

Flourish Wealth Management

Quarterly Newsletter

JANUARY 2026

A new year often brings a natural sense of reflection. As one chapter closes and another begins, many people find themselves thinking about where they've been, what they've learned, and how they want to move forward. Financial planning is no different; it's shaped not only by numbers and markets, but also by experiences, habits, and the stories we carry with us.

In this quarter's newsletter, we explore both the personal and the practical sides of financial decision-making. Our featured article looks inward, inviting you to consider your own "money story" and how awareness of long-held beliefs can influence the choices you make today. Understanding these patterns can be a powerful first step toward more intentional planning in the year ahead.

You'll also find our Quarterly Market Commentary and Annual Review, offering perspective on how markets performed in 2025 and how portfolios are being positioned as we move into 2026. Together, these pieces are designed to provide context, clarity, and a thoughtful foundation as you begin the new year.

As always, thank you for being part of the Flourish community. We hope this issue provides you with timely insights and inspiration as you plan for the months ahead.



Sincerely,

Kathy Longo, CFP®, CAP®, CDFA®

4th Quarter | 2025

QUARTERLY ARTICLE

Rewriting Your Money Story: How Awareness Can Transform Your Financial Life

By: Kathy Longo, CFP®, CAP®, CDFIA®

President and Founder

Everyone has a “money story” – a set of beliefs, experiences, and habits about money that developed over time. It’s not just about numbers in a bank account, though. Your money story is a mix of memories, personal values, cultural influences, and emotional responses that shape how you think about saving, spending, and planning for your financial future.

These patterns might subtly influence your choices long after they formed, often without your realizing it. That’s where *rewriting your money story* comes in. By becoming more aware of the thoughts and beliefs that affect your financial habits, you can make decisions that feel more intentional and aligned with your goals, whatever they may be.

What Is a Money Story and Why It Matters

Your money story is essentially the narrative you’ve developed about money based on your experiences, upbringing, and beliefs. It might include thoughts like “money is hard to come by,” “good financial choices are stressful,” or “I don’t know how to manage money well.” These beliefs often form early in life and evolve over time.

People don’t always realize how deeply their money story influences everyday decisions, from how comfortable they feel talking about finances to how they approach spending or saving. Sometimes these ingrained patterns can hold you back from moving toward your goals, even if you intellectually know what you want to achieve.

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Start with Awareness: What Are You Believing?

Rewriting your money story begins with awareness. Instead of trying to “fix” behavior right away, try noticing it. Where did your financial beliefs come from? How do they show up in your choices today? Reflecting on these questions can help you see patterns you might otherwise overlook.

For example, if you grew up hearing that money should never be discussed openly, you might now find it uncomfortable to review your own finances or talk about money with a partner. Noticing that pattern is the first step toward making meaningful change!

Dig Into the Origins of Your Beliefs

Often, financial beliefs start early and stick with us because they feel familiar or “safe,” even if they no longer serve us. Think about your earliest money memories, maybe watching a parent worry over bills or feeling anxious about asking for a raise. These moments can shape your unconscious attitudes about money long before you realize it.

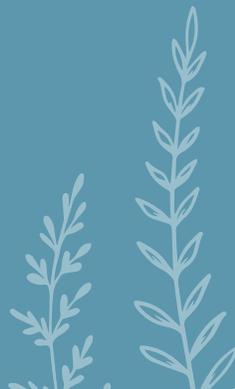
Once you can name some of these influences, it’s easier to consider whether they still fit who you are today and what you want going forward. This doesn’t mean dismissing your past experiences; rather, it means separating outdated ideas from your present goals.

Notice How Your Story Shows Up Now

Your money story often influences:

- How you feel about [budgeting or tracking expenses](#)
- Your comfort level with financial conversations
- Whether you feel confident setting goals or planning for them
- Your tendency to avoid or engage with financial decisions

Recognizing these patterns is like turning on a light in a dim room; the more you see, the easier it becomes to decide what to do next.



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Rewrite the Narrative with Intention

Once you've noticed the patterns that show up in your beliefs and behaviors, you can start to reframe them. *Rewriting your money story* isn't about pretending negative or limiting thoughts never existed. It's about acknowledging them and then choosing new narratives that support the choices you want to make.

For example:

- Instead of thinking, "I'm bad with money," you might notice that you're still learning and gathering tools that work for you.
- Instead of avoiding [financial conversations](#), you could approach them as opportunities to learn and grow.

This shift doesn't happen overnight, but each step builds momentum toward more thoughtful financial decision-making.

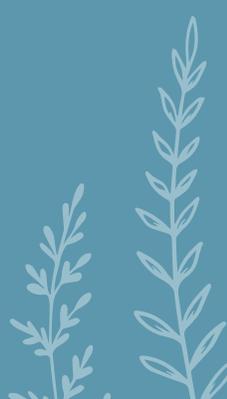
How a Guide Can Help You Navigate Your Story

Having someone to talk through your money story with can make the process more approachable. A financial planner can offer perspective, ask questions that spark new insight, and help you connect your financial habits with practical actions. Together, you can explore how your beliefs influence your planning and what steps feel right for where you are now.

Whether you are feeling stuck, unsure about your next steps, or simply curious about what might be possible, discussing your money story with a trusted advisor can be a beneficial part of shaping your financial life.

Start Your Next Chapter

If you're interested in exploring your money story and how it shows up in your financial decisions, Flourish Wealth Management is here to walk through that process with you. A thoughtful conversation can help you reflect on where you've been and consider where you want to go. [Schedule a conversation today](#) to talk about *rewriting your money story* and planning with intention.



MARKET COMMENTARY

Fourth Quarter & 2025 Annual Review



By: Jay E. Pluimer, AIF®, CIMA®
Director of Investments

Markets ended 2025 with positive returns across the board. Foreign stocks had the strongest returns in the 4th quarter and for the year, gaining 4.9% and 31.9% respectively. The falling strength of the US Dollar (dropped by 10% in 2025) was a significant factor in the outperformance of foreign markets, along with large increases in foreign government spending on Defense and Artificial Intelligence (AI) infrastructure. AI was also a significant theme that supported strong markets in the US, with Large Cap stocks gaining 2.7% during the fourth quarter and 17.9% for the year. The full year return is particularly impressive when considering that US Large Caps were down 19% in early April before making a significant turnaround once the market adjusted for changing US Tariff policies. Small-cap stocks and Emerging Markets also posted gains during the fourth quarter (2.2% and 4.8% respectively) and for the full year (12.8% and 34.4% respectively), demonstrating significant market breadth that extended beyond the Magnificent 7 stocks in the US. In fact, only two of the Mag 7 stocks had better returns than the broad market (Nvidia and Alphabet), but those companies still drove 40% of total market returns for the year. Finally, Bond investors gained 7.3% in 2025, completing a recovery since the downturn in 2022.

Market volatility was elevated throughout 2025 due to a combination of trade tariff changes, rising inflation rates, ongoing concerns about the size of the US deficit, along with questions about whether or not politicians in Washington DC are capable of developing and implementing a plan to address the debt burden. Corporate spending on AI initiatives was a primary driver of economic growth in the US and Foreign markets, with significant emphasis on energy infrastructure to support increased demand for computing power. 2025 also witnessed the

evolution of the so-called K-shaped economy where the Top 20% of US households experienced economic gains driven by rising home values and surging investment account balances, while the other 80% experienced difficult times with reduced employment opportunities, stubbornly high inflation rates, and a broad affordability crisis. It will be important to address the growing Wealth Gap in the US at some point in the next few years, along with the budget deficit, but consumer spending continued to maintain enough strength to support excellent corporate earnings and surprisingly strong economic growth rates that consistently exceeded expectations at over 3% during 2025.

For more information on investments and the markets, you can reference our [Quarterly Market Review](#) and our [Annual Market Review](#).

Conclusion

As we step into 2026, financial planning remains an evolving journey, one shaped by reflection, adaptability, and informed decision-making. Whether this issue encouraged you to think differently about your relationship with money or helped you better understand the market forces at play, we hope it offered insight you can carry into the months ahead.

If reading this quarter's newsletter sparked questions or curiosity about your own financial picture, our team is always here as a resource. Thoughtful conversations can help connect awareness with action and support planning that aligns with your values and priorities.

Wishing you a steady and meaningful start to the year ahead.



Sincerely,

Kathy Longo, CFP®, CAP®, CDFA®
and the Flourish Team