



## Market Thoughts from Mary Sterk

Like many of you, I've seen a lot of market volatility in my 31 years in the industry. We can all agree that the market movements over the last week are unsettling, to say the least. Markets are bracing for uncertainty as the impact of the new tariffs leads to economic turbulence and widespread investor fear. In addition, big drops in the market trigger institutional stops and margin calls, creating a spiral that can easily create investor panic.

At this moment, it's impossible to forecast the short and long term effects of the current trade policy. So let's focus on some things that we DO know:

1. Markets have proven resilient over time and it's important to maintain discipline and focus on your long-term goals. Investing is a long-term endeavor, and short term emotional responses to market downturns are what eat away at investor profits over time. If you don't need to actually spend your investment money in the next few years, then your long-term investment time horizon has not changed. It may feel very uncomfortable to hang in there, but any shifts and changes in your portfolio should be based on when you need to use the money... not fear of further current losses.
2. The long term trajectory of the U.S. economy and markets is up, despite many shocks over time like the October 1987 crash, the recession of 1990, the dot com bubble burst in 2001, the attacks of 9/11, the 2008 recession, and the 2020 Pandemic. All of these events felt like the sky was falling. All of these events had commentary that the situation was unique and had never happened before.... And all of these times eventually the markets came back.
3. The old axiom of buy low, sell high is still what makes money. And as uncomfortable as it seems, this is what buying low feels like.
4. When I look back at the Pandemic markets in 2020, investors who held their ground or invested more during the drop not only recovered, but they bounced back even stronger. History shows us that even one day out of the market can crush investor returns if they miss a big market bounce upwards.

We are here to support you and navigate these times of uncertainty together. Knowledge is power, and we're committed to equipping you with the tools and information you need to weather this storm. We are continuing to watch market developments and are here to assist you with evaluating and understanding these economic changes. As always, if you have any questions do not hesitate to call.