

## What Are You?

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Have you ever been asked, "What are you?" (Not "Who are you?" but "What are you?") Are you fish or fowl; meat or milk; friend or foe; north or south? What are you? Have I confused you? That was not my intention. I do want you to consider what you are, though.

I am referring to what type of investor you are. I am sure that if you have been investing for a few years, your style has probably changed. Most investors' styles have, since they now realize that not everything goes up and stays up. They have seen that gravity works on investments, too, and what goes up will come back down!

I have found that there are three types of investors; I refer to them as the three faces of investing. The first type that most of us are familiar with is the "stock jockey." I am sure you have run across this group. Stock jockeys (or "stock junkies") were quite prevalent prior to the recent major drop in the stock market. They have a unique profile. They can quote you the profit-to-earning ration ("P/E") of almost every stock on the New York Stock Exchange. They have subscriptions to *The Wall Street Journal* and other financial services, and watch the stock reports on TV all day long. They are usually thrill-seekers and love to take major risks, even though they think there is no risk in what they are doing. To them, the sky is the limit; they love to "bet the house" (which a lot of them did, and "lost the house," too!)

Stock jockeys have investment goals that are quite easy to see. They are out to beat the pros, impress their friends, and win every time. It's simple, and to the point. I run across stock jockeys all the time, and all that I can offer are my condolences! They do not want any help. Their minds are usually made up, so they do not want any additional facts that may confuse them. Sound familiar? Have you run across some of these? Right now, they are a dying breed, but trust me - they will be back.

The second type of investor is what I refer to as the "Orman and Givens admirer." They are usually walking around with a book from their idol tucked under their arm. This type of investor reads and watches everything his or her financial gurus have to say. Every time the gurus are on Oprah, the investor tapes the show and memorizes it word for word. If Suze doesn't say it, it isn't worth looking at; that is this type of investor's mantra.

Their investment goal is to beat the market and seek rewards without any risk. It's not a bad goal - if it works! What can I offer them? Some Oprah re-runs and a shoulder to cry on! That's about all!

The third group is also unique. Its members understand that a person can win or lose in the market. They try to go into everything with their eyes wide open and get as many facts as they can, and also understand that there are no guarantees. They are looking for steady growth and want to preserve their capital. I call this group "wise investors." They seek as much information as they can get from reliable sources, and weigh it all before they make any investments. They realize that this is a "marathon, not a sprint." Long-term growth is far better than short-term gain. To these people, I say, "good for you!" and things will be good for them.

You have now seen my three faces of investing, or types of investors. I am sure that you can identify some of your friends in each of these groups - and it is probably easy and fun to do, too!

The next part of this little quiz is a little tricky. I want you to be honest with yourself. I want you to pick the type of investor you are: a stock jockey; an Orman and Givens admirer; or a wise investor. Which is it - one, two or three? If you feel you are either a one or two, maybe it is time to re-evaluate your portfolio, and your focus. It is never too late to change. Seek competent help and review your portfolio and your goals.

If you feel you are a wise investor, good for you. I hope it is an honest evaluation and that you truly fall into that category. If you do not end up in any category, maybe it is because you are still sitting on the sidelines waiting for the "right" time to get into the market. Maybe you need to rethink the meaning of the word "right."

The "best" time is now; don't just sit there and watch the world pass you by!

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