

FINANCIALLY Speaking

Donald P. Speakman: MSFS, CLU, ChFC, CFP, CRPC, AAMS, CMFC

Don's Business Perspective

The fun continues in the markets! Had you asked me a year ago, I would have never guessed the markets would be performing so well. At the beginning of 2017, when asked my thoughts for the upcoming year, I said I would be very satisfied if the market rose 8%. Obviously, my crystal ball was not working. That said, I am not anticipating any big drops in the market in the next year, as the fundamentals of the market and the economy remain strong. As I have previously stated, bull markets do not end just because they have been going on for an extended period of time. They normally end when major fundamental changes occur in the market or the economy. In my opinion, all signs are positive at this point in time. I see no reason a strong market and economy can't continue, barring a major hotspot blowup, such as North Korea. Earnings are good, employment numbers are outstanding, inflation and interest rates are low, housing is strong, and consumer confidence is close to a record high. It is hard to find anything wrong with the current conditions, except our government needs to address their overspending issue.

Don't fall for all of the negative sensationalism you hear on the news. Turn off the financial news and watch a good comedy and you might be more relaxed and happier. It has certainly worked for me. I don't expect 2018 to be nearly as smooth a ride as 2017 has been, but I expect we will see mid-single digit returns. I would love to talk with anyone who is nervous or concerned about the markets or about their asset allocation. For almost 40 years, we have talked about comfort level being of the utmost importance. If you are outside yours, call me and we can talk.

God Bless and I wish you nothing but the best of health and happiness this year.

Don

The opinions voiced in this material are for general information only and are not intended to provide specific advice or recommendations for any individual. All performance referenced is historical and is no guarantee of future results.

The Projecting Hope Film Festival

Although there were some last minute changes, we hope that you were able to attend the 2017 Projecting Hope Film Festival. This highly anticipated event took place at the North Versailles Stadium 18 movie theater the weekend of December 1-3. With 24 film screenings and over 3,000 tickets distributed at no charge, The Speakman Financial Group is a proud sponsor of this event and we feel so blessed to have the opportunity to make an impact on the Pittsburgh community! For those who were in attendance, we hope you enjoyed a complimentary weekend of faith-based, family-friendly films.

5 Things to Consider When Choosing a Nursing Home

Recently, Don has read many articles with tips and suggestions regarding finding the best nursing home for you or a loved one. Here are some of his top takeaways and things to consider when visiting a nursing home and making this important decision.

1. Choose a facility that's convenient.

First, consider the location. It's best for the nursing home to be one that family and friends can visit often. People in nursing homes who have regular visitors usually receive better care.¹

2. Inquire about safety measures.

Are doors to the outside secure? Are exits clearly marked and free from obstructions at all times? Do hallways and bathrooms have handrails, grab bars, non-skid floors and other safety measures to help prevent falls? How does the facility protect residents who wander? Is the facility wheelchair accessible? ²

Don's Personal Perspective



It's hard to believe another year has come and gone... Where does the time go? As usual, Jamie and I have been very busy enjoying life more than ever. In August, we attended a couples' golf weekend with seven other couples. While we did not win the competition, we had a great time with some old friends and also made some new ones. We then

had a relaxing break at our home in the Caymans. That was followed by a guys' golf trip to Las Vegas and Pebble Beach with my son, Michael, and some friends. It was my first time with Michael at Pebble Beach and the trip was everything we hoped it would be! The scenery was unbelievable and included three amazing golf courses. On many occasions, we laughed so much it hurt. Working together with Michael has really been a fantastic experience and I must say he is doing a wonderful job at the office. Be sure to say hi to him the next time you are in to visit. Jamie and I attended a financial planning conference in California with some friends and laughed and learned together. Later in October, we went back to the Caymans, where we are undertaking a major construction project to shore up the foundation of our deck. As I warn clients on a regular basis, most projects take longer and cost more than originally estimated, but we are looking forward to having the project completed. Jamie is doing a fantastic job overseeing the work, which definitely is not my strong point. Jamie and I then went on our annual trip to Vegas with two of our very dearest friends. We saw great shows and all four of us completed the Las Vegas 10K together from start to finish. I previously ran half-marathons but I think my days of running 13.1 miles at one time are behind me. As usual, Jamie cooked fantastic meals as we hosted our family and friends for Thanksgiving and Christmas dinners.

We are grateful that our health has been very good. Health wise, everything is either staying the same or getting better. We continue to work out almost daily, which has been beneficial. I have had stem cell and blood plasma therapy for some arthritis issues in my shoulder, neck, and back, and all are improving.

The kids are doing well and in November, Tricia blessed us with her fourth child, Aksel Samuel. Their lives are really busy between the kids and work; I don't know how they do it! Heather and Steve, along with their three children, are doing well and keep busy with sports and gymnastics. In an interesting twist, since my transition to LPL as our new broker-dealer, I now find myself working at the same company as Steve. He was one of the speakers at a recent meeting Jamie and I attended, and we were both impressed with his presentation.

At this time of the year, I am especially thankful for how blessed our lives are. We have no major health issues and all three children are happily married and have given us seven wonderful, lively grandchildren that we love spending time with. Hope you had a blessed Christmas and I wish you a happy and healthy New Year.

God Bless,
Don



Spotlight On Our Staff

The Speakman Financial Group is very excited to introduce you to the newest member of our team, Jennifer Scheller. She earned her Bachelor's degree in Business Management at Slippery Rock University and holds her Pennsylvania Life Insurance license. Jennifer's primary responsibilities will be to prepare client summaries and assist clients with forms. Jennifer joins us with over 10 years of customer service experience, most recently working with pension plans for the U.S. government.

Jennifer was born and raised in Pittsburgh and is a very proud mother of her son, Brantley. When she's not working, Jennifer enjoys spending time with her family and friends, traveling, camping, and enjoying the outdoors.



Monte Carlo Night

On November 3, The Speakman Financial Group hosted our 12th annual Monte Carlo Night. This is one of our most popular events, which we host to extend our thanks to those who have participated in our "Friends Helping Friends" program. This year, we entertained 81 clients and guests for an evening of dinner, gambling, and fun at Chartiers Country Club. Our celebration featured a fantastic buffet, which included a pasta bar, carving station, and a delicious selection of desserts. After dinner, our guests enjoyed an evening of excitement and laughter at the "casino" with blackjack, craps, roulette, and the big wheel! Our guests were able to trade in their winnings at the end of the night for a chance to win one of many fantastic gift baskets!



Our Monte Carlo Night is a fun-filled evening for our guests, as well as a fundraising opportunity for the benefit of the Greater Pittsburgh Food Bank and the KDKA Turkey Fund. In addition to collecting numerous baskets and bags of food for donation, we were able to raise \$903.00, which was matched by Don and ultimately matched by PNC, totaling \$3,612.00! We would like to thank our clients for their incredible generosity.

Human Coalition Banquet

Each year, the Human Coalition hosts a banquet in Pittsburgh to honor their life-changing work. Formerly known as the Pregnancy Resource Center, this organization is dedicated to ending abortion in America. On November 2, over 600 guests attended the celebration and listened as guest speaker, Bishop Vincent Mathews, President of Church Of God In Christ World Missions & Bishop Of South Africa 1st Jurisdiction, shared words of inspiration. They heard stories from women and families whose lives have personally been altered by the Human Coalition. Don and Jamie were honored at the banquet, recognizing their involvement and Don's participation as a board member in previous years. Please consider donating at www.humancoalition.org/cities/pittsburgh if you would like to make a difference by supporting this cause.



Message From Michael

How are your New Year's Resolutions holding up? It's going to take a lot of exercise for me to burn off the calories from the massive amount of Christmas cookies I've eaten throughout the holiday season. I love that my wife, Megan, enjoys baking, but I doubt I'll ever muster up the willpower to avoid sneaking sugar cookies from the jar at night. We recently started wearing Fitbit watches to be more health conscious. My dad has been wearing one for years and always enjoys a little friendly competition for motivation!

As we start the New Year, I'm excited to tell you about some of the enhancements we have made at our office! The next time you stop in for an appointment, you may notice a fresh scent in the air from our new essential oil diffuser in our reception area. Paula is our resident expert on the subject and I encourage you to chat with her about the benefits and uses of various essential oils!

We live in a fascinating time for financial technology. During the past several months, Char and I have been exploring ways to enhance your investment experience with The Speakman Financial Group and we are proud to announce that we recently partnered with Money Guide Pro. For those of you who may not be familiar with Money Guide Pro, it is an online financial planning tool that will help us analyze all your financial needs, wants, and wishes. As a team, we love seeing you reach your financial goals. We believe this tool is going to have a profound impact on our ability to understand what is most important to each of you and to improve your likelihood of success!

On a more personal note, 2017 was a very exciting year for me. As you may remember from our last newsletter, I married my high-school sweetheart, Megan, over the summer in Killarney, Ireland. After we returned home from

our honeymoon, we moved from Charlotte, North Carolina to Pittsburgh. It has been wonderful to spend the holiday season with our families here in Pittsburgh! Over the past 10 years, we've had to pick and choose which holidays and family events to come home for and it has made us even more appreciative of the time we are able to share with our loved ones.

We are really enjoying our apartment in Mount Washington and have spent many evenings watching the sunset over downtown Pittsburgh. Megan was blessed to find a job as a graphic designer for student affairs at the University of Pittsburgh. I'm happy she found a job that she enjoys, but as a loyal Penn State Alumnus and an avid sports fan, I will always be partial to the Nittany Lions. We've had a great time attending Steelers and Penguins games this year.

I'm confident 2018 is going to be a terrific year for our office. I take great pride in the work that my dad, Charlene, and our staff have done for your families over the years. If you have a friend or a family member who could benefit from a relationship with our team, please do not hesitate to connect us with them. I would be happy to devote my time to helping you and those that you care about.

I wish you and your family a wonderful start to the New Year. Good luck with your resolutions! I'm going to head home and eat all of the junk food in my house so it isn't there to tempt me throughout the rest of the year!

All the best,
Michael

5 Things to Consider When Choosing a Nursing Home

...Continued from page 1

3. Talk with the residents.

If there are residents in the lobby as you wait for your guide, chat with them! Ask them how long they have been residing in the home and how they feel about it. It is also a good idea to talk with residents' family members if you have the opportunity. They have probably spent countless hours in the facility and their recommendation or discouragement can be very telling.³

4. Check staff turnover rate.

One potentially valuable figure that you won't see would show staff turnover. Heavy turnover is an obvious indication of unhappy workers, whose dissatisfaction could mean worse care. The national average for turnover in 2010 was 39.5 percent for all positions within a nursing home, according to an AHCA report published last year. The federal government has plans in the works to collect and report the information but does not now require homes to show it.⁴

5. Make a surprise visit.

Any nursing home worth using will be willing to let you drop in for a visit. If they require that you schedule a visit days or weeks in advance, ask them why they require that much notice. Visiting at the last minute will provide you with a solid glimpse of how clean the facility normally is, how it usually operates, and what level of elder health care they are providing.⁵

We hope that you find these ideas to be helpful and as always, please reach out to our office as a sounding board with your thoughts on these important decisions.

¹ www.aarp.org/home-family/caregiving/info-05-2012/caregiving-resource-center-asking-right-questions

² http://www.healthcommunities.com/healthy-living-guides/index.shtml/14-tips-for-choosing-a-nursing-home_107

³ www.alz.org/alzwa/documents/tour_nursing_home.pdf

⁴ health.usnews.com/health-news/best-nursing-homes/articles/2013/02/26/how-to-choose-a-nursing-home

⁵ www.assistedlivingtoday.com/blog/skilled-nursing-facility/

Thoughts From Char

It's a new year, a new beginning. There is excitement brewing; a sense of hope springs forth when we begin a new calendar. We dream again. We plan again. How else can we explain all those resolutions! This is OUR TIME TO... .

A few years ago I happened upon an idea of choosing just one word to focus on throughout the new year rather than a number of resolutions. As I write this, I'm going through that process yet again for 2018. I want to choose that one word that embodies my pursuit this year, so it takes some consideration. After all, I will have to live with it for the entire year.

Throughout 2017, my word was JOY. I was in search of joy- that inner, sustainable peace and contentment. I found it in the special time shared with Erica, Dave and Riley (my daughter and her family) and especially with the news that Erica will be welcoming a new baby boy in March! I experienced joy amongst The Speakman Financial Group family when we began each staff meeting with "Tell me Something Good." Joy was found in learning of the antics and milestones reached by our children and grandchildren as we share the stories of our lives. Joy swells our heart when we slow down to appreciate what matters most to us- our family and our health.

In my pursuit of joy, I found myself thinking about how we evolve and go through various stages in life. The word "transition" comes to mind. We transition into adulthood, marriage, parenthood, job change, empty nester, retirement, widowhood. Life is a series of transitions. Some transitions are by choice and others not so much.

In a more literal way, The Speakman Financial Group has gone through a number of transitions in 2017. We saw Mary Ann retire, we welcomed Don's son, Michael, and Jennifer to our staff, and now we are in the midst of the transition to LPL, our new broker-dealer. We are realigning responsibilities within our firm and we are all learning new ways of processing and servicing our clients on a different technology platform.

As I find myself within various transitions, I am humbled and grateful (two words to consider) but also frustrated. Transitions are HARD! Change we don't choose for ourselves can be a difficult pill to swallow. Even those we choose can be tough (remember how we abandon those resolutions!) We resist doing what we know must be done. But if we aren't willing to learn or adjust to the changes, we won't move forward. We'll be living in the past, missing the here and now, and we really won't be in a position to embrace the future.

I am humbled as a student being taught by a younger generation. Every day, I am taught something new by my younger coworkers, especially regarding the new tools technology offers. This makes me reflect gratefully for not only the opportunity to learn, but also for my instructors. So, rather than let myself become frustrated (admittedly I haven't avoided this completely!) if I need to know how something works on my phone or computer, I ask Riley- or anybody under 40.

Almost daily, I see all the moms in our office imparting life lessons to their young. In particular, I see Erica encouraging Riley to apply herself in her studies at school. No doubt that's important and we all like to see our kids and grandkids do well academically. But she as well as Katie, Paula and Jennifer desire to teach their children the skills they will need for coping with life. Erica refers to this as IQ and EQ. We understand IQ, but it's our EQ, or the emotional response to deal with one's own experiences and environment, that determines our outcome. This, my friends is the secret sauce to experiencing life's buffet of events!

Our health and wellness depend on our EQ. Sure we think of health in the physical sense however, we also need to think of it in the emotional and spiritual sense. If we lack EQ, we feel that stress and frustration and we allow it to get the best of us. Our EQ is vital to keeping us in balance. What happens when we aren't in balance? For the worst case scenarios, look at the news headlines and you'll see many examples. How do we develop our EQ? That's the hard work we do internally, reflecting on and making healthy choices around what really matters. I find guidance in this area is freely given when I embrace prayer and my faith journey.

Going through transition, I am reminded again how each of us need all of us. I need Michael and his generation who have grown up with technology to help me navigate it and learn how best to use these tools! It would appear maybe he needs me as well, to help him navigate our way of relating to our clients and business partners and the history of how we got to where we are today. I'm excited for the possibilities of this new season for our firm. Together, I know we will grow and flourish in this new year. Hmm, there's a couple more words worthy of consideration!

Happy New Year!

Char





Penn Center West Two
Suite 325
Pittsburgh, PA 15276

PRST STD
US POSTAGE
PAID
Pittsburgh, PA
Permit No. 5363



AT YOUR SERVICE

Our address is:
THE SPEAKMAN FINANCIAL GROUP
PENN CENTER WEST TWO, SUITE 325
PITTSBURGH, PA 15276

Email: don@speakmanfinancial.com
Phone: 412-787-3373
Out of town: 866-752-6734

To schedule an appointment with Don, Charlene, or Michael call Judy Elias Ext. 105

If you are new to our office and would like to schedule an appointment call Paul Speakman Ext. 104

Visit us online at:
www.speakmanfinancial.com

We have established a presence on Facebook to enhance communication with our clients and prospective clients regarding activities, special events and timely information. Be sure to follow us on Facebook and “Like” us. 

Securities and advisory services offered through LPL Financial, a Registered Investment Advisor, Member FINRA/SIPC.
686870