JULY 2026

# From the Desk of the Lev Rourk Group

U P D A T E


**JUDITH WILKENS LEV**
Senior Vice President
Investment Management Consultant
Financial Advisor
*NMLS# 1252284*

**COREY D. LEV, CFP®, CRPC®**
Senior Vice President
Financial Planning Specialist
Financial Advisor
*NMLS# 1261752*

**RONALD L. ROURK, CFP®**
First Vice President
Financial Advisor
*NMLS# 1255573*

1200 Franklin Avenue
Garden City, New York 11530
516-227-2899
800-645-8600
516-248-8630 Fax

judy.w.lev@morganstanley.com
corey.d.lev@morganstanley.com
ronald.l.rourk@morganstanley.com

Morgan Stanley


Reassess your portfolio periodically, finding ways to increase your comfort level with your stock investments. Consider the following tips:

✔ **Develop a stock investment philosophy.** Approach investing with a formal plan so you can make informed decisions with confidence and know you have carefully considered your options before investing.

✔ **Remind yourself of why you are investing in stocks.** Write down your reasons for investing in each individual stock, indicating the long-term returns and short-term losses you expect. When market volatility makes you nervous, review your written reasons for investing as you did. That reminder should help keep you focused on the long term.

✔ **Monitor your stock investments so you understand the fundamentals of those stocks.** If you believe you have invested in a company with good long-term prospects, you are more likely to hold the stock during volatile periods.

✔ **Review your current asset allocation.** Revisit your asset allocation strategy, comparing your current allocation to your desired allocation. Now may be a good time to rebalance your portfolio, reallocating some of those stock investments to other alternatives.

✔ **Determine how risky your stocks are compared to the overall market.** You can do this by reviewing betas for your individual stocks and calculating a beta for your entire stock portfolio. Beta, which can be found in a number of published services, is a statistical measure of how stock market movements have historically impacted a stock's price. By comparing the movements of the Standard & Poor's 500 (S&P 500) to the movements of

Continued on page 2

## A Budget for College Students

Many students will first handle money without parental supervision during college. You might want to develop a budget to guide your child's spending. Consider the following:

✔ First consider all potential expenses, including food, travel, clothing, entertainment, phone, subscriptions, computer expenses, medical and dental expenses, and insurance.

✔ Develop a preliminary budget for the first couple months of college. You may find that you forgot about certain items. After your child has lived on his/her own for a couple months, you can develop a more realistic budget.

✔ If your child has trouble sticking with the budget or can't account for large sums, have him/her keep a list for a couple of weeks that details all expenditures. Go over these expenses together to determine how they can be reduced.

✔ Consider providing your child with a debit card rather than a credit card. Since your child's spending will be limited to the amount on deposit, it is harder to overspend.

✔ Explain the basics of credit cards. Go over which types of items your child can use the credit card for and which items should not be charged. Make sure your child understands that if the balance isn't paid in full each month, a significant amount of interest will be paid on the outstanding balance.

✔ Have your child provide you with a written monthly comparison of his/her actual expenses to budgeted amounts. ✔✔✔

## Take Time

continued from page 1

a particular stock, a pattern develops that gauges the stock's exposure to market risk. Calculating a beta for your entire portfolio will give you a rough idea of how your stocks are likely to perform in a market decline or rally. If your stock portfolio is riskier than you realized, you can take steps to reduce that risk by reallocating.

✔ **Keep in mind the tax aspects of selling.** While you may be tempted to lock in some of your gains, you may have to pay taxes on those gains if the stocks aren't held in tax-advantaged accounts. You'll have to pay at least 15% capital gains taxes (0% if you are in the 10% or 12% tax bracket) on any stocks held over one year. If your gains are substantial, it may take longer to overcome the tax bill than to overcome a downturn in the market.

✔ **Consider selling stocks if you have short-term cash needs.** If you are counting on your stock investments for short-term cash needs, such as to supplement your retirement income in the next couple of years or to pay for your child's college education, look for an appropriate time to sell some stock. With short-term needs, you may not have time to wait for your stocks to rebound from a market decline.

✔ **Don't time the market.** During periods of market volatility, investors can get nervous and consider timing the market, which typically translates into exiting the market in fear of losses. Remember that most people, including professionals, have difficulty timing the market with any degree of accuracy. Significant market gains can occur in a matter of days, making it risky to be out of the market for any length of time.

✔ **Remember that you are investing for the long term.** Even though short-term setbacks can give even the most experienced investors anxiety, remember that staying in the market for the long term, through different market cycles, can help manage the effects of market fluctuations.

Please call if you'd like help implementing strategies that may make you more comfortable with your stock holdings. ✔✔✔

## Assess Your 401(k) Plan

At least annually, you should thoroughly review your 401(k) plan. Some items to consider include:

✔ **Have your goals or objectives changed?** Most people use their 401(k) plan to fund retirement, although it can also be used for other things. Take time to reassess your goals and objectives, which can impact how much you contribute and how you invest those contributions. Calculate how much you'll need at retirement as well as how much you should save annually to meet that goal.

✔ **Are you contributing as much as you can to the plan?** Look for ways to increase your contribution rate. One strategy is to allocate any salary increases to your 401(k) plan immediately, before you get used to the money and find ways to spend it. At a minimum, make sure you are contributing enough to take full advantage of any matching contributions made by your employer. In 2026, the maximum contribution to a 401(k) plan is $24,500 plus an additional $8,000 catch-up contribution, if permitted by the plan, for individuals age 50 and older.

✔ **Are the assets in your 401(k) plan properly allocated?** Some of the more common mistakes made when investing 401(k) assets include allocating too much to conservative investments, not diversifying among several investment vehicles, and investing too much in the employer's stock. Saving for retirement typically encompasses a long time frame, so make investment choices that reflect that time period. For many, that means a significant portion of their assets should be invested in growth vehicles.

✔ **Do your investments need to be rebalanced?** Use this review to ensure your allocation still makes sense. Also review the performance of individual investments, comparing the performance to appropriate benchmarks. You can't just select your investments once and then ignore the plan. Review your allocation annually to make sure it is close to your desired allocation. If not, adjust your holdings to get your allocation back in line. Selling investments within your 401(k) plan does not generate tax liabilities, so you can make these changes without any tax ramifications.

✔ **Are you satisfied with the features of your 401(k) plan?** If there are aspects of your plan you're not happy with, such as too few investment choices or no employer matching, take this opportunity to let your employer know.

Managed properly, your 401(k) plan can play a significant role in helping to fund your retirement. Please call if you'd like help reviewing your 401(k) plan and investments. ✔✔✔

# Making Your Money Last Through Retirement

What many people don't realize is just how hard it is to make one's money last their entire retirement without having proper planning in place. The fact is funding retirement is tricky no matter how well-off you may be going into it, and making your money last is something that can only be achieved with careful calculation.

Ready to learn how to make the most of your retirement without running short of money? Here are a handful of tips you simply can't afford to ignore.

## 1. Consider Longevity Insurance

While the concept of longevity insurance is certainly nothing new, it's something many people are unfamiliar with. Essentially, many of today's insurance companies have tweaked the ways in which single premium annuities are paid out, allowing comfort to baby boomers who are concerned about getting their money when they need it most. If you were to purchase a policy at age 65 for $25,000, for example, the policy would begin paying out $3,000 per month once you've reached the age of 85. For healthy, active individuals, longevity insurance is worth a second look.

## 2. Make Your Home Age-Proof

One thing that often gets overlooked by those who are preparing for retirement is the importance of age-proofing one's home. Over time, wear and tear can wreak havoc on even the most well-built homes, and repairs can end up being extremely costly. What's the solution? Take care of repairs and make your home age-proof before entering retirement. An age-proof home is one that is not only able to withstand the elements and the test of time, but also one that will be easy for you and a partner to live in when you reach old age. Most age-proof homes don't feature staircases, for example, as mobility issues later in life can make it difficult to live in such a home.

## 3. Choose the Right Withdrawal Rate

The withdrawal rate you choose for your retirement plan will have a major impact on how comfortably you're able to retire. Many people make the mistake of choosing a withdrawal rate that is simply too high, such as 10% in their first year of retirement. While it's certainly tempting to take out a fair amount of money and treat yourself once retirement age has been met, most people can agree that it's not a particularly smart idea.

In the end, the withdrawal rate that is right for you will depend largely on the strength and diversification of your portfolio. A smart starting point for the first year of retirement for most people is 4%, keeping the same rate plus adjusting for inflation in the years to come.

## 4. Keep a Solid Rainy Day Fund

Most people believe that the best way to ensure a comfortable retirement is to put as much money as possible into their retirement funds. However, it's essential to keep a solid rainy day fund in case of an emergency that exists *outside* of your retirement plan. How much should you keep? In general, most people will benefit from keeping a rainy day fund available of at least six months of living expenses. Though it doesn't seem like much, it may be exactly what you need should an emergency occur.

## 5. Get a Light Job

Reaching the age of retirement doesn't mean you need to stop working altogether. For many, the shock of no longer working can actually be rather hard to deal with. There's something about community, for example, that can be hard to find outside a normal work environment. The solution, for some, can be found in getting a light job once settling into retirement, and doing so comes along with a number of benefits.

While most people don't want to work hard once they've retired, there are plenty of lighter jobs that can not only help to foster community, but also bring in income each month. This money can either be put towards a savings account to add extra insurance for retirement, or you can choose to use it as spending money. Either way, holding a casual job after retirement is a great way to stay active, remain happy and healthy, and help your money last through retirement.

Retirement is a tricky process, and there's no way to plan it better than working one-on-one with your financial advisor. Please call if you'd like to discuss this in more detail. ✔✔✔

U P D A T E

# How to Pay for College without Student Loans

Student loans may seem like a simple solution to pay for college, but it can be daunting to graduate with lots of debt. If you are looking for ways to pay for college with minimal student loan debt, here are some tips:

## Market Data

| | Month End | | | % Change | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Stocks: | May 26 | Apr 26 | Mar 26 | YTD | 12-Mon. |
| Dow Jones Ind. | 51032.46 | 49652.14 | 46341.51 | 6.2% | 20.7% |
| S&P 500 | 7580.06 | 7209.01 | 6528.52 | 10.7 | 28.2 |
| Nasdaq Comp. | 26972.62 | 24892.31 | 21590.63 | 16.1 | 41.1 |
| Total Stock Market | 74913.05 | 71306.98 | 64612.63 | 11.0 | 28.3 |
| Precious Metals: | | | | | |
| Gold | 4560.50 | 4641.00 | 4592.00 | 5.0 | 38.7 |
| Silver | 75.62 | 73.75 | 73.40 | 4.4 | 129.9 |
| Interest Rates: | May 26 | Apr 26 | Mar 26 | Dec 25 | May 25 |
| Prime rate | 6.75 | 6.75 | 6.75 | 6.75 | 7.50 |
| Money market rate | 0.43 | 0.42 | 0.42 | 0.41 | 0.45 |
| 3-month T-bill rate | 3.60 | 3.59 | 3.62 | 3.57 | 4.26 |
| 20-year T-bond rate | 4.98 | 4.97 | 4.88 | 4.79 | 4.93 |
| Dow Jones Corp. | 5.35 | 5.27 | 5.43 | 5.00 | 5.38 |
| Bond Buyer Muni | 4.69 | 4.59 | 4.76 | 4.79 | 4.93 |

Sources: Barron's, Wall Street Journal. An investor may not invest directly in an index.

**Scholarships** — Not all scholarships are based on academic performance. You should avidly look for scholarship opportunities.

**Pay Cash as You Go** — Work full-time in the summer to save the money you will need for school. You can also work part-time during the school year to help with expenses. An in-state university is typically less expensive than an out-of-state university or private college. Another option is to attend a community college for two years and then transfer to a four-year university.

**Employer Tuition Reimbursement** — Consider working for a company that will pay for your college education. Some companies will pay the expenses upfront while others will reimburse expenses after you complete each semester.

**Go Part-Time** — Another option is to work full-time while attending college part-time. While it will take you longer to complete your education, it may be worth it.

**Load Up on Your Classes** — By taking more classes, you may be able to graduate earlier. Also, the tuition for summer classes is often less expensive than other semesters.

Please call if you'd like to discuss this topic in more detail. ✔✔✔

FR2026-0122-0257



THE LEV ROURK GROUP AT
MORGAN STANLEY WEALTH MANAGEMENT
Morgan Stanley
1200 Franklin Avenue
Garden City, New York 11530