

## Are you all right?

In May, Mary and I had the wonderful privilege of travelling to England for two weeks, touring the towns and villages of that country's southern coast. It was a spectacular trip. As a not-so-



seasoned traveler, we saw and did things that I had only read about. We stayed on the grounds of Canterbury Cathedral, toured the White Cliffs of Dover, ate fish and chips on a pier jutting out into the English Channel, saw the Atlantic Ocean from Land's End, and a lot more. One of the highlights of our trip was our early morning visit to Stonehenge. As you can see from the picture I took, it was a beautiful day. Once we got away from the tourists and their ubiquitous selfie-sticks, Mary and I stood in awe of the monument's stark beauty, and we marveled at how those ancient people managed to build it

without the big equipment we have today. What an experience!

We met a lot of nice people, too. The staff members at our hotels were especially gracious and helpful. It took me a little while, however, to get used to their ways of speech. For example, when I walked up to the reception desk to ask for something, they would say, "Are you all right?" Initially, I was a little concerned. "What, does she think I look sick or something?" I eventually caught on that it's their way of saying "May I help you?" Big difference! It didn't take long for me to enjoy their other delightful English sayings, and it was fun to hear "cheerio" as we left our hotel each morning, on to some new adventure.

As you know, here on the other side of the pond, when we say "are you all right," we mean something entirely different than our English cousins. That started me thinking about all the ways I want my clients to be all right about their financial lives. While there is always risk inherent in investing towards a goal, it's important that your pursuit of that goal is "all right," meaning that your strategies fit your objectives and individual financial situation. Here are some of the questions I might ask when meeting with someone for the first time:

1. **Are you all right when it comes to saving and investing for retirement?** It's not fast, but, given enough time, compounding can work. Think about this: a 25-year old who invests \$300 a month at an average 6% rate of return can amass about \$600,000 in 40 years. That's real money, and \$500 a month makes her a millionaire. It doesn't happen overnight, and there are no guarantees. Also, you have to be consistent, and it helps a lot if you have an advisor to help you manage risk. No matter the amount of money you have to work with, anyone can use this strategy, and the best time to start is today. I can help you figure out how.<sup>1</sup>
2. **Are you all right with knowing how to turn your life's savings into income for the future?** If you don't have a pension, but are looking for guaranteed income during your retirement years, a fixed annuity might be just the ticket. It provides income<sup>2</sup> that can be used to supplement your Social Security benefit. Don't let the ill-informed naysayers out there poison your thinking about annuities. They are powerful retirement tools. To learn more about how one might work for you, let's meet.
3. **Are you all right with managing your money on your own, or would some help from a pro make life easier for you?** The time and money you spend with your advisor can be more than made up by knowing that you have an experienced professional, a personal Chief Financial Officer, to help you sort through the ever-increasing amount of financial information that bombards us every day. To sort through the fluff and get to something that's meaningful for you, let me be your guide.

When Mary and I began travelling to foreign countries three years ago, she told me that it would change my life, and she was right. Mainly, I've found that many people, no matter where they live, face the same financial concerns that my clients do: raising a family, educating their children, saving for a confident retirement, and seeking to preserve their hard-earned wealth.

We're all in the same financial boat, and the only big difference, it seems to me, is that we count our money in euros, pounds, dollars, or whatever.

You don't have to travel to England to find out if you are all right about working toward achieving your own financial goals. We can do it right here in Slidell. Just give me a call, and we'll talk.

Cheers!

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<sup>1</sup>This is a hypothetical example and is not representative of any specific situation. Your results will vary. The hypothetical rate of return used does not reflect the deduction of fees and charges inherent to investing. Investments are subject to fluctuating returns, and there is no assurance that an investment will double in value. Investing involves risk, including loss of principal.

<sup>2</sup>Fixed annuities are long-term investment vehicles designed for retirement purposes. Gains from tax-deferred investments are taxable as ordinary income upon withdrawal. Guarantees are based on the claims paying ability of the issuing company. Withdrawals made prior to age 59½ are subject to a 10% IRS penalty. Surrender charges might apply.

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