

Choosing a Financial Adviser

There are many things to consider when choosing a financial adviser, and one of them is compatibility. Do his or her goals line up with yours? Is his or her risk tolerance on your level? Does his or her personality complement your own?

Personality matters! I know where my own strengths and weaknesses lie, and I have chosen a financial adviser who fills in the gaps. "George" is a deep thinker, an introspective man who is not prone to take risks. I, on the other hand, tend to take risks with my own money that I would never recommend to anyone else.

George is a good balance to these urges, but I can't help testing him from time to time, just to keep him on his toes.

"George," I said one day, "I want you to take a couple of thousand and buy this stock." I named one of the more volatile stocks I could think of at the time. He pulled some information from his computer and I could hear the doubt in his voice: "That stock is pretty unstable, Larry."

"Maybe so, but I think it looks pretty good," I said. We went back and forth until I finally convinced him to buy it.

Before I hung up, I said, "George, you and I both know I'm not going to buy that junk. Why did you let me talk you into that?"

"Because you're so persuasive," he said.

"But that's exactly why I use you as my financial planner!" I replied. "You're supposed to offset my persuasive tendencies. I can talk myself into some high-risk investment; you need to be strong enough to tell me when it's a bad idea."

One way to determine how well you and a particular adviser will complement each other is to know how both of you scored on a personality test. If you're too much alike, chances are you will make the same investment mistakes. On the other hand, if you're too different, you and your adviser will have a hard time agreeing on anything. If you have a supporter-type personality and your adviser has a dominant personality, you may find yourself being intimidated and pressured into financial decisions you might otherwise not make.

Think through your choice of a financial adviser. Then, choose a person whose strengths, weaknesses, and overall personality provide a good balance to your own.

Larry Burkett (1939-2003), a well-known author, teacher, and radio personality, was co-founder of Crown Financial Ministries, whose daily radio broadcasts are heard on more than 1,000 stations in the U.S. Larry's best-selling books include The Coming Economic Earthquake, What Ever Happened to the American Dream? and Victory Over Debt.



Give Your Home a Safety Check

- ◆ Keep things that burn, such as dishtowels, paper, curtains, or plastic bags, at least three feet away from your stove top in the kitchen.
- ◆ Store matches and lighters in a locked cabinet or drawer.
- ◆ Install fire extinguishers in the kitchen and other rooms. Make sure everyone knows how to use them.
- ◆ Buy a first aid kit for your home and vehicle.
- ◆ Make sure staircases are well-lit and free of clutter.
- ◆ Make sure all throw rugs or area rugs have non-skid backing.
- ◆ Keep space heaters at least three feet away from things that can burn, such as curtains, newspapers, magazines, and clothing. Always turn off space heaters when leaving the room or going to bed.
- ◆ Never leave burning candles unattended. Blow out candles and make sure they are extinguished before leaving the room. Invest in a candle warmer that doesn't use fire.
- ◆ Store gasoline and other dangerous chemicals in approved containers. Always put them away after using them. Place them out of reach of children.
- ◆ Teach every family member how to escape in case of a fire. Also teach them how to "Stop, Drop, and Roll" if their clothing catches on fire.



Fun Activities for the Family

To keep your family active during the cold days of winter, try some of these activities:

- Take a nature hike in the woods. Be sure and bundle up and pay attention to the weather forecast before you go.
- Make snow angels in your backyard.
- Have a snowball fight, but be careful not to hurt anyone.
- Go ice skating.
- Build a small, contained fire in the back yard and sing songs or tell stories.
- Go sledding or tubing.
- Play a game of flag football.
- Shovel snow for an elderly neighbor.

