

Illustrious Illusions

August 2019

“Just because you can doesn’t mean you should.” - Unknown

Years ago, when I was a newly minted lawyer, I would try to dress the part; problem was, fresh out of law school meant that I had little cash in my pocket and thus my wardrobe was less than what I thought it should be. So, I remember very clearly going to argue an appeal for the first time in front of a judge and before we even began I felt a bit anxious – you see, the opposing attorney was at least 15 years older than me and looked impeccable. But as we all know, appearances can be deceitful, and low and behold, whether it was my brilliance (I like to think this was the case) or his ineptitude, the judge not only ruled in my favor but gave opposing counsel a minor tongue-lashing for his terrible argument. Suffice it to say, I learned a good lesson that day: just because something looks good, does not necessarily mean it is good; and it’s not too far a leap to then conclude that just because you can do something (like buy an expensive suit) doesn’t mean that you should.

We bring this up for a few reasons. First, we believe that in life too many people want to do something that they either cannot or should not do; too many people have so-called FOMO (“fear of missing out”) and/or try to keep up with the “Joneses”. But we believe that the “Joneses” are probably pretty unhappy people because they worship at the altar of instant self-gratification and buy things that they *think* will make them happy (even though they may not need much less afford them). So, as I’ve said before, when you go to buy that new huge flat-screen TV, or anything else, to replace the one that you bought just a few years ago, remember to ask yourself if you really *need* it.

The second reason this is top of the mind for us is due to the fact that we have been looking for a new office. If you remember, six months ago we took our own advice and sold the office space we had owned for twelve years due to unrealistic valuations and flexibility. True to form, we have been slowly and diligently looking at different types of offices in different parts of the city; we did not want to rush into a new space and regret it later (as we say, there is never any boat to be missed in the short-term). And we kept reminding ourselves that appearances are less important than they might seem. So, when we found a perfect space that was a bit more expensive and a bit more luxurious than what we were looking for, we asked ourselves if we really needed it. And we quickly came to the conclusion that the only thing it did was make us feel important as well as potentially impress visitors with our flashiness - which is why we declined to take that office.

The reality is that we do not need anything, much less an office, to make us feel special or important; maybe it's our age or the fact that Wynne and I have been doing this for almost forty years collectively, but we firmly believe that our clients will be more impressed by how we are looking to efficiently spend corporate money rather than spending lavishly on a high-end office. And if a visitor is looking to potentially hire us and makes that determination based on what we look like rather than the service and advice that we provide, then they are not seeing the forest for the trees – which we will be happy to point out. You see, there are a lot of great financial advisors out there, but, as in any profession, there may be those that, in our opinion, simply do not know what they are doing – and sometimes they may be hired by people who are blinded by an illustrious office. Instead, in looking for a new office, we wanted something that would help us be even more efficient; we found this in a new building that is a two-minute walk to Dimensional's new home office in Charlotte, which makes good business sense since we work with them extensively.

We do understand that we may be preaching to the choir, since most of you (our clients) know us well enough to know that we aspire to give you the best advice without the noise that distracts (like a pretty office, or a short-term market event). But we wanted to take this opportunity to give you our reasoning for doing what we are doing behind the scenes when it comes to our business. Because you are what matters most to us, and we want you to know what we do as well as why we do it. And if you ever refer a friend or family member to us (which we do appreciate!), then feel free to tell them that we may not be the flashiest firm, but we strive every day to provide the best financial advice and service; as they say in the south, we'll take substance over form any day of the week and twice on Sunday!

Have a great rest of your Summer, and feel free to email or call us anytime. Take care!

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New office address beginning on **September 15, 2019:**

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All phone numbers and email addresses will remain the same.

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