

New Year, New Rules:

Why It's Time to Recheck Your Finances

The end of the year is more than a season for celebrations — it's a natural checkpoint for your financial plan. Markets shift, laws evolve, and your own goals may change. A quick year-end review keeps your plan on pace. And with January offering a natural moment for fresh starts, it's the perfect time to revisit the core adjustments that help keep financial plans aligned with life goals.

1. Start the Year Intentional, Not Accidental.

Ask: Does my plan still fit the life I want in the year ahead?

Over time, milestones — marriage, a new home, a growing family, retirement approaching — can shift priorities in ways your plan may not fully reflect. A 2024 New York Life survey found that [62% of adults felt financially unprepared for major life events](#), and 39% wished they'd sought guidance sooner.

Even if you feel prepared, upcoming changes may require higher insurance limits, updated beneficiaries, or adjustments to saving and investment strategies. Annual reviews give you space to evaluate whether your money supports your goals today and in the years ahead.

2. Revisit Risk and Resilience.

Ask: How is my current investment mix performing in today's environment?

Markets don't move in straight lines, and inflation can erode purchasing power. [ARC's review of 350,000 portfolios](#) found that despite an 8.4% average return in 2024, many portfolios remain 12% below their 2021 value in real terms.

A yearly check-in helps confirm your asset mix still matches your risk tolerance and time horizon. That conversation may include rebalancing your stock-to-bond ratio, reviewing income sources like dividends or rental income, or updating assumptions about savings rates, cash levels, and inflation.

3. Re-evaluate Tax Strategies.

Ask: If key tax rules shifted tomorrow, would my plan still work the way I expect it to?

While some details are still subject to change, several tax-related changes are slated for 2026, including:

Tax Cuts and Jobs Act (TCJA) sunsets on January 1, 2026, could mean higher income-tax brackets and a lower federal estate-tax exemption. If those changes take effect, some households may need to revisit their income planning, gifting strategies, or estate documents to confirm they still reflect their goals under a different tax environment.

2.0 changes could require certain higher-income earners over 50 to make 401(k) catch-up contributions as Roth (after-tax) starting in 2026. As a result, investors may need to rethink the timing or type of retirement contributions they make.

Potential limits on itemized deductions for top earners means top earners may receive a smaller benefit from certain deductible expenses than they do today. If enacted, this could affect how people approach charitable giving, tax payments, or other deductible items.

4. Review Insurance and Protection Needs.

Ask: If something unexpected happened tomorrow, would I be covered?

Insurance needs evolve as home values and earnings rise and risk exposures change. Even high-value homes can be at risk when valuations, exposures, or policy limits aren't reviewed regularly. Following the California wildfires, [an investigation of thousands of homeowners](#) found that roughly two-thirds were underinsured — by an average of 34% — leaving many with significant gaps between their actual coverage and rebuilding costs.

Advisors can help evaluate the structure of your coverage: ensuring liability limits align with your net worth, confirming umbrella policies extend protection, and coordinating coverage across multiple homes, vehicles, or assets owned through trusts or LLCs, so nothing falls through the cracks.

5. Set (and Celebrate) Meaningful Milestones.

Ask: What's one step I can take this year to move closer to the future and legacy I want?

High-net-worth planning is a long arc, shaped by thoughtful milestones — not quick wins. Each year, identify one or two goals that deepen the impact of your wealth, whether that's formalizing a succession plan, increasing contributions to investment or charitable vehicles, or advancing long-term estate, family-governance, or philanthropic objectives.

Charitable giving remains one of the most effective ways to align wealth with values. In 2024, Americans gave [over \\$592.5 billion](#) to charitable causes, and tools such as donor-advised funds or qualified charitable distributions (QCDs) from IRAs can make giving both efficient and tax-advantaged.

Just as important: pause to recognize what you accomplished this year — and, when appropriate, share those milestones with loved ones. Families who communicate about goals and responsibilities are far more likely to preserve wealth across generations.

Who's Helping You Navigate Financial Changes for 2026?

Change is constant — in markets, in legislation, and in life. A thoughtful partner can help you sort through shifting rules and keep your strategy aligned with your goals. When you're ready to take the next step, I am here to help you move forward.

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