



In the words of American writer Henry James: “Three things in human life are important: the first is to be kind; the second is to be kind; and the third is to be kind.”

We often think of this quote, though it comes to mind more during Random Acts of Kindness Week, which falls from February 13 to 19 this year. Created by the Random Acts of Kindness Foundation, a non-profit, privately funded organization founded in

1995, the week is devoted to encouraging individuals, groups, and communities to make a conscious effort to do something good for somebody – and quite possibly inspire others to do the same.

Participating in this sort of celebration is not only easy, but it can also be personal. And, really, you can share a kindness whenever and wherever you are. If you'd like to be involved, you may wonder what small thing you can do to improve another's day. I have some ideas, a few of which I intend to take part in myself.

You could consider helping a neighbor with yard work or picking up litter by the side of the road. Holding the door open for a stranger or paying the tab for the person behind you at the coffee shop. Kindness could also be spread by giving up your place in line for someone who seems hurried, writing a letter of thanks to a soldier serving overseas, or offering to buy clothes or food for someone in need. Another option would be to simply make a conscious effort to smile at a few people as you go through your day.

When it comes to kindness, the humblest of acts can have large effects. If you're looking for more inspiration as Random Acts of Kindness Week approaches, visit randomactsofkindness.org.

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Spotlight



Presidential election years usher in considerable uncertainty. While the most likely scenario remains a rematch of the 2020 election, there seems to be a nagging feeling that something could happen to reset the race and produce an unexpected outcome. This uncertainty, the potential for surprise and the polarized nature of the political environment may cause investors to be cautious in the upcoming election year.

Market Performance in a Presidential Election Year

Frank's Desk



Happy Random Acts of Kindness Day!

In case you hadn't heard, Saturday, February 17th is Random Act of Kindness Day, although I'm not sure if its Random Act, or Acts. But I'm sure that it's on the 17th of February. I also know that it was originated by the Random Acts of Kindness Foundation located in Denver Colorado.

This makes perfect sense as there is literally nothing to do in Denver in the middle of February because it's COLD outside in February. They must have known this because it began in 1995 and sat relatively dormant for 9 years before spreading to New Zealand in 2004; another outdoor mecca of fun and frivolity. New Zealand is best known for Sheep, Wine, and Lord of the Rings. If that's not random then I don't know what is. I know I know, "But Frank, you can go outside at these places and snow ski". If you have ever seen me snow ski then you would agree that the act of kindness that I am offering is not going outside and plowing down snow skiers. Question, do we really need a specific day to be nice to one another? I hope not. Here is an idea, pick your own day to be nice to others. Start with your birthday; my random act day will be March 3rd . Once you get the hang of it, you can add another day, say your wife's birthday; March 30th . I'll be Mr. nice guy throughout the month of March. That's ok with me. Who knows, you might decide that this being nice to others is a pretty neat thing. In fact, a very famous fellow long ago commented on this very subject; he said, 'do unto others as you would have others do unto you'. I think his random act day is celebrated in the Spring. So let me challenge you to be kind. You pick the day, place, and time. I bet you will like it. If you end up not liking it, you haven't missed much. If

you do like it, then good for you, and thanks for the holiday. In any event, you won't have to worry about it. After all, no one else will know but you; you and that other fellow.

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The S&P 500 is an unmanaged index of 500 widely held stocks that is generally considered representative of the U.S. stock market.

Market Update

	12/29/23 Close	01/31/24* Close	Change Year to Date	% Gain/Loss Year to Date
DJIA	37,689.54	38,150.30	+460.76	+1.22%
NASDAQ	15,011.35	15,164.01	+152.66	+1.02%
S&P 500	4,769.83	4,845.65	+75.82	+1.59%
MSCI EAFE	2,241.21	2,231.88	-9.33	-0.42%
RUSSELL 2000	2,027.07	1,947.34	-79.73	-3.93%
BLOOMBERG U.S. AGGREGATE BOND	2,162.21	2,146.28	-15.93	-0.74%

*Performance reflects index values as of market close on December 30, 2023.

[See Full Market Update](#)

Articles



Technology has helped to streamline the way we manage our money, allowing us to perform transactions and monitor our accounts online, instead of needing to do everything in-person. These tools are simple to use, getting better every year, and don't cost any more than the traditional methods.

But there are risks involved, especially for our seniors. This vulnerable population is more likely to fall victim to the fraud and abuse that has come along with this digital revolution. Whether it's phishing attempts, fraudulent lotteries, or exploitation by deceitful caregivers, these threats are becoming more common and more sophisticated.

There are ways to mitigate these risks. Here are five essential strategies that should help:

1. Facilitate Discussions: Prevention starts with awareness. Initiate regular family conversations about the various forms of financial abuse. This proactive approach not only educates seniors but also creates a supportive environment where they feel comfortable sharing their concerns. Discussing news stories,

sharing articles, or attending community workshops on financial scams can be part of these discussions.

2. Simplify Finances: Streamlining finances can significantly help elders in managing their money. This can involve reducing the number of credit cards, consolidating bank accounts, and setting up automatic bill payments. Simplification makes it easier for seniors to track and monitor their finances, reducing the risk of unnoticed fraudulent activity.

3. Regular Monitoring: It's important to consistently review your financial statements for suspicious activity. Key warning signs include:

- Unusual withdrawals or transfers: Large, unexplained withdrawals or unfamiliar transfers can indicate unauthorized access to accounts.
- Missing deposits: Expected deposits that do not appear in the account as scheduled could suggest interference.
- Odd charges: Charges from unknown sources or for unfamiliar services/products need investigation.
- Changes in spending patterns: A deviation from regular spending habits may signal that someone else is using the account.

Additionally, setting up alerts for these activities is beneficial. Seniors can designate trusted individuals—be it family members, friends, or a family lawyer—to receive these alerts. This network of trusted contacts ensures that if the senior misses something, someone else can catch it.

4. Secure Legal Documents: Ensuring that all legal documents (such as wills, trusts, and powers of attorneys) are regularly updated and securely stored is crucial. Engaging a trusted attorney or financial advisor for periodic reviews helps in maintaining their relevance and understanding. Limit access to these documents to only a few trusted individuals, like a designated family member or a financial advisor, while keeping the rest of the family informed about their existence and location.

5. Exercise Caution in Sharing Information: Emphasize to your loved ones the critical importance of never sharing personal information, such as Social Security numbers, account numbers, or other financial details, over the phone unless they are the one initiating the call. This is vital in preventing identity theft. Teach them how to verify the identity of callers and the legitimacy of their requests, even when they claim to represent well-known organizations. Additionally, educating seniors about scammers' tactics, such as creating urgency or using threatening language, is crucial to prevent them from being manipulated into divulging sensitive information.

By implementing these strategies, we not only protect our seniors from financial predators but also empower them with the confidence and tools to manage their finances safely. In doing so, we ensure that their golden years are marked by peace and security, rather than uncertainty and risk.

Let's Connect



Want a Second Opinion?

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