to say, "Just don't lose it!" rather than, "How do we grow it?"

An anxious investor's main objective is to reduce current risk—not to plan ahead. Instead of making decisions based on long-term financial objectives, they will act upon how they feel in the moment.

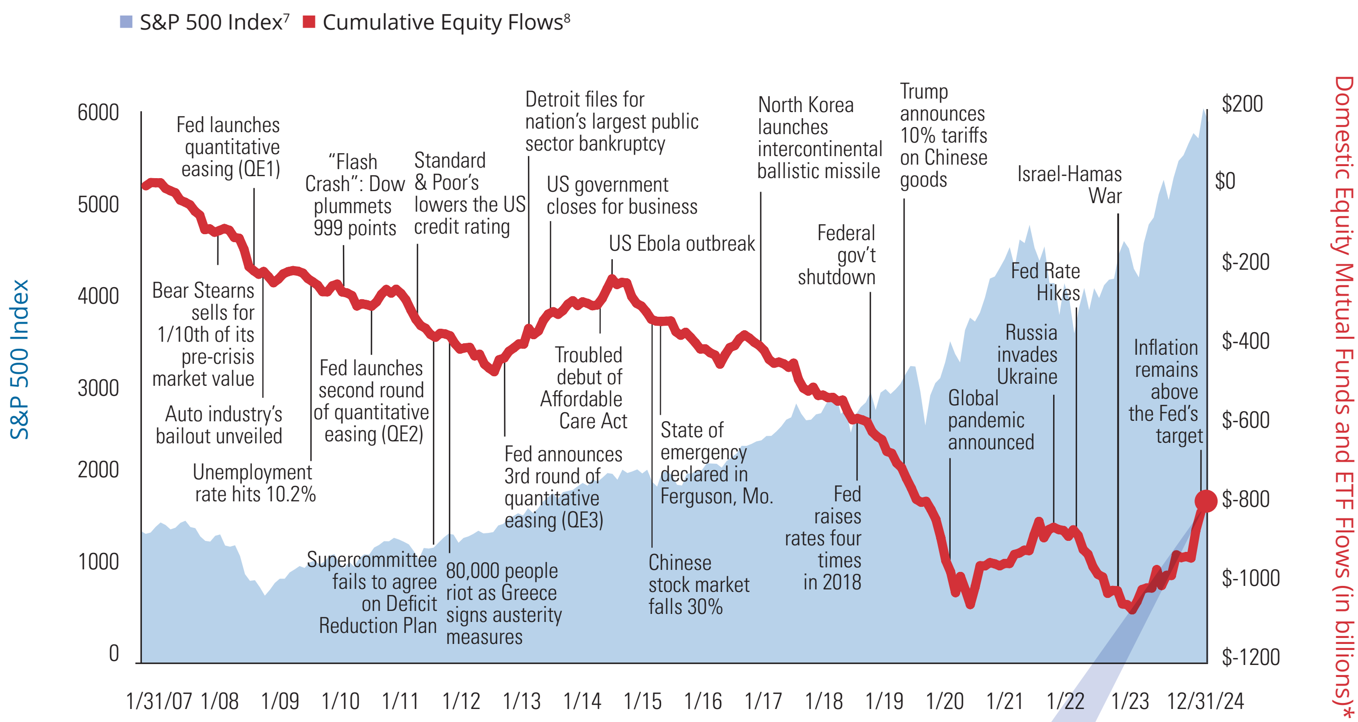
# The Urge to Panic

When investors are exposed to a steady stream of gloomy news, they are likely to feel threatened and become concerned about their investments.

As a result of the financial crisis in 2008, the global pandemic, and today's inflation and rising interest rates, many investors are more concerned with playing it safe and clinging to the money they already have instead of growing their money.

## Have You Participated in the Rebound?

### S&P 500 Index and Domestic Equity Mutual Fund and ETF Flows




*Equity mutual fund flows from 2007. Equity ETF flows began in 2010.

Since the end of 2007, investors have been subject to an ongoing barrage of negative events and disturbing headlines. The negative headlines certainly underscored investors' desire for safe investments, despite the market quadrupling in value.

Investors withdrew **$820 billion** from domestic equity mutual funds and ETFs between 1/31/07 – 12/31/24.[8]
S&P 500 Index Cumulative Return 3/9/09 – 12/31/24: **1,067%**[9]

**See back cover for index descriptions.**
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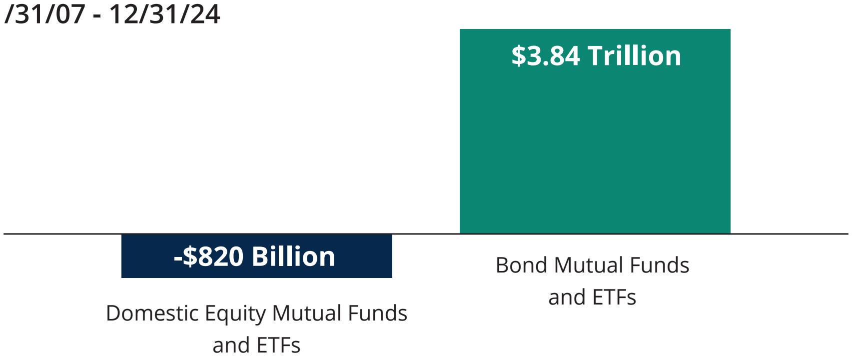
## Where Did the Assets Go?

Since 2007, investors have abandoned equity mutual funds/ETFs with outflows of $820 billion, while adding $3.84 billion to bond mutual funds/ETFs.[8]

### Cumulative Asset Flows[8]

**1/31/07 - 12/31/24**

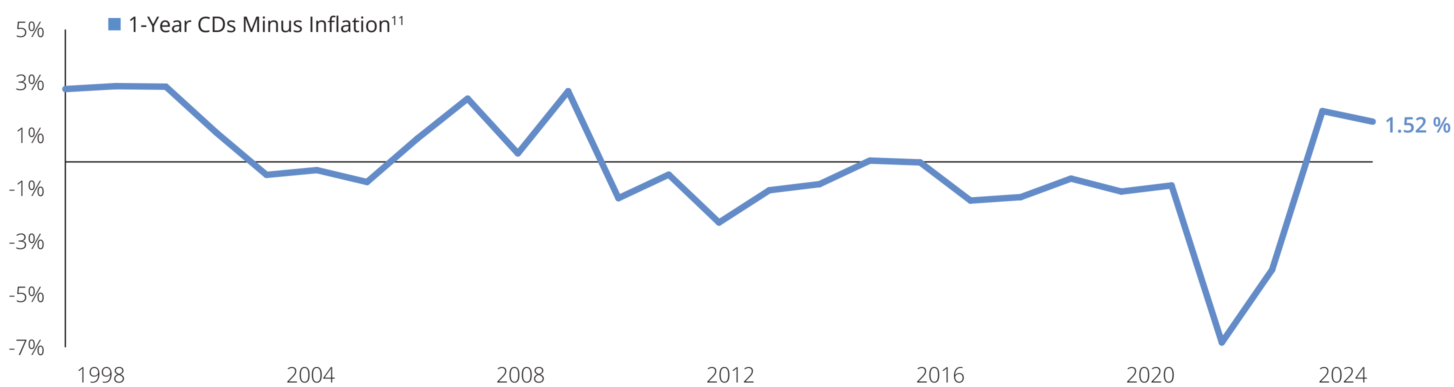



> How many times does the end of the world as we know it need to arrive before we realize that it's not the end of the world as we know it
>
> —Michael Lewis
> Best-selling author of "The Big Short"

## How "Safe" Is Cash?

Total assets in cash investments reached an astounding $18.9 trillion in 2024.[10] Cash investments may provide a sense of security because of their perceived benefit of principal stability. But when cash returns are adjusted for inflation, they can be less reassuring. The inflation-adjusted return of CDs has been negative from 2015–2022; in 2023, it turned positive.

### The Real Return of CDs




CD rates are proxied by Bankrate's 12-month CD national average

Inflation rates are based on the Consumer Price Index (CPI), a measure of change in consumer prices as determined by the US Bureau of Labor Statistics. You cannot invest directly in the index.

Cash investments are subject to risk.

CDs are insured by the FDIC up to $250,000, offer a fixed rate of return, and are generally designed for short-term savings needs. The principal value and investment return of investment securities (including mutual funds) are subject to risk, will fluctuate with changes in market conditions, are generally considered long-term investments, and are not in the best interest of all investors.

**See back cover for index descriptions.**
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# There's Always a Reason to Panic

Since 1960, we've had 11 bear markets (averaging about one every six years), with an average decline of 35%. How an investor chooses to respond to this turmoil can dramatically affect his or her long-term performance. When the market is declining and the news is depressing, the urge to panic and play it safe can be intense.

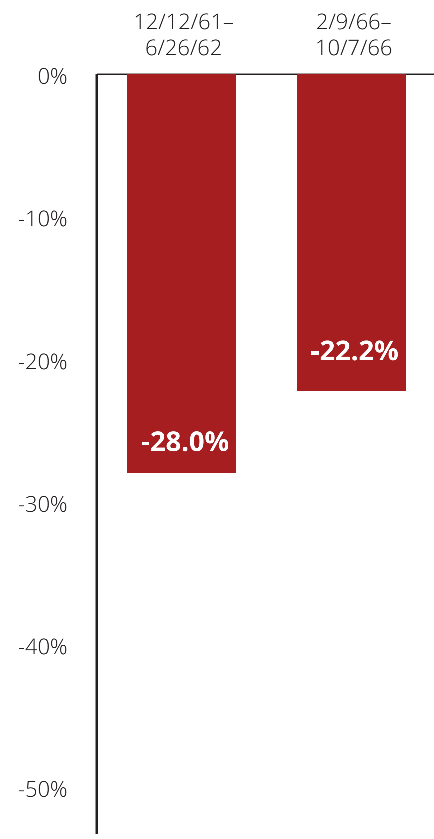
**Despite these 11 bear markets, the S&P 500 Index climbed from 59 on 12/31/59 to 5,906 on 12/31/24**

Data Source: Google Finance, 2025

**Bear Markets**
**S&P 500 Index 1960–2024**[12]

**Bear Markets**
Downturn of 20% or more in the stock market over at least a two-month period

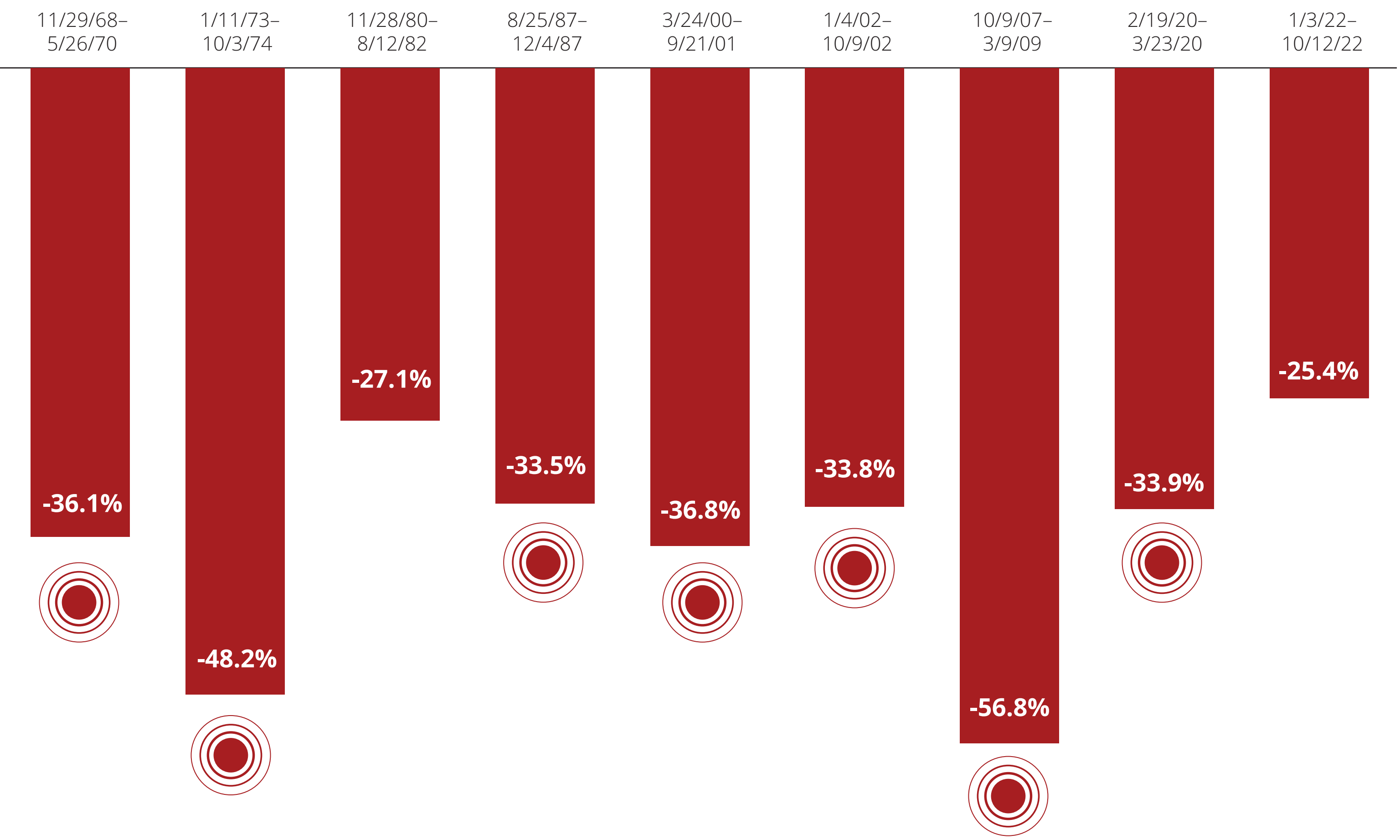
**Panic: 30%**
The panic buttons represent periods in which the market dropped at least 30%. This could be considered a tipping point for investors who aren't comfortable with significant market declines and instead choose to look for "safer" investment choices.




See back cover for index descriptions.

Investors are more likely to find the courage to re-enter the market after things quiet down. Unfortunately, by this time, they've already missed much of the recovery.

**During a 40-year career and a 30-year retirement, you can expect to experience 12 bear markets.**



# The Price of Panic

Despite repeated, sometimes verbatim, predictions of dire global catastrophe or outrageous economic boom, the markets have been resilient.

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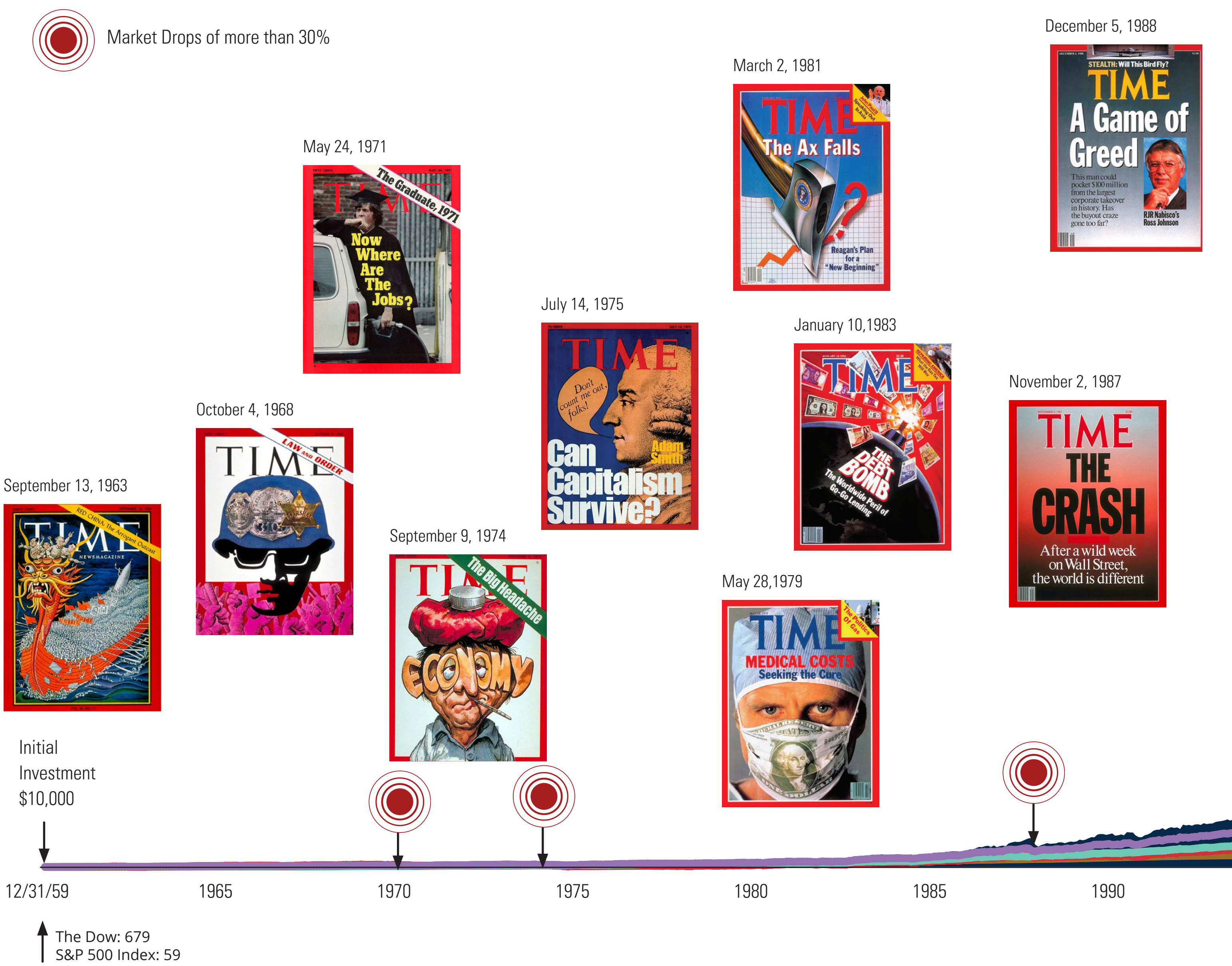
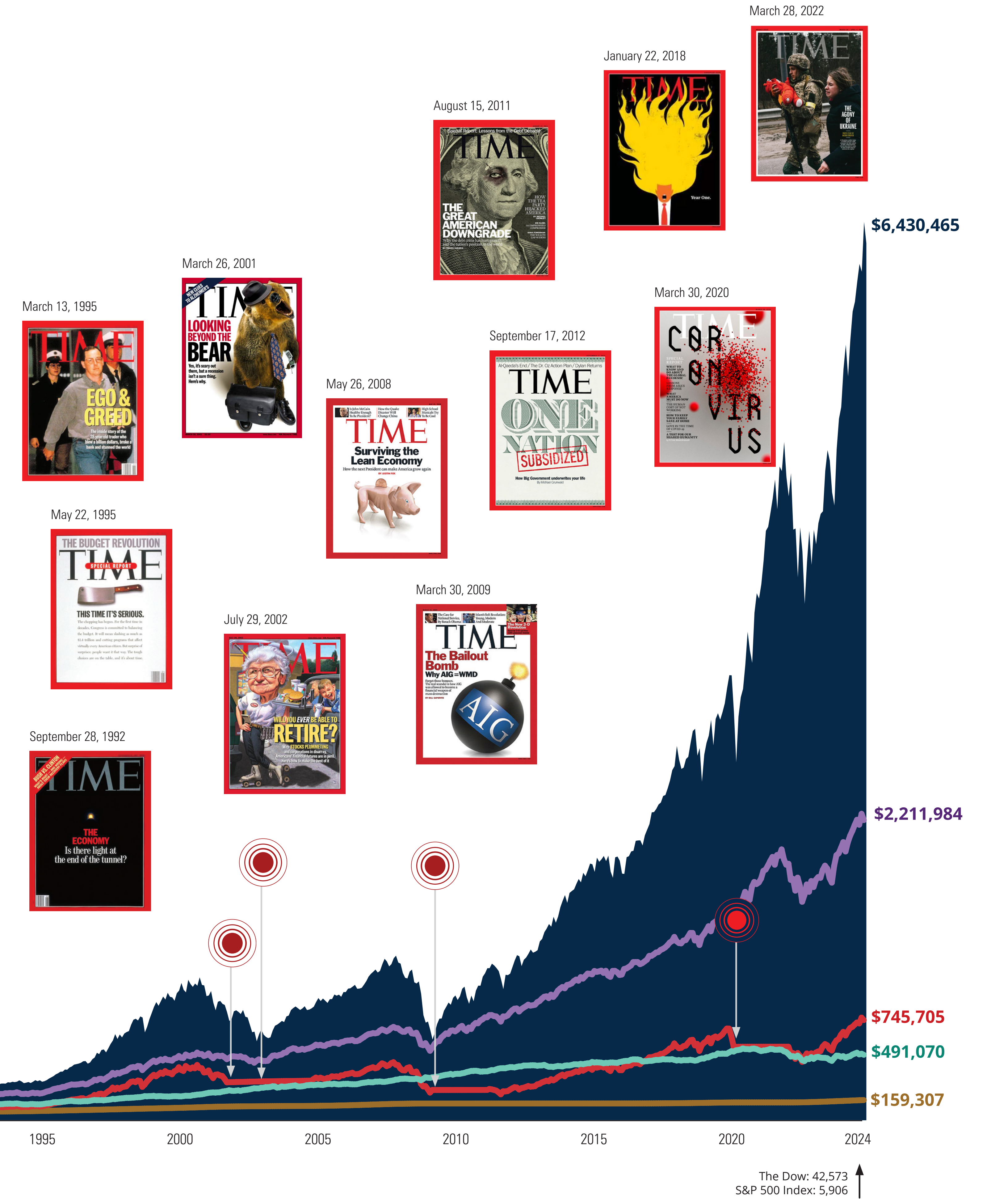
## $10,000 Invested 1960–2024[12]

- **Equity Investor** S&P 500 Index
- **Balanced Investor** 50% S&P 500 Index and 50% IA SBBI US Long Term Corp Bond Index
- **Bond Investor** IA SBBI US Long Term Corp Bond Index
- **Reactionary Investor** Invests in S&P 500 Index; Moves 100% into 30-Day T-Bills each time the market drops 30%, and then moves 100% back into S&P 500 Index two years later
- **Cash Investor** 30-Day T-Bills





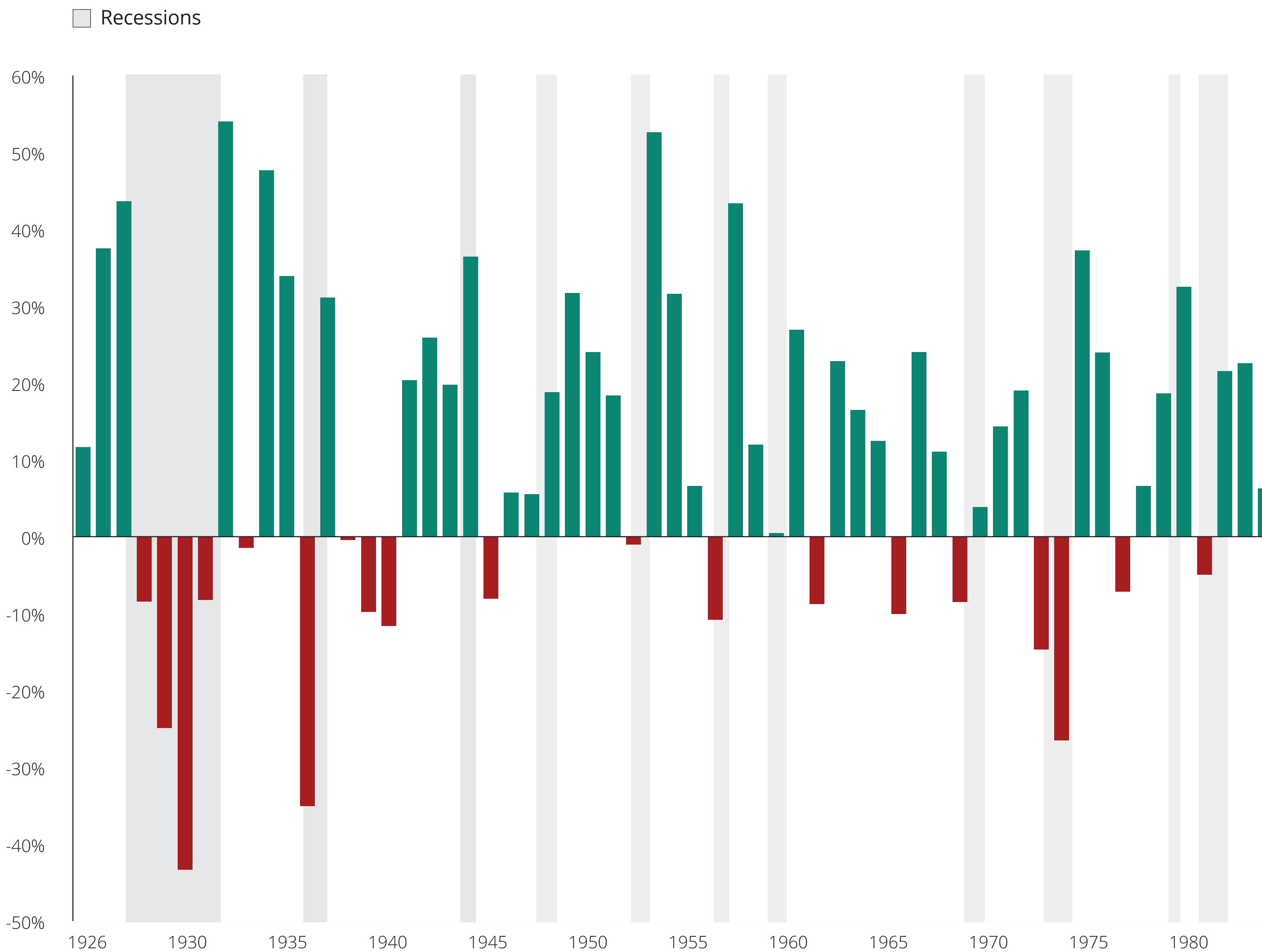
March 28, 2022
January 22, 2018
August 15, 2011
March 26, 2001
March 13, 1995
May 26, 2008
September 17, 2012
March 30, 2020
May 22, 1995
March 30, 2009
July 29, 2002
September 28, 1992
$6,430,465
$2,211,984
$745,705
$491,070
$159,307
1995
2000
2005
2010
2015
2020
2024
The Dow: 42,573
S&P 500 Index: 5,906

# Is Fear of Loss Blinding You From Growth

The theory of "loss aversion" suggests that people strongly prefer avoiding losses to acquiring gains. Todd Feldman, assistant finance professor at San Francisco State University, states that "loss-averse investors are investors more impacted by losses than gains. For example, when loss-averse investors experience losses, they may sell as the stock market is plummeting. When the stock market starts to rebound, it takes the loss-averse investor a long time to re-enter the market after experiencing significant losses."[13]

This fear of loss in the down years can cause investors to overlook the potential for growth in the positive years.

## Average Annual Returns: S&P 500 Index 1926–2024[9]

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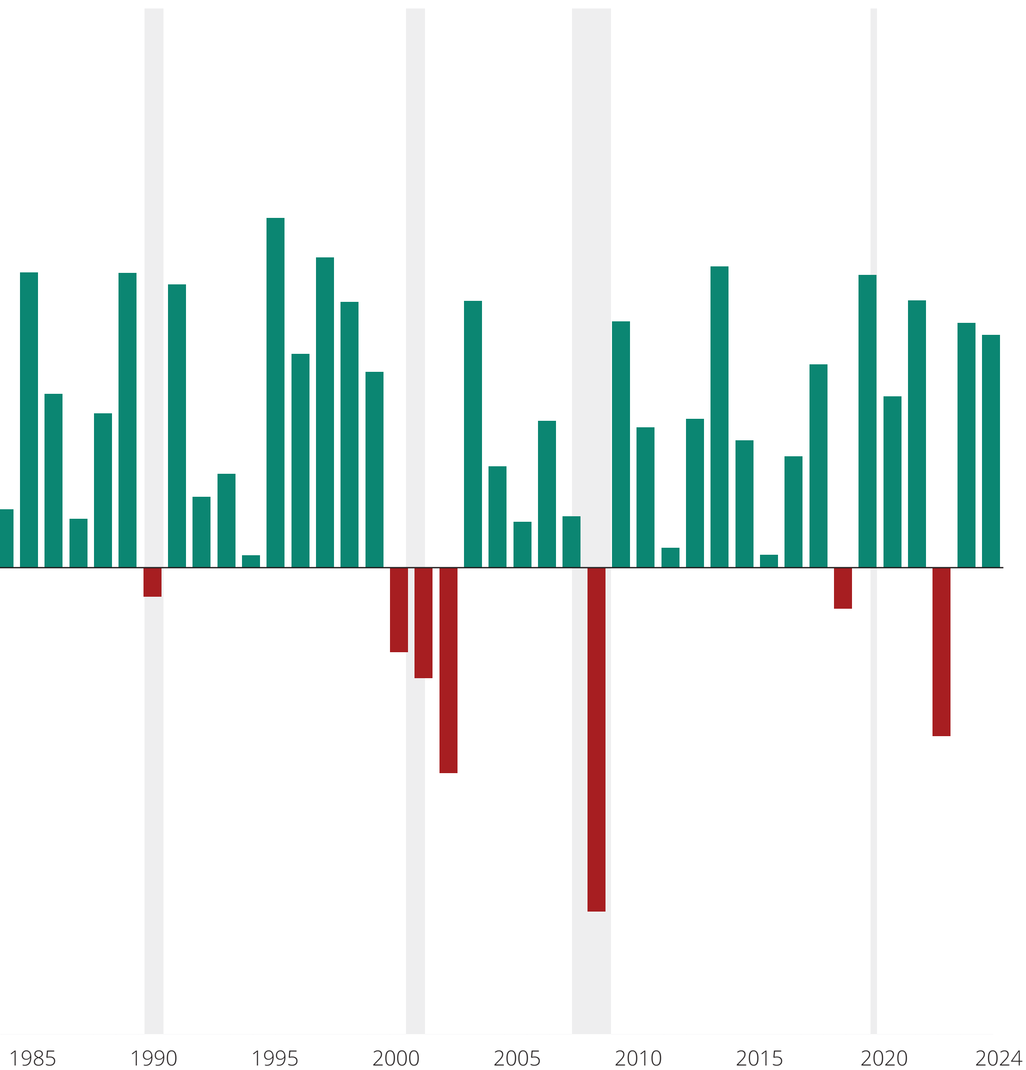
Unmanaged index returns do not reflect any fees, expenses, or sales charges.

# Opportunities?

Since 1926, the S&P 500 Index has had 73 positive years—nearly three times the number of negative years.

Many investors also tend to put more emphasis on recent market conditions when making decisions about the future. This is known as “recency bias.”[14]

An investor prone to recency bias who experiences a financial crisis would forecast a continued decline in stock prices and overlook the market’s “up” years.

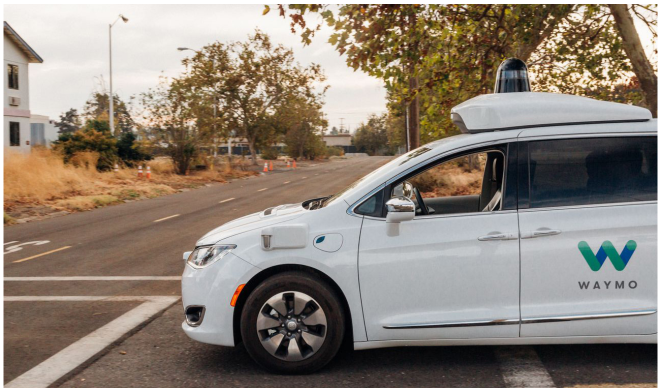



**S&P 500 Index Stats**

| | |
|---|---|
| Number of positive years: | 73 |
| Number of negative years: | 26 |
| Percentage of positive years: | 74% |
| Percentage of negative years: | 26% |
| Average annual return: | 10.42% |
| Number of years when gains were greater than 20%: | 38 |
| Number of years when losses were greater than 20%: | 6 |

# Headlines You'll Probably Never See

While the media may be trumpeting the Crisis Du Jour, chances are there are positive news stories that just aren't getting much media attention. The future trends shown here could positively impact the economy, despite their lack of coverage in the media.




## Robotaxis on the Rise

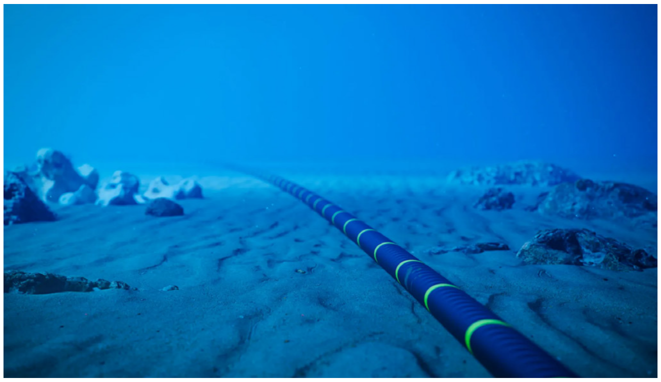
Customers are loving self-driving robotaxis in some areas. In August, Waymo provided nearly 500,000 rides in California, a huge jump from under 20,000 the previous year. This year, Uber and Lyft will also offer driverless rides through Waymo and other providers in select locations.

Source: How Uber and Lyft Are Gearing Up for the Robotaxi Revolution, Forbes, 1/6/25

## Meta Will Build the World's Longest Undersea Cable

Meta's launched the Waterworth Project, an ambitious plan to lay 31,000 miles of undersea cable connecting five continents. It's a huge, multibillion-dollar, multi-year effort to improve the world's digital highways by creating three new oceanic corridors with high-speed, reliable connectivity, and powering AI innovation.This bold move promises to reshape digital infrastructure globally.

Source: Meta Will Build the World's Longest Undersea Cable, Wired, 2/19/25)

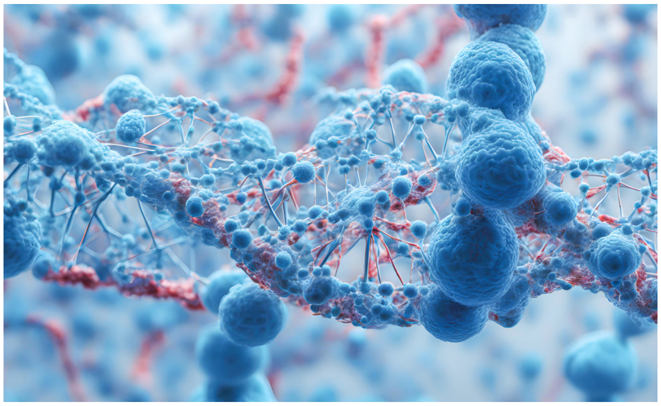


## World's Biggest Battery

Maine is about to host the world's largest clean-energy battery. With an impressive 8,500 MWh capacity, it can deliver 85 MW of power for up to 100 hours—enough to light up roughly 670 homes per MW. Expected to be operational in 2028, this cutting-edge system uses rust for long-term storage, providing New England with multi-day clean energy backup and reliability.

Source: America Is Building the World's Biggest Battery—And It Will Run on Rust, Popular Mechanics, 12/12/24

Hartford Funds may or may not be invested in the companies referenced herein; however, no particular endorsement of any product or service is being made.



## Longer Life?

AgeXtend is an AI platform that's revolutionizing longevity research. It has analyzed over 1.1 billion different molecular compounds and found some that might help slow down aging and improve overall health. This breakthrough tool may not only be useful for discovering new drugs but also for creating personalized medicine. In short, AgeXtend is opening up new ways to understand aging and helping people live longer, healthier lives.

Source: 'Numerous' Substances That May Slow Aging Discovered With New AI Tool, Newsweek, 12/6/24

## Optimus

In 2024 Tesla unveiled Optimus—a sci-fi android with George Clooney's charm and Einstein-level smarts. Seen chatting and taking drink orders at events, it's built to do it all. From teaching and babysitting to walking your dog and running errands, Optimus is designed to be your all-in-one helper. It's set to transform everyday life.

Source: Why the Tesla 'Optimus' Robot Changes Everything About Customer Experience, CMS Wire, 10/17/24


## Agentic AI Agents: The Ultimate Solution for Getting Things Done

While generative AI focuses on creating, agentic AI is all about doing. These agents make decisions, take actions, and adapt to changing environments. They can plan trips, serve as virtual caregivers, and optimize supply chains in real time. Thinking like humans, they autonomously solve problems and transform industries, ushering in a new era of innovation and progress.

(Source: Generative AI Vs. Agentic AI: The Key Differences Everyone Needs To Know, Forbes, 2/3/25)

# Getting Your Portfolio off the Media-Go-Round

The repeating patterns of crisis reporting in the media can make it easy for investors to get mired in the present and lose sight of their long-term financial goals. Sensational breaking-news stories coupled with uncertainty in the market can test the resolve of even the most seasoned long-term investors.

The investment world can be complex, with multiple asset classes within equities and fixed income, as well as a wide variety of investment vehicles and choices. Plus, history shows that asset classes move in and out of favor over time. You could have a better chance of reaching your financial goals if you choose a diversified strategy and work with a financial professional.

## 1 Don't Go It Alone

Although many investors are tempted to "go it alone," working with a trusted financial professional can help you sort through what you see and hear in the news and distinguish between valuable information and media noise.

Your financial professional has the expertise required to help you set financial goals, establish an investment plan, and provide guidance during all types of economic and market environments. Plus, investors who work with financial professionals are more confident that their money will last in retirement than those who don't.

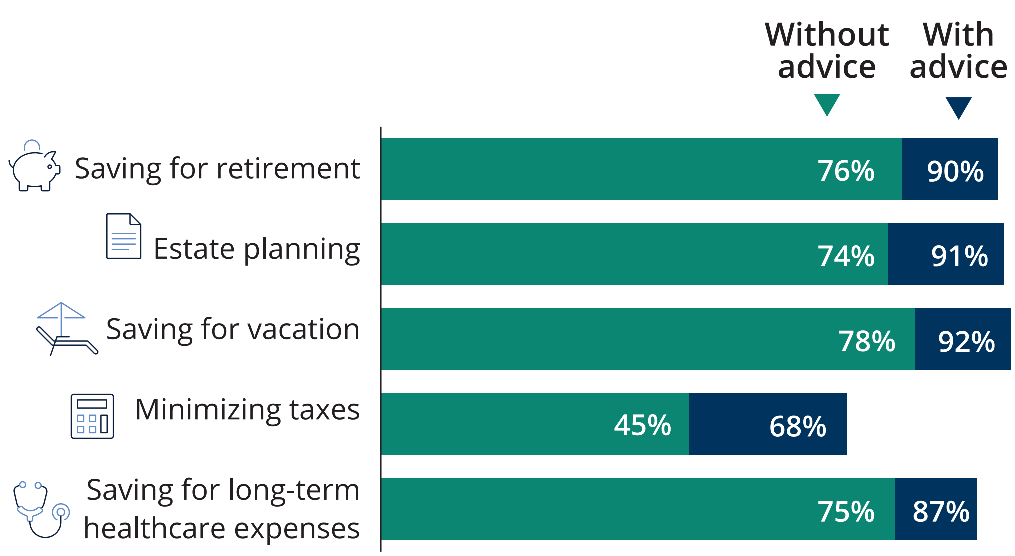
## 2 Start with a Plan

What are the necessary components of a financial plan?

- Investment time horizon of five years or longer
- Specific dollar amount and target date for each financial goal
- Realistic assumed rate of return for your investments
- Income-distribution plan that lasts for life
- Estate planning to ensure maximum wealth transfer to your heirs

Your financial professional can help you design a plan to fit your goals and preferences.

**Working With a Financial Professional Boosts Confidence to Reach Goals**[16]
Percentage of investors who say they feel confident about reaching their goal

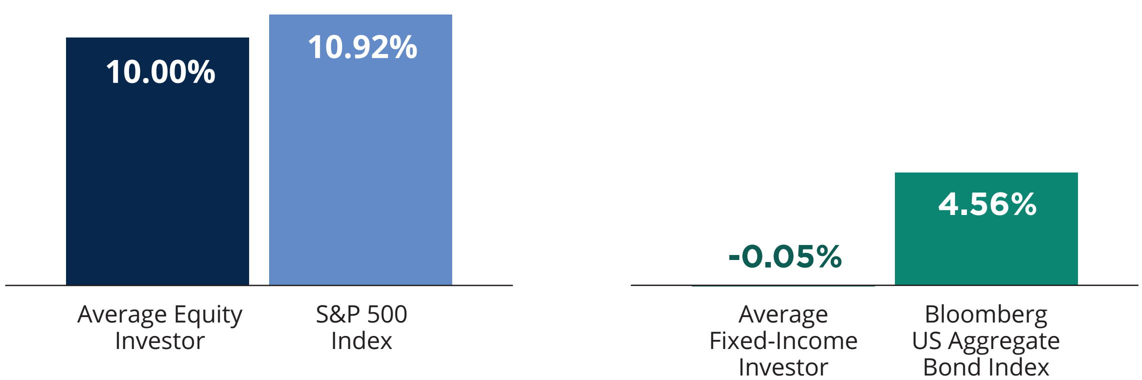


# 3 Long-Term Behavior

Over the past 30 years, we've witnessed repeating patterns of market volatility. This has led many investors to move their investments onto the sidelines in a flight to safety or to make decisions in an attempt to time the market.

Short investment-holding periods are the primary reason why investors have underperformed the market.

**Individual Investors Have Underperformed Market Indices[17]**
Average Annual Returns for the 30-Year Period Ending 12/31/24




**Past performance does not guarantee future results.** Performance data for indices represents a lump-sum investment in January 1995 to December 2024 with no withdrawals. Indices are unmanaged, unavailable for direct investment, and do not reflect fees, expenses, or sales charges.

**See back cover for index descriptions.**

**Dalbar's Quantitative Analysis of Investor Behavior Methodology** - Dalbar's Quantitative Analysis of Investor Behavior uses data from the Investment Company Institute (ICI), Standard & Poor's, and Bloomberg Index Products to compare mutual fund investor returns to an appropriate set of benchmarks. Covering the period from January 1, 1995 to December 31, 2024, the study utilizes mutual fund sales, redemptions and exchanges each month as the measure of investor behavior. These behaviors reflect the "average investor." Based on this behavior, the analysis calculates the "average investor return" for various periods. These results are then compared to the returns of respective indices.

**Average equity investor and average bond investor** performance results are calculated using data supplied by ICI. Investor returns are represented by the change in total mutual fund assets after excluding sales, redemptions, and exchanges. This method of calculation captures realized and unrealized capital gains, dividends, interest, trading costs, sales charges, fees, expenses, and any other costs. After calculating investor returns in dollar terms, two percentages are calculated for the period examined: total investor return rate and annualized investor return rate. Total investor return rate is determined by calculating the investor return dollars as a percentage of the net of the sales, redemptions, and exchanges for each period.

**John Diehl**
Senior Vice President
Applied Insights Team
Hartford Funds

# Perspectives from The Great Recession

On September 29, 2008, the Dow Jones Industrial Average dropped 777 points, in the midst of the financial crisis. The next day the headlines read “Worst Day Ever for the Dow.” While this was true based on how many points the Dow dropped, the day barely made the top-20 worst days on a percentage basis.

On September 30, the very next day, the Dow was up 485 points. Do you remember reading the headline, “Dow Has Third Best Day Ever?” Probably not. It wasn’t written because negative news is what sells.

We’ve had lots of volatility since 2008, especially in 2020 when the Dow dropped and rose over 1,000 points in a day eight times.

Had you been able to ignore the media hype since the Dow’s low of 6,547 on March 9, 2009 and focus clearly on market returns, by the end of 2024 you would have watched the Dow Jones Industrial Average rise to 42,573 and return an average of 15.2% annually.[18] How unfortunate for those on the sidelines.

Investing involves risk, including the possible loss of principal. Fixed income security risks include credit, liquidity, call, duration, and interest-rate risk. As interest rates rise, bond prices generally fall. Diversification does not ensure a profit or protect against a loss in declining market.

**Index Descriptions**

**Dow Jones Industrial Average** is a price-weighted average of 30 significant stocks traded on the New York Stock Exchange and the Nasdaq.

**S&P 500 Index** is a market capitalization-weighted price index composed of 500 widely held common stocks.

**Bloomberg US Aggregate Bond Index** is composed of securities that cover the US investment-grade fixed-rate bond market, with index components for government and corporate securities, mortgage pass-through securities, and asset-backed securities.

**IA SBBI US LT Corp** measures the performance of US dollar-denominated bonds issued in the US investment-grade bond market including US and non-US corporate securities that have at least ten years to maturity and a credit rating of AAA/AA.

**IA SBBI US 30 Day TBill** measures the performance of a single issue of outstanding Treasury Bill which matures closest to, but not beyond, one month from the rebalancing date. The issue is purchased at the beginning of the month and held for a full month; at the end of the month that issue is sold and rolled into a newly selected issue. The index is calculated by Morningstar and the raw data is from WSJ.



[1] News Platform Fact Sheet, Pew Research, 9/17/24
[2] Millennials on Millennials—TV and Digital News Consumption, Nielsen, 2018. Most recent data available.
[3] Source: Ned Davis Research, 1/24
[4] Pew Research Center’s American Trends Panel, Pew Research Center, 2025
[5] By the numbers: Our stressed-out nation, American Psychological Association, 12/17. Most recent data available.
[6] Google Trends,12/24
[7] Factset, 1/25
[8] Investment Company Institute, 12/24
[9] Morningstar, 1/25. The 1,067% return shown on page 8 includes dividends reinvested.
[10] Board of Governors of the Federal Reserve System (US), Q3 2024
[11] Bloomberg, Bankrate.com 1-Year CDs National Average, 12/24
[12] Ned Davis Research, 1/25
[13] The Journal of Investing, Summer 2012
[14] How “Recency Bias” Can Make You a Lazy Investor, Medium, 9/6/19
[16] 2021 Fidelity Investor Insights Study. Most recent data available.
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[18] Factset, Morningstar 1/25

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