

Risk, Not Volatility, Is the Real Enemy

- ▶ This short article reminds us that the real financial risk that we face is falling short of our financial goals.
- ▶ While the value of our portfolio will experience volatility, this should be expected.

What would you do if your investments lost 10% in a single day? A) Add more money to my account. B) Hold steady with what I've got. C) Yank my money; I wouldn't be able to stand any more losses.

If investors buy the right investments but sell them at the wrong time because they can't handle the price fluctuations, they may have been better off avoiding those investments in the first place. Most investors are poor judges of their own risk tolerance, feeling more risk-resilient in up markets and more risk-averse after market losses. However, focusing on an investor's response to short-term losses inappropriately confuses risk and volatility. Understanding the difference between the two and focusing on the former is a potential way to make sure you reach your financial goals.

Volatility encompasses the changes in the price of a

security, a portfolio, or a market segment, both on the upside and downside, during a short time period like a day, a month, or a year. Risk, by contrast, is the chance that you won't be able to meet your financial goals or that you'll have to recalibrate your goals because your investment comes up short. So how can investors focus on risk while putting volatility in its place? The first step is to know that volatility is inevitable, and if you have a long enough time horizon, you may be able to harness it for your own benefit. Diversifying your portfolio among different asset classes can also help mute the volatility. It helps to articulate your real risks: your financial goals and the possibility of falling short of them. Finally, plan to keep money you need for near-term expenses out of the volatility mix altogether.

Investing in securities always involves risk of loss. Diversification does not eliminate the risk of experiencing investment losses.

©2013 Morningstar, Inc. All Rights Reserved. The information contained herein (1) is intended solely for informational purposes; (2) is proprietary to Morningstar and/or the content providers; (3) is not warranted to be accurate, complete, or timely; and (4) does not constitute investment advice of any kind. Neither Morningstar nor the content providers are responsible for any damages or losses arising from any use of this information. Past performance is no guarantee of future results. "Morningstar" and the Morningstar logo are registered trademarks of Morningstar, Inc. Morningstar Market Commentary originally published by Robert Johnson, CFA, Director of Economic Analysis with Morningstar and has been modified for Morningstar Newsletter Builder.



Louis E. Conrad II, CFA
President

COMPASS Wealth Management
Post Office Box 250
Lexington, Massachusetts 02420

lconrad@compassinvest.com
www.compassinvest.com

Tel: (978) 828-5681
Fax: (781) 862-7030

© COMPASS Wealth Management, LLC, as well as Morningstar. While the information contained in this newsletter relies on sources believed to be reliable, accuracy cannot be guaranteed. Unless otherwise noted, all information and opinions are as of the date of transmittal, and are subject to change without notice. This newsletter is intended for general informational purposes only and it does not discuss all aspects that may apply to your situation. Please consult with a qualified professional. COMPASS Wealth Management, LLC is a registered investment advisor with the appropriate regulatory authorities. For additional details on the services that COMPASS offers, we encourage you to also review Parts 2A and 2B of our Form ADV, which is provided on request. For details on the selection criteria used to determine the recipients of the FIVE STAR Wealth Manager award, please visit our web site (www.compassinvest.com). The criteria used to determine "Morningstar's Best Client Newsletter" in 2012 can be reviewed in The COMPASS Chronicle's September 2012 edition, which is also available on our web site.