

Biggest Loser II: Financially, that is.

Ok, I will admit it. I am a fan of the current hit, the “Biggest Loser” that airs on NBC. And, OK, I’ll admit it again. I am always looking for ways to connect with people and help them link their money, and financial well being with their life, so here’s a true story for you to reflect on.

**THE YEAR WAS 1990, WHEN I HEARD;
SNAP! CRACK! POP!**

That was the sound of my 6-7 cervical popping while I maintained my “ooo look at you, macho 30 something work out guy,” look while attempting to lift a weight too much for me at the health club. And what was even more frustrating, is that one single event set the stage for a cycle of physical challenges that affects many Americans – as they age, or, become obese.

Buy hey, I’m a Financial Guy, not some health guru, and when I write an article, I’m always equating Your Money, **and** Your Life, ‘cause that’s what saving, investing and avoiding financial mishaps is all about; changing your financial money mindset to enhance your life, and your family’s life.

SORRY: BACK TO MY NECK.

I now realize at my 50 plus age, is that the similarities of my subsequent physical rehabilitation, re-injury, surgery and even re-surgery seemed eerily similar to a person’s financial journey, or weight loss journey as seen on the Biggest Loser. And what is even more eerie, and what strikes me most, is overcoming any physical challenge is very similar to a person attempting to establish financial independence as well. Unfortunately, as many give up on overcoming physical injury or weight loss plans; many also give up regarding their financial rehab, as well.



FACT:

- Many people rationalize reasons to not change/overcome health or financial challenges.
- Many others start to move toward change as the result of a crisis; then stop.
- Still others make un-realistic commitments to change, only to stop, due to no focus, no plan, or no help.

What’s funny about the above three statements? It’s the same for physical change, psychological change – and from a 24 year veteran of financial issues – it’s the same for financial issues!

I SHOULD BE 275LBS.

You the reader know a 30 something body – Yep, suddenly something pops, twists, snaps or simply don’t work the way it used to body part. My first was the neck.

**BUT THERE WAS AN IMPORTANT DIFFERENCE,
AND ONE I WANT TO SHARE WITH YOU:**

Once I found out the problem, I did not lose sight of the objective (maintain weight and base health, like blood pressure, cholesterol etc.) I modified the plan around my new limitations to achieve similar results.

AND:

- There was pain involved.
- There was some trial and error.
- There were more costs involved and less immediate results than my previous methods.
- I realized I needed help (Surgeons, Physical therapists etc.)

Now this article needs to stay financial, because I make my living that way, but look again at the above items. Don't the above points apply to any life goal?

Well if you agree that they do, then realize that I have exercised my 24+ years as a financial consultant and investment manager working with over 1,000 individuals. From that information base:

- Many people avoid savings, investing and planning, only to rely on the old saying "I want to live for today," excuse.
- Many people began to set aside monies, and make investment decisions only to stop, due to a short term crisis (from broken water heaters, to lobotomy's; I have heard every excuse around!)
- Many become discouraged due to events beyond their control, and fail to modify their plan, in favor of abandoning their plan all together.
- Too many get stuck in "going it alone" planning where they avoid getting help, or rely on advisors who chase, canvass and sell them into financial products, that are soon abandoned.

Now I am not going to give you some psycho – subliminal – mumbo jumbo, so you can Google your way into a life time of non-action research – I'm a grass roots consultant who has been walking in your shoes, both physically and financially. It's simple:

JUST LIKE A PHYSICAL CHANGE, A FINANCIAL CHANGE, OR ANY SELF-BETTERMENT MINDSET YOU ADOPT; TOUGH DECISIONS ARE INVOLVED:

- **Overcome the circle of doom:** Avoid friends, family and those around you who keep you from your goal. "Here honey, have one more hot cross bun," or "have one more beer for the road," or "what are you investing/saving for?" Simple fact. If you continue to fly with the turkeys, you'll get eaten for Thanksgiving, just like your goals, ambitions and dreams.
- **No pain does mean – no gain:** If your doctor says push it, then? PUSH IT! In a financial sense, if you trust guys/girls like me who are your financial advisors, then? **Do what's recommended!** The results you see are never immediate, so you need someone to help you keep your focus and keep your mind from drifting toward the Turkey's path (have you ever seen a turkey Fly?)



• **Rebuild by taking baby steps:** Like any weight reduction, life change, or financial change, it's better done in small steps. Remember the phrase: *Life is a cinch by the inch, and hard by the yard.* You and your financial advisor can get started for a little commitment, with the goal of increasing the commitment. This plus a little tax advantage here, and a little deduction there, and you are well on your way to flying with the eagles. Now, I am like most people, and there is always a series of events that must come together before we humans accept, or better yet, demands change. YOU must make the decision to change before the crisis, like diabetes, heart attack, or financial missed opportunity, pass you by.

Your attempts for physical change, or creating financial independence involves similar challenges:

IT'S UP TO YOU TO STRIVE TO THRIVE.

But, my hope is; the 2008 market and economic crisis may be the catalyst for people to fight to change their financial picture. It is up to you to demand your own personal life change.

How would you like to begin your personal **financial** fitness program? You can start right now. Throw your sweats on, and exercise my website at www.markstevensfinancial.com. There you will find calculators, e-seminars, and a host of tools to help get you on track! Should you need more guidance, feel free to e-mail me, or call anytime. I wish you the best of luck.



Mark Stevens

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