

man of style



WHY GUYS SHOULD INVEST IN GREAT CLOTHES. BY KAREN ALBERG GROSSMAN

# fashion and FINANCE

many of them in their entrepreneurial ventures and see what works over time. Inspired by them, I've expanded my focus from just financial planning to include insurance and wealth management. My clients were the inspiration behind my decision to form my newest venture, FDP Wealth Management.

### *What determines a good fit between client and advisor?*

The most important factor is shared values. From the client's perspective, you have to trust and work well with the person to whom you're entrusting your family's future. From the advisor's perspective, you have to be able to put yourself in your client's shoes, feel their concerns

**M**ark Chandik, principal of FDP Wealth Management, is not your typical fashion icon. In fact, were it not for the style influence of his wife Cindy and daughters Caitlin and Madeline, he wouldn't likely be featured in a fashion magazine. Admitting that his instinct for finance seriously outshines his fashion sensibility, Chandik nonetheless enjoys fine clothing and the aura of confidence that dressing well inspires. Here, we chat with him about investments (both financial and sartorial), and the value of great clothes.

### *How did you get into the financial services business?*

I initially joined my father's financial planning business in Texas after graduating from college with an accounting degree. I guess I took the path of least resistance: I knew I didn't want to work for one of the "Big 8" accounting firms—even back then I preferred a smaller firm where I could have more impact. The financial planning industry was in its infancy at that time, so it proved to be a great opportunity for me to learn a lot.

### *Was your father your mentor?*

Yes, as were several of my clients. I've had the opportunity to observe

and address them. It's usually apparent very quickly whether or not there is a fit.

As an entrepreneur myself, I naturally work well with other entrepreneurs or else those who have been part of successful ventures. There's a certain independent mindset that comes with navigating a business over the long haul.

### *How have recent gyrations in the financial market affected your investment advice?*

There's no question that the last 36 months have been difficult for everyone. Most of our clients own businesses plus real estate and investment portfolios, all of which

have been affected by the economic downturn. And since many of our clients are in Southern California, they've also been hurt by the devaluation in local real estate.

While we've always used risk management as a fundamental component of our consulting process, it's become more important than ever. Each of our clients has a portfolio personalized to accommodate their risk tolerance levels. While some have chosen to become more conservative, others have stayed the course.

*Do you think individual investors will forgive the market's past sins and put money back into stocks?*

Investors have relatively short memories. While the past decade has been difficult since as far back as the dot.com bubble, the reality is

*Are disappointed investors reverting to more "do it yourself" investing, or are they changing brokers?*

Most educated investors understand that their financial advisor wasn't responsible for the market meltdown, nor did he or she create the mortgage crisis. Nonetheless, they will hold their advisor accountable if they feel that they haven't been communicated with properly or if their portfolios were not constructed properly.

There is a general distrust in large financial institutions as well, which bodes well for boutique and independent firms such as ours. Clients want full transparency, honesty and to work with an advisor devoid of conflicts of interest.

Realistically, there will always be "do it yourself investors," and those who periodically feel that they need

Park and enjoy going to shows and eating at interesting restaurants throughout the city. When we want to really relax, however, Hawaii is our destination of choice, where I enjoy driving around Maui and playing an occasional round of golf.

Also, I strongly believe that successful companies have an obligation to support the local community. Over the years, FDP has supported dozens of charitable causes, many based on our clients' passions.

*Speaking of passions, how important has clothing been in your life?*

I believe it was about 10 years ago that I started to hear comments from my wife and daughters such as, "Are you really going to wear that?" or "Are you going outside of this house looking like that?"

I don't think I dressed poorly for

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that over the long-term, stocks have always provided greater return than other investments.

Yields on fixed income investments historically don't provide enough return to offset inflation, or grow assets sufficiently to meet a family's needs. Therefore, some level of equity exposure is required. Factor in the reality that real estate will take a long time to recover, if it ever does, and investors must consider alternatives. Investments that contain hedge characteristics and anything that provides a dependable and tax-efficient income stream should be considered in a properly diversified portfolio.

to change advisors; frankly, these types of clients are not a good fit for us. As long as we continue "drilling down" to determine each client's financial goals while developing long-term relationships, our clients will stay with us.

*What are some of your other interests?*

My wife and I enjoy trying new restaurants; we're members of the Newport Beach chapter of a wine and food organization called LaChaines de Rotisseurs. We get together four times a year and are seated with new people who are always interesting to talk to.

We also enjoy traveling, especially to New York. I run in Central

business (although my family might disagree), but admittedly my casual style consisted of ill-fitting Levi's and a T-shirt circa a 1980s rock concert. A lot of guys hang on to clothing way too long, which sends the message that "I don't really care what I look like." My wife took me shopping at GARYS a number of years ago and taught me that quality trumps quantity. She (and the great sales associates at the store) helped me understand what looked good on me and what didn't. Over the years I've learned that quality clothing not only helps you feel good about yourself, but also conveys confidence to those around you.



count store. So while you can't always judge a guy by what he wears, clothing is often a reflection of one's personal attitude about quality. What's more, as articulated in the book *Dress for Success*, a client makes a decision to work with you based on many factors, including appearance. For me, spending the time to dress well, to have my shoes shined and clothing pressed, reflects self-confidence, which becomes evident in my interaction with clients.

*In such a volatile industry, how do you deal with stress?*

Someone told me once that there are two types of stress. The first is the stress that you feel when you have no power in a given situation. I believe the recent financial meltdown is an example of that. The only way you can respond to this type of negative stress is to work hard to overcome it, e.g. working more hours to deepen relationships with clients.

The other type of stress is self-

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*What were your most recent clothing purchases and what will you buy next?*

I became an avid road cyclist about three years ago, and have in that time lost about 20 pounds: I'm down a full size or two. At first I had a skilled tailor take in the clothing but ultimately it didn't look right. I just feel better in clothing that fits well. So for me, my clothing purchases over the past two years have been a total redo of my wardrobe. It's actually been kind of fun to do this: I've

purchased suits from Canali and more fitted dress shirts and even a new tuxedo since my old one was literally falling off me! Then as pieces get worn, I replace them.

*Have you observed that affluent customers dress better than the norm?*

Years ago I read the book *The Millionaire Next Door* and learned that the plumbing contractor with a net worth exceeding \$20 million might drive a 10-year old car and wear clothing purchased at a dis-

induced, such as when you're growing your business and developing new capabilities. This type of stress provides excitement and anxiety at the same time. You need to continually reinvent yourself and your business to stay current with what's going on around you, so some level of self-induced stress is okay. You just need to be aware of it, manage it and not let it get the best of you!

And of course it's easier to manage when wearing great clothes!