
Do You Know Your Financial Goals?

Understanding your financial goals is central to financial planning, but identifying goals that truly matter can be tough. Morningstar's behavioral science team built this exercise to help you identify your top financial goals and uncover goals you might have overlooked.

Instructions

Step 1: List your top three financial goals. We suggest doing this privately, so you don't feel anchored to what first comes to mind or embarrassed if you decide to change your mind later.

Step 2: Take a look at the master list of common financial goals. Are any of the goals on the list important to you? If so, check the box next to those goals.

Step 3: Look at your initial list and master list. Consider the goals you wrote down and the goals you checked. Of these goals, what are the top three? Write them down in order of importance.

Step 4 (optional): Revisit the master list of common financial goals and cross out the goals that are least important to you. Sometimes identifying what you don't care for can help clarify what really drives you and lead to a fruitful conversation with your advisor.

1 What are your top three financial goals?

Most important goal:

Second most important goal:

Third most important goal:

2 Here's a master list of common financial goals. Are there any goals here that are important to you? If so, check the box next to those goals. (Check five at most)

- To be better off than my peers
- To pay for personal self-improvement (e.g., go back to school, learn a skill)
- To experience the excitement of investing
- To start a new business
- To buy a house
- To help pay for my kids' college education
- To stop working and do something I love
- To go on a dream vacation
- To relocate in retirement
- To care for my aging parents
- To give to charity or other causes I care about
- To feel secure about my finances in retirement
- To feel secure about my finances now
- To leave an inheritance to my loved ones
- To retire early
- To pay for future medical expenses
- To not be a financial burden to my family as I grow older
- To manage my debt

3 Look at your initial list and master list. Consider the goals you wrote down and the goals you checked. Of these goals, what are the top three? Write them down in order of importance.

Most important goal:

Second most important goal:

Third most important goal:
