



IN THIS ISSUE

1. Simplifying Your Financial Journey
2. Simple Banking? Jason's Tips to No-Fee Banking
3. The Hillside Factor^(Y) Focus: Industry Landscape & Our Preferences
4. Keep It Simple...
5. Performance Results

SIMPLIFYING YOUR FINANCIAL JOURNEY

Michael Preto, CFP®, CIM®

We believe that simplicity is the key to success in financial planning. In a world where complexity often reigns supreme, we stand by the principle of keeping it simple, straightforward, and effective. Here are some of the core beliefs that guide our approach:

1. Investing in businesses with above-average fundamentals produces above-average returns.

At the heart of successful investing lies a focus on the fundamentals. We believe in investing in solid businesses with strong fundamentals, as they are more likely to generate consistent returns over the long term.

2. Tracking your progress towards your retirement is a necessary part of your financial plan.

Planning for retirement is not a one-time event but a journey that requires continuous monitoring and adjustment. We help our clients track their progress towards their retirement goals, ensuring that they stay on course to achieve the lifestyle they desire in their golden years.

KEEP IT SIMPLE

Investing is not a game where the guy with the 160 IQ beats the guy with the 130 IQ. Once you have ordinary intelligence, what you need is the temperament to control the urges that get other people into trouble in investing.

WARREN BUFFETT



3. If you have more money than you need to hit your retirement goals, you deserve to know about it.

Financial peace of mind comes from knowing where you stand. If you find yourself with surplus funds beyond what is necessary to meet your retirement goals, we believe you should be informed so that you can explore additional opportunities for wealth preservation and growth.

4. You can't expect to beat the benchmark if you pay fees to look like it.

Fees can eat into your investment returns and erode your wealth over time. We advocate for transparent fee structures and strategies that prioritize your best interests, ensuring that you keep more of your hard-earned money working for you.

5. Taxes suck and we don't want you to pay any more than necessary.

Tax efficiency is a critical aspect of financial planning. We employ strategies to minimize your tax liabilities while maximizing your after-tax returns, helping you preserve more of your wealth for yourself and your loved ones.

6. Buying low and selling high is better than buying high and selling low.

While it may sound simple, the age-old adage of buying low and selling high holds true. We emphasize disciplined investing principles that focus on value and opportunity, allowing you to capitalize on market fluctuations while mitigating downside risks.

In summary, we encourage our clients to embrace simplicity in their financial lives. By adhering to these core beliefs and keeping things straightforward, we believe that you can achieve greater financial clarity, confidence, and success. At Hillside Wealth Management, we are committed to helping you navigate your financial journey with ease, so you can focus on what matters most to you. 😊 😊

HILLSIDE WEALTH MANAGEMENT | FREEDOM | FAMILY | PERFORMANCE



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SIMPLE BANKING? JASON'S TIPS TO NO-FEE BANKING IN CANADA

Jason Del Vicario, CFA®

*In a financial landscape where simplicity is often overshadowed by complexities and hidden fees, finding a straightforward banking solution can feel like a daunting task. However, recent developments in the Canadian banking sector have brought about alternatives to the traditional 'Big Banks,' offering consumers the opportunity to save significantly on monthly fees. As one of those who sought a fee-free banking option **as a simple way to save money**, I embarked on a journey to explore accessible alternatives and wanted to share my experience with our Informed Investor readers.*

As you may already know, the options for banking in Canada can feel somewhat limited. Recently, the takeover of HSBC by RBC prompted me to explore alternatives to the 'Big Banks' in order to avoid monthly banking fees. The good news is, with a bit of effort, you too can enjoy fee-free banking in Canada. Below, I'll share what I've done, which I believe can work well for you and potentially save or earn you hundreds, if not thousands, of dollars each year.

I've opened a bank account with EQ Bank, and let me tell you, it's incredibly simple and can be done entirely online in just minutes. Visit their website to learn more:

<https://www.eqbank.ca/>

Benefits of an EQ Bank account:

- Earn up to 2.50% interest on balances, with an additional 1.50% bonus interest when you direct deposit your pay into the account, totaling up to 4.00%. In [comparison](#), RBC offers a mere 0.01% interest rate.
- Enjoy no fees, including free unlimited Interac Transfers, bill payments, and EFTs. There's no minimum balance required, and there's no need for separate accounts for savings and chequing. In contrast, accounts with Big Banks can easily charge \$5-10/month.
- With the EQ Bank card, you can make free withdrawals from ANY ATM in Canada, saving you from annoying ATM fees. Plus, there are other features such as no FX fees, making it great for travel. Big Banks often charge for these services, which can add up over time.
- Rest assured with CDIC deposit insurance, providing the same level of protection as any other bank in Canada.

Despite these benefits, there is a drawback to EQ Bank: it doesn't have physical locations, meaning you can't walk in and withdraw cash (though you can do so from ATMs, as mentioned above), and the account doesn't allow you to write cheques.



In addition to EQ Bank, I've been a satisfied user of Simplii for over 20 years. It was the first 'no fee' banking option offered to Canadians, and I highly recommend it. You can open an account for free in just minutes online. Please consider using this referral link:

<https://blue.mbsy.co/6DrH8h> and referral fees received will be donated to the [Vancouver Food Bank](#).

Final Thoughts/Advice:

Once you've opened a Simplii account, I recommend the following:

1. Connect your EQ Bank account to your Simplii account, which can be easily done following these instructions.

⊖ How do I link a bank account to my EQ Bank account? 📄

Using the EQ Bank mobile app, sign in to your account, and then click on the navigation menu in the top right corner. Under "Manage my account," click on "Externally linked account," then "Link another account."

Using a web browser, sign in to online banking. Under "Transfers," click on "Linked accounts," then "Link another bank account."

2. Request (free!) cheques from your Simplii account.
3. If you ever need to withdraw larger sums of cash or issue a bank draft, remember that Simplii is a subsidiary of CIBC, and you can do so from any CIBC branch.

You can also link your EQ Bank account to your Big Bank account and keep them both for a while until you're convinced that everything is working as it should. Just be sure to transfer any direct deposits/withdrawals from your Big Bank to EQ, and don't forget to update us on your banking information changes!

Simple, right? If you have any questions, please don't hesitate to [reach out](#).



SIMPLE TARGETS CAN MAKE OR BREAK YOUR RETIREMENT

Watch our recent [YouTube video](#) where Amanda talks about the 3 key targets each retiree should know when planning for retirement.



Subscribe to our [YouTube Channel](#) today!

THE HILLSIDE FACTOR^(Y) FOCUS: INDUSTRY LANDSCAPE AND OUR PREFERENCES

Steven Chen, CFA[®]

What makes for a promising industry in the eyes of investors?

For the sake of predictability, many (including us) would look for ones that do not change often over time (think beverage, pest control vs. artificial intelligence, biotech). But stability aside, we also research into the industry landscape to gauge the potential of our interested companies to grow profitably and sustainably. What does this really mean? Let's give two examples here.

Legal Monopoly in Under-Penetrated Industries

As previously highlighted, this is what we think would be an ideal setup for a growth company (and its shareholders). From our portfolio, [Fever-tree](#), [Integrated Diagnostics](#), [Kaspi.kz](#), and [Evolution Gaming](#) fall into this category. All of these companies possess an over 50% market share with a significant (if not ever widening) competitive gap to the #2 player. Most of the incremental value of these companies would be driven by the increasing penetration of the industry, where certain mega-trends hopefully come into play: e.g., premiumization of drink mixer, digitalization of our daily life.

Market Leadership In Slow-Growth, Fragmented Industries

Long-term shareholder return and industry growth are surprisingly un-correlated (if not even negatively correlated to some extent). Although more mature industries deserve no topic among investors during a cocktail party, they are less likely to attract new entrants. Moreover, a low degree of concentration may provide leading industry players with the chance to grab market shares. Within our portfolio, [Alimentation Couche-tard](#) has been leveraging its scale advantage and brand power to consolidate the convenience-store industry in North America. So have [RH](#) (with a top market share of 3%~4% earned from scratch after turning around a nearly bankrupt niche-hardware retail business) in the US premium home-furnishings industry and [Kato](#) (being the only industry participant listed on the Main Board of Hong Kong Stock Exchange) in the elderly-home industry in Hong Kong.

HILLSIDE IN THE NEWS

BNN Hot Picks April 15th:
[Hillside's three plays in beverage stocks](#)



BNN's Market Call on May 27th. [Mark your calendar HERE!](#)



If you have any questions, please feel free to [get in touch](#).

KEEP IT SIMPLE...

Michael Preto, CFP®, CIM®

Financially preparing for retirement can seem a daunting task. You've been working your whole career, earning a living to finance life and then suddenly it stops, and now you're supposed to live off savings? What about inflation, taxes, pensions and how long am I going to live?

Like most things in life, having a proven, simple process helps. Here's a step-by-step process we use to prepare you for the transition:

1. Decide **when** you want to retire.
2. Calculate your monthly **burn rate**, ie. how much you're spending today.
3. Figure out what your **passive income** will be (CPP, OAS, Pension and/or rental income).
4. Calculate the **gap** between your current burn rate and what your passive income will be in retirement.
5. Calculate how much you **need** saved by your retirement date to finance the gap.
6. Figure out how much you need to **save** annually between now and retirement to hit your number.
7. **Track** your plan annually and adjust accordingly.

And please don't get overwhelmed with calculating your burn rate- we have a simplified process to calculate this with you- come in for visit and we'll walk you through it (pls make this clickable). Following this process will keep you financially prepared for one of life's biggest transitions.

Retirement is further complicated if you're a business owner looking to sell your business. You likely think your business is worth \$X and this is what you'll be looking for in an offer. But there's a more important number for you to know; how much do you need from the sale to achieve financial independence?

We've heard too many stories of business owners walking away from an offer which would've solved their retirement puzzle- only to not get another offer and be forced to walk away with nothing. We want you to know how sweet the offer needs to be for your future, not just your ego.

There's a whole other side of retirement to prepare for- what are you going to do with your new life? Another big question. The best way to answer it is to ask yourself a simple question: what makes you happy? And before you say fishing, golf or travel, let's think a little deeper about the word **Happiness**.



Shawn Achor, Harvard Pro author of the book *The Happiness Advantage* defines happiness as an experience of positive emotions and pleasure combined with a deeper meaning of purpose. The 3 key ingredients to happiness are:

1. **Pleasure**
2. **Engagement**
3. **Meaning**



If you're having a hard time getting in the right headspace to ask yourself what makes you happy, here are some simple tips from Mr. Achor's book:

Meditating: Sit down, close your eyes and focus on your breath. Start with 5mins and go from there. Your mind will wander and that's normal and okay- just come back to your breath.

Have something to look forward to: most of the pleasure we gain from doing something is in the anticipation of it. So, get something in your calendar now and you'll start reaping the benefits today.

Commit conscious acts of kindness: doing kind things for others is a proven way to bring more joy to our lives.

Exercise: physical activity benefits your body and mind.

Focus on experiences, not things: when we spend our money on experiences, we get more bang for our happiness buck than when we spend our money on things.

Exercise a signature strength: go to viacharacter.org, sign up and take the free survey to discover your top strengths (mine were Honesty, Love, Gratitude, Fairness and Curiosity) and then spend more time exercising them.

All of these are simple, free and pretty much guaranteed to make life better. Give them a go and let us know how it goes- [we'd love to hear from you!](#)

MARCH 2024 PERFORMANCE RESULTS

An overview of our three portfolios to date.

Performance to March 28, 2024	YTD	1 Mo	6 Mo	1 Yr	3 Yr**	5 Yr**	Inception**
Hillside Conservative Growth*	5.36%	-0.17%	12.40%	11.72%	6.65%	7.37%	7.44%
HCG Benchmark ¹	2.69%	1.49%	9.71%	8.00%	1.92%	3.87%	4.07%
Hillside Balanced Growth*	6.89%	-0.78%	13.39%	13.59%	8.70%	9.02%	9.66%
HBG Benchmark ²	5.10%	2.21%	13.42%	12.67%	4.42%	6.30%	5.57%
Hillside Focused Growth*	9.77%	-0.91%	17.46%	20.86%	12.17%	12.45%	10.56%
HFG Benchmark ³	9.25%	3.26%	18.39%	20.37%	8.87%	10.51%	8.41%

Past performance is not an indication of future returns.

* Performance is presented gross of fees. **Inception: Sept 2, 2014. Results beyond 1 year are annualized.

¹ Hillside Conservative Growth Benchmark: 100% Vanguard Conservative ETF

² Hillside Balanced Growth Benchmark: 100% Vanguard Balanced ETF

³ Hillside Focused Growth Benchmark: 100% Vanguard All-Equity ETF

Source: SIACHarts.com

The performance presented in this portfolio report is hypothetical and does not represent a specific client account. Details regarding actual returns of an investment account are available from the client's advisor.

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Insurance products provided through iA Private Wealth Insurance.

Hillside Wealth Management is a personal trade name of Michael Preto and Jason Del Vicario.

Performance is calculated using month-end market values of the model portfolio. Since we use a model portfolio to calculate performance there are no client-initiated cash flows (deposits/withdrawals) to account for.

Performance is calculated by dividing the change in the model portfolio's market value by the model portfolio's market value at the beginning of the performance period. Also, all income generated by the portfolio's holdings are held within the model portfolio in cash and is accounted for in the portfolio's month-end market value - this results in a total return measure of the model's performance.

Returns for periods less than 1 year are shown as periodic returns while returns for periods greater than 1 year are annualized. Returns do not include fees and actual returns experienced by an investor may differ from those shown. Past performance is not a guarantee of future results.