

QUARTERLY MEMO
TO CLIENTS AND FRIENDS
EARLY SPRING 2025

What profession in America, (other than AI immersion), will be in more demand than any other in the immediate future? I believe it's psychologist/psychiatrists. There is more anxiety, loneliness, dark thoughts in society than I've ever seen. Everywhere, it seems, is chaos and disruption. Our job is unique in many ways. We have to plan for our clients, the best way to meet these anxieties and challenges no matter who is in the White House and the seats of power. We have to plan for the future and be always conscious of what we feel is the best common sense path for your family's financial future. Our approach tries to delve *beneath* the headlines and partisan noise. As I've said... It's a unique role in people's lives. And this does underline knowledge of history and of markets, human nature's relation to fear and greed, and a certain psychiatry of its own as well.

In the last several years, stock markets have been dominated by a handful of tech companies, the so-called 'Magnificent 7', while the vast majority of stocks are seemingly ignored. As contrarians, we feel that these unloved areas deserve attention from investors, areas like healthcare and energy that seem attractive to us. In tough times, there are always companies, public and private, that prosper, for various reasons. And in 'boom times,' areas that seems stagnant and remain out of favor. Purposely, over the last six months or so, in our managed accounts, we have taken money off the table, taking gains when certain stocks hit our targets, and keeping cash on the sidelines to invest in what we see as attractive, lower prices. This may even include some of those 'Mag 7' stocks as they fall somewhat out of favor, which has happened recently. But we do have 'dry powder' to take advantage of weakness.

I've written these memos for you, almost like reporters on the front lines telling stories of desperate times. Reports from the trenches. Go back in time if you've saved any of these memos, trying to guide our clients through rough patches: own companies with strong balance sheets, and companies that almost all pay dividends: cash flow to you, go against the crowds that chase the fads of the moment. Buy 'themes' that seem to be attractive for the future. Be

contrarian and have patience. We are the freest, most entrepreneurial nation on earth. Trust that spirit and know that it drives no matter who is in the White House. We try to look over chasms, not *into* them.

By the way, we were recently named by *Forbes Magazine* as a Best-In-State Wealth Management Team in Massachusetts for 2025.

Time for spring.

John D. Spooner

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Source: Forbes (Jan 2025) 2025 Forbes Best-In-State Wealth Management Teams ranking awarded in 2025. This ranking was determined based on an evaluation process conducted by SHOOK Research LLC (the research company) in partnership with Forbes (the publisher) for the period from 3/31/23–3/31/24. Neither Morgan Stanley Smith Barney LLC nor its Financial Advisors or Private Wealth Advisors paid a fee to SHOOK Research LLC, for placement on its rankings. This ranking is based on in-person and telephone due diligence meetings to evaluate each Financial Advisor qualitatively, a major component of a ranking algorithm that includes client retention, industry experience, review of compliance records, firm nominations, and quantitative criteria, including assets under management and revenue generated for their firms. Investment performance is not a criterion. Rankings are based on the opinions of SHOOK Research LLC and may not be representative of any one client's experience; investors must carefully choose the right Financial Advisor or team for their own situation and perform their own due diligence. This ranking is not indicative of the Financial Advisor's future performance. Morgan Stanley Smith Barney LLC is not affiliated with SHOOK Research LLC or Forbes. For more information, see www.SHOOKresearch.com.

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