

# Four Questions To Ask Yourself Before Year-End

December can be a good time for many investors to think about the coming year by asking themselves a few questions about where they are today—and where they might want to be 12 months or more from now.

Getting your questions clear in your own mind can be a way to get organized for any upcoming annual meetings with advisors about your wealth. With that in mind, here are some issues you may want to consider before the calendar flips.

**1. Are you involved in your investing at your preferred level?** Recently, it seems some investors may be increasingly open to delegating more of their investment activities to their professional advisors. For example, a CEG Insights study from last year (*The Path to Success*) found that 54% of investors are actively involved in managing their investments daily—a decline from 64.5% observed in the previous year's study.

There's no single "correct" path when it comes to involvement with your investments. While some like to be very hands-on, others prefer that a professional address all matters. The key is to examine your level of engagement in the investment management process and determine whether it's where you want it to be.

**2. How confident are you in your outlook for retirement?** If your saving and investing goals include a comfortable retirement, how do you feel about your prospects? Of the investors surveyed in "*The Path to Success*" report, 90.4% overall expect to be able to generate sufficient income in retirement. Even among the group that's youngest and farthest away from their golden years—millennials—a full 76.7% expect to have enough retirement income.

One way that some investors evaluate their retirement prospects is to stress test their portfolios—a process that involves questioning existing assumptions about their wealth plans and seeing how their financial picture might look if various scenarios occurred.

**3. What are your current financial concerns?** The surveyed investors reported three main financial concerns that were on their minds at the moment: inflation (cited by 79.9% of investors), tax increases (a concern for 72.5% of investors) and stock market performance (59.2% of investors).

It can be a good idea to revisit your own list of concerns from time to time, as changes in life can bring certain issues to the forefront while pushing others down the list (or even off it). Regular progress meetings with your advisors are often ideal moments to discuss what's changed and what that might mean to your financial picture.

*Continued on back page*

Steven C. Jackson,  
CWS®, CPFA  
Senior Vice President,  
Financial Advisor

Steven C. Jackson, Jr., CFP®  
Senior Vice President, Branch  
Manager, Financial Advisor

Chalyda Dumayas,  
FPQP®, CWP  
Senior Registered  
Financial Planning Associate



D | A | DAVIDSON

**JACKSON FINANCIAL ADVISORS**

Members of D.A. Davidson & Co. member SIPC

Continued from front page

## CONSIDER STRESS TESTING

**4. How do you feel about the amount of investment risk you're taking?** It's not uncommon for the investment journey to be bumpy from time to time, particularly for those investors who hold a significant amount of risk assets such as equities. Indeed, the majority of investors surveyed by CEG Insights—56.9%—are concerned about market volatility. If you find yourself worried about the market's ups and downs, consider taking a look at the level of risk in your portfolio to see whether it's acceptable to you—taking into account both your tolerance for short-term fluctuations and your plans for the future and the investment growth rate it might take to realize those plans.

## THE POTENTIAL VALUE OF STRESS TESTING

Stress testing is a systematic way to evaluate whether the financial (and other) expertise you're using is likely to deliver the results you expect, and to ensure you are not missing any meaningful opportunities that could enhance your outcomes.

Stress testing often is done because of anxiety about the current state of affairs. People might opt to stress test when they feel uncertain about their overall current financial or legal situation or about some particular aspect of their situation. By stress testing, you have the opportunity to feel more confident that you are getting or employing the best solutions for your specific circumstances.

We've seen that stress testing has long been a best practice of families with significant wealth. Even extremely wealthy families, who tend to employ some of the finest professionals available, are strongly inclined to make sure everything works the way they want it to.

That said, you don't have to be worried that something is amiss with a strategy before you engage in a stress test. Stress testing can be valuable even when the probability of something being wrong with a solution is quite low. Say, for example, that a mistake or error involving a particular strategy you've implemented likely would be extremely harmful to your financial well-being. It might make sense to stress test that strategy just to be certain that you're not headed for a disastrous result.

There are two types of stress tests: comprehensive and focused. **Comprehensive stress testing** involves many aspects of a family's financial and nonfinancial lives. For stress testing to be considered comprehensive, we believe three or more particular sets of services or products initiated within the same 18-month period should be assessed. In contrast, **focused stress testing** involves fewer than three sets of services or products initiated in the same 18-month period. Often just one aspect of an overall wealth plan is tested at a time.

A key goal of stress testing is to identify errors and missed opportunities. Mistakes occur, even among top professionals. Thanks to stress testing, they potentially can be fixed before problems get serious.

It's likely a busy month ahead for you and your loved ones. But if you can, take a little time to ask yourself these questions as well as others that may be on your mind. The process could help you set yourself up for some productive conversations with your family and your advisors in the coming months.

---

*ACKNOWLEDGMENT: This article was published by the VFO Inner Circle, a global financial concierge group working with affluent individuals and families, and is distributed with its permission. Copyright 2025 by AES Nation, LLC. All rights reserved. The content does not necessarily reflect the expertise of the individual Financial Advisors, or the views of D.A. Davidson & Co. Neither the information nor any opinion in this publication constitutes investment or securities advice nor is it a solicitation or offer by D.A. Davidson or its affiliates to buy or sell any securities, options, or other financial instruments or provide any investment advice or service. Financial Advisors are available to discuss the ideas, strategies, products and services described herein, as well as the suitability and risks associated with them. D.A. Davidson & Co. does not provide tax or legal advice. Questions about the legal or tax implications of any of the products or concepts described should be directed to your accountant and/or attorney. D.A. Davidson & Co. is a full-service investment firm, member SIPC.*

A digital copy of this Flash Report as well as our previous reports can be found at [JacksonFinancialAdvisors.com](https://JacksonFinancialAdvisors.com)