



KENNEDY WEALTH AND TAX MANAGEMENT INC.

Registered Investment Adviser

Independence ▪ Integrity ▪ Experience



Kennedy Wealth & Tax Management, Inc.

Kevin A. Kennedy, CPA

Gregory J. Bungler, CFP®

CT. 203-264-1200

FL. 561-223-1475

kevin@kennedywealth.com • www.kennedywealth.com

“A problem is a chance for you to do your best.” – Duke Ellington

Different Inflation Measures, Different Purposes

The inflation measure most often mentioned in the media is the Consumer Price Index for All Urban Consumers (CPI-U), which tracks the average change in prices paid by consumers over time for a fixed basket of goods and services. In setting economic policy, however, the Federal Reserve Open Market Committee focuses on a different measure of inflation — the Personal Consumption Expenditures (PCE) Price Index, which is based on a broader range of expenditures and reflects changes in consumer choices. More specifically, the Fed focuses on "core PCE," which strips out volatile food and energy categories that are less likely to respond to monetary policy. Over the last 10 years, core PCE prices have generally run below the Fed's 2% inflation target.



Sources: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics and U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis, 2020 (data for the period September 2010 to September 2020)

Estate Planning Strategies in a Low-Interest-Rate Environment

The federal government requires the use of certain interest rates (published by the IRS) to value various items used in estate planning, such as an income, annuity, or remainder interest in a trust. The government also has interest rates that a taxpayer may be deemed to use in connection with certain installment sales or intra-family loans. These rates are currently at or near historic lows, presenting several estate planning opportunities. Low interest rates generally favor certain estate planning strategies over others and may have a detrimental effect on others.

Grantor Retained Annuity Trust (GRAT)

In a GRAT, you transfer property to a trust, but retain a right to annuity payments for a term of years. After the trust term ends, the remaining trust property passes to your beneficiaries, such as family members. The value of the gift of a remainder interest is discounted for gift tax purposes to reflect that it will be received in the future. Also, if you survive the trust term, the trust property is not included in your gross estate for estate tax purposes. If the rate of appreciation is greater than the IRS interest rate, a higher value of trust assets escapes gift and estate taxation. Consequently, the lower the IRS interest rate, the more effective this technique generally is.

Charitable Lead Annuity Trust (CLAT)

In a CLAT, you transfer property to a trust, giving a charity the right to annuity payments for a term of years. After the trust term ends, the remaining trust property passes to your beneficiaries, such as family members. This trust is similar to a GRAT, except that you get a gift tax charitable deduction. Also, if the CLAT is structured so you are taxed on trust income, you receive an upfront income tax charitable deduction for the gift of the annuity interest. Generally, the lower the IRS interest rate, the more effective this technique is.

Installment Sale

You may also wish to consider an installment sale to family members. With an installment sale, you can

generally defer the taxation of any gain on the property sold until the installment payments are received. However, if the family member resells the property within two years of your installment sale, any deferred gain will generally be accelerated. The two-year limit does not apply to stocks that are sold on an established securities market.

You are generally required to charge an adequate interest rate in return for the opportunity to pay in installments, or interest will be deemed to be charged for income tax and gift tax purposes. However, with the current low interest rates, your family members can pay for the property in installments, while paying only a minimal interest cost for the benefit of doing so.

Low-Interest Loan

A low-interest loan to family members might also be useful. You are generally required to charge an adequate interest rate on the loan to avoid income tax and gift tax consequences. However, with the current low interest rates, you can provide loans — or refinance an existing loan — at a very low rate and family members can effectively keep any earnings in excess of the interest they are required to pay you.

Charitable Remainder Unitrust (CRUT)

You retain a stream of payments for a number of years (or for life), after which the remainder passes to charity. You receive a current charitable deduction for the gift of the remainder interest. Interest rates have no effect if payments are made annually at the beginning of each year. Otherwise, interest rates generally have only a minimal effect. However, in this case, a lower interest rate increases the value of the charitable remainder interest slightly less than a higher interest rate would.

The use of trusts involves a complex web of tax rules and regulations, and usually involves upfront costs and ongoing administrative fees. You should consider the counsel of an experienced estate professional before implementing a trust strategy.

More to Consider

Here is how certain factors affect the valuation of remainder interest transfers in the trusts discussed here. In addition to the interest rate, you may want to consider how the length of the trust term and the amount of the trust payments affect values.

FACTOR	GRAT	CLAT	CRUT
Lower interest rate	LV	LV	Minimal or no effect
Longer term of years	LV	LV	LV (shorten term to increase value)
Higher annuity payment	LV	LV	N/A
Lower unitrust payout rate	N/A	N/A	HV

HV = higher value for remainder interest; LV = lower value for remainder interest

Are Value Stocks Poised for a Comeback?

Growth stocks have dominated the market for the last decade, led by tech giants and other fast-growing companies. While it's possible this trend may continue, some analysts think that value stocks may have strong appeal during the economic recovery.¹

No one can predict the market, of course. And past results are never a guarantee of future performance. But it may be helpful to consider these two types of stocks and the place they hold in your portfolio.

Value stocks are associated with companies that appear to be undervalued by the market or are in an industry that is currently out of favor. These stocks may be priced lower than might be expected in relation to their earnings, assets, or growth potential. In an expensive market, value stocks can offer bargains.

Established companies are more likely than younger companies to be considered value stocks. Older businesses may be more conservative with spending and emphasize paying dividends over reinvesting profits. The potential for solid dividend returns regardless of market direction is one reason why value stocks can be appealing, especially in the current low-interest environment. An investor who purchases a value stock typically expects the broader market to eventually recognize the company's full potential, which might push the stock price upward. One risk is that a stock may be undervalued for reasons that cannot be easily remedied, such as legal difficulties, poor management, or tough competition.

Growth stocks are associated with companies that appear to have above-average growth potential. These companies may be on the verge of a market breakthrough or acquisition, or they might occupy a strong position in a growing industry. The dominance of large technology stocks over the last few years is one example of this.

Growth companies may be more aggressive with spending and place more emphasis on reinvesting profits than paying dividends (although many larger growth companies do offer dividends). Investors generally hope to benefit from future capital appreciation. Growth stocks may be priced higher in relation to current earnings or assets, so investors are essentially paying a premium for growth potential. This is one reason why growth stocks are typically considered to carry higher risk than value stocks.

Diversification and Weighting

Value and growth stocks tend to perform differently under different market conditions (see chart). For diversification, it may be wise to hold both value and growth stocks in your portfolio, but this can be accomplished by investing in broad index funds, which generally include a mix of value and growth stocks. These are considered *blended funds*.

Different Styles for Different Times

Value and growth are considered investing *styles*. The last 10 years have been a strong period for growth stocks, but value stocks were stronger during the previous decade, which included two recessions with extended bear markets.



Source: FTSE Russell, 2021, for the period 1/1/2001 to 12/31/2020. Value stocks and growth stocks are represented by the Russell 1000 Value Index and the Russell 1000 Growth Index, respectively. The performance of an unmanaged index is not indicative of the performance of any particular investment. Individuals cannot invest directly in an index. Investment fees, charges, and taxes were not taken into account and would reduce the performance shown if they were included. Rates of return will vary over time, particularly for long-term investments. Past performance is no guarantee of future results. Actual results will vary.

Typically, investors who follow a value or growth strategy weight their portfolios to one side or the other through funds or individual stocks. If you use a mutual fund or exchange traded fund (ETF) to emphasize value or growth in your equity portfolio, it's important to understand the fund's objectives and structure, including the index that the fund uses as a benchmark.

Diversification is a method used to help manage investment risk; it does not guarantee a profit or protect against loss. The return and principal value of stocks, mutual funds, and ETFs fluctuate with changes in market conditions. Shares, when sold, may be worth more or less than their original cost. The amount of a company's dividend can fluctuate with earnings, which are influenced by economic, market, and political events. Dividends are typically not guaranteed and could be changed or eliminated.

Mutual funds and ETFs are sold by prospectus. Please consider the investment objectives, risks, charges, and expenses carefully before investing. The prospectus, which contains this and other information about the investment company, can be obtained from your financial professional. Be sure to read the prospectus carefully before deciding whether to invest.

1) *The Wall Street Journal*, September 30, 2020

Umbrella Insurance Offers Extra Liability Coverage

Accidents can happen, no matter how careful you are. Even if you make every effort to help ensure that your house and the surrounding area are safe for visitors, rain, snow, or ice can cause slippery stairs and walkways. You might face an increased risk of having a liability claim filed against you if you have a dog, a swimming pool, a trampoline, employ workers in your home, or own a rental property. Or you could be held responsible for a serious auto accident — a special concern if you have a teenage driver.

American society is litigious, and some legal judgments seem excessive. Standard homeowners and auto insurance policies generally cover personal liability, but you may not have enough coverage to protect your income and assets in the event of a high-dollar judgment. That's when umbrella insurance could be a big help, providing additional coverage, up to policy limits.

On top of the liability coverage amount, an umbrella policy may help pay legal expenses and compensation for time off from work to defend yourself in court. It might also cover situations not included in standard homeowners policies, such as libel, slander, invasion of privacy, and defamation of character.

Umbrella insurance is not just for wealthy households; it is also appropriate for middle-income families with substantial home equity, retirement savings, and current and future income that could be used to satisfy

a large jury award. (Home equity might be protected, at least in part, by state law. Qualified retirement plan assets may have some protection from creditors under federal and/or state law, depending on the plan and jurisdiction, but you would still be liable for any judgments.)



Protecting yourself with an umbrella policy could help avoid expensive consequences down the road.

Although coverage and costs vary by insurer, you can typically obtain \$1 million in coverage for \$300 or less per year; higher coverage amounts can be even more cost-effective. Before adding umbrella insurance, however, you generally must purchase a certain amount of liability coverage on your homeowners and auto policies (typically \$300,000 and \$250,000, respectively), which serve as a deductible for the umbrella policy.¹

Your insurer can help you determine how much current liability protection you have, and how much more you can purchase. It might be helpful to consider your assets, potential exposure, and what you consider to be an acceptable risk.

1) Insurance Information Institute, 2020

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