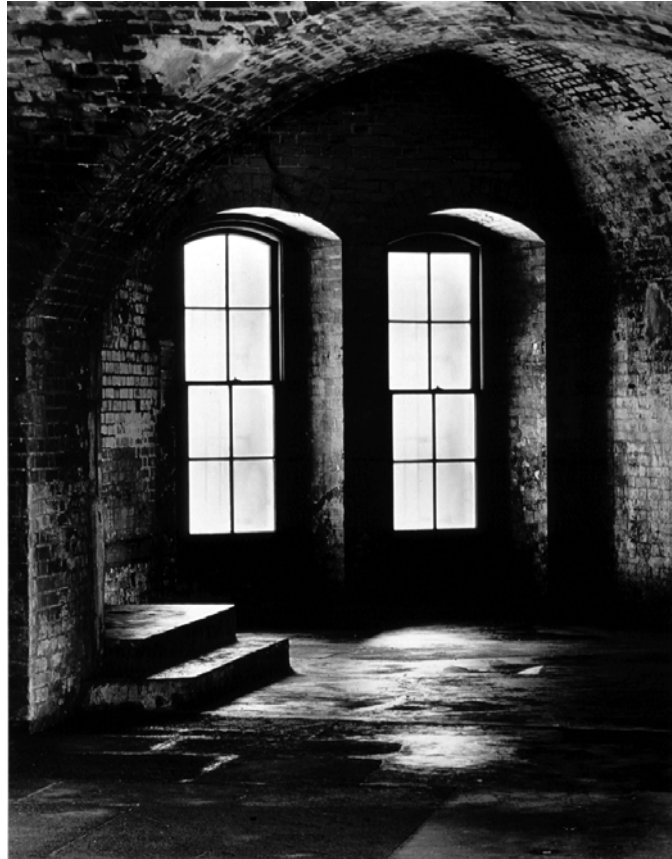


Your Life and Your Money



*“A Guide to Aligning Your Personal Finances
With Your Life Goals and
Creating Financial Independence”*

**Neiman Wealth Management LLC
Robert A Neiman, CPA**

By Robert Neiman

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**Neiman Wealth Management LLC
Robert A Neiman CPA**

**1606 James Street
Merrick NY 11566**

Phone: (516) 867-5545 or (800) 313-2119

Fax (516) 867-4810 or (866) 823-1800

Email: bob@bobneiman.com

Web Site: www.bobneiman.com

Dedicated to Geri,
my best friend and my wife,
who stands by my side every day,
who believes in me, even on days when I feel lost,
and,
who I'm blessed to be sharing my life with.

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Introduction



Tree and Fold © Bob Neiman

My Story and Introduction

My strong subjects in high school were science and math. In fact, I won the science award for the Farmingdale High School class of 1969. In college, I majored in psychology, getting lost in the emerging human potential movement in the early 1970's. I even started graduate school to pursue a degree in Counseling Psychology. In 1976 I got married. During this time, while I was working on a Masters in Interdisciplinary Studies, also known as a "Perpetual Student Degree," I decided to become a CPA. Less than two years later I finished all the accounting and related courses I needed, and landed my first job in a local CPA firm in Portland, Oregon. I took and passed the CPA exam in November 1978. On September 30, 1982, I opened my CPA practice in Bellevue, Washington.

Over the years I have had the privilege of working with many clients, preparing tax returns, doing accounting, and helping people identify and pursue their financial goals and dreams. My initial concerns were limited to income tax and accounting issues. As my practice grew, I helped clients plan for and start new businesses, make major life transitions, and start on the road to financial independence.

Increasingly, I found myself asking my clients questions about what they wanted from their lives, what their goals were, and what problems they were having getting there. I found that answering a simple tax question was not enough. I needed to know what someone was trying to accomplish and how this related to the rest of their life. Then I would often reframe their questions to get at their real concerns. Often, the tax aspects were not even the major issue.

I also spent a lot of time helping people feel more comfortable with financial issues, how to handle their money, and how to structure their lives to become more financially independent. One of the things that has always puzzled me is how some people seem to be very comfortable with money and finances, while other people just experience frustration with their money and finances.

In the 1980's I bought a house and started a family. I put together a financial plan to pay off my house and started an investment program. I then started on my plan to financial independence. In the mid 1990's as I entered my mid-forties, I had achieved my goal of paying off my house and had accumulated a decent investment portfolio. Once I paid off my mortgage I had a lot more discretionary cash flow and many more choices in my life. It felt great.

But I wasn't happy in my marriage, and I found myself facing a difficult choice. Do I stay in a marriage that I was less and less satisfied with, but that allowed me to become financially independent? Or, do I end my unfulfilling marriage and likely take a giant step backwards on my path to financial independence? The more I thought about it, the more I realized that my personal happiness and fulfillment was more important than being financially independent. So, I made the difficult choice to end my marriage and accept the financial consequences of that choice.

I first met my current wife, Geri, at summer camp in 1968. We dated in 1970 and 1971, then, we broke up and went our separate ways. We both got married and started families. Over the years we spoke once or twice a year and became good friends over the phone. We were both going through divorces at the same time and decided that we wanted to be together. I moved to New York in late 1998. Geri and I were married on

August 21, 1999. We bought a house with a big mortgage in late 2001. So now I had taken a major step backwards on my financial plan, but was much happier in my life.

In the 1990's, along with everyone else, I had gotten interested in investments. I started reading everything I could about investment philosophy, investor behavior, and the history of the markets. I saw some clients become day traders and go out and take enormous risks. Others created portfolios with all their investments in technology, internet, and telecomm stocks. At first many people made money as they rode the great bull market of the 1990's. Because they were not diversified, when the market turned in 2000, many of them had big losses. Some people were terrified of risk-taking. They tended to stay away from stocks and kept their money in ultra conservative investments.

Other clients seemed to take a middle road. They created diversified portfolios with low turnover. When times were good they did not do as well as the high-fliers, but when the bust came, they didn't suffer as much either. More importantly, they tended to have a more rational investment program that was less affected by any fear or greed that they might have felt. In 2000, I decided to get my securities licenses. I felt that I could help my clients achieve their financial goals by offering investment services. Managing investments fits in well with the other services that I offer my clients.

One of my passions in life is photography. I first started when I was a kid when my dad set up a makeshift darkroom in our bathroom. I've read extensively and taken many workshops over the years as I pursued my photographic art. First in color and more recently in black and white, I enjoy image-making. I particularly enjoy making abstract photographs, where the viewer can get lost in an image and let their imagination go.

Last year I created my web site www.bobneiman.com. I have a section on my photography. I also have sections on my work with clients as an investment advisor, financial planner, financial coach, and CPA, a mix that I find highly satisfying.

Over the years I spoke at numerous seminars to clients and professional people. I also started putting some of my thoughts down on paper in outline form, in lists of important questions, and in short written articles. This client handbook is the result of these efforts.

I have several goals in "Your Life and Your Money, A Guide to Aligning Your Personal Finances With Your Life Goals and Creating Financial Independence." First, I want to emphasize the importance of integrating money and finances with a person's life goals and life purpose. Ultimately, it's all about being happy, leading a fulfilling life, and making a difference in this world. It's not just about accumulating money. I wanted to make the strong connection between our money beliefs and how we handle our money and finances. I also wanted to share what I believe are some of the important concepts and issues that we need to understand to successfully reach our financial goals. Finally, I wanted to address some of the inner challenges that we often face as we work to create the discipline to get what we want in life and work towards financial independence.

Bob Neiman
October 2003