
Never so Happy to say Happy New Year!!!

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While the world is not out of the woods going into 2021, we sure are looking forward to saying goodbye to 2020. We don't expect a light switch to just be flicked in January; We've got some dark days ahead of us. The good news though, is there is so much optimism going into the New Year. A number of vaccines were introduced at the end of last year and we're seeing millions across the globe getting vaccinated for COVID-19. This should mean some extremely needed immunity which will slowly open up the economy. So many small business owners need this so bad. This virus and the subsequent restrictions placed on businesses has been absolutely dreadful. While we all have some tough days ahead of us, we are optimistic that later in 2021, things will open up again and life will start to get back to some sense of normal.

2020 will go down as a year like no other. Almost two million deaths¹ have been attributed to COVID-19 as I write this with over 3,000 per day in the US alone over the last couple of weeks². It's been a tough year for us as we have clients who have been sick with the virus and clients who run businesses which have been decimated. Some clients have lost friends to COVID-19 and others have had family members get very sick. My own father was sick with the virus as was one of our very best friends. We have clients who are in healthcare and they are exhausted. I think we all owe these healthcare workers a debt of gratitude as they are on the frontlines helping people battle this wretched thing.

One of the hardest things that our family dealt with in 2020, was the passing of my Aunt Jane at the end of November. She was a real rock in our family and simply, a wonderful person. My Auntie Jane worked as a Music

Teacher and always had a passion for the arts. She played multiple instruments and appreciated a wide variety of genres. My sisters and I grew up with her being very involved in our lives. She really was instrumental in our upbringing. Auntie Jane was always there for us and really took on a role as an additional parent. My first job was at a grocery store near her house and I would go over to her place for lunch breaks regularly. We had wonderful conversations about history, politics and religion. She was well read and well researched. Truth and honesty were always very important to her and I always appreciated her insights. Auntie Jane was always a calm and collected person. She had great advice that she shared with me and my sisters over the years. I'm sure anyone who knew her will truly miss those conversations. Jane was extremely generous both with her time and with her philanthropy. She will leave a lasting legacy on our whole family and will be very, very much missed.

It was definitely a year of highs and lows. Deeper valleys than mountains last year for sure but there was some good news. Surprisingly, investments really rallied back quickly after an extremely hard March. Much of this was driven by Technology Companies who had good solutions for allowing people to work and communicate. We also had success in Healthcare especially with companies who have created effective vaccines. Precious Metals went up a lot as did some Cryptocurrencies. Some of that growth had to do with people moving money to more defensive assets, especially when things looked very bleak. Interest Rates dropped dramatically and that lifted the value of Bonds. Mortgage Rates are also at historic lows now which has allowed people to spend less on their homes.

We also had some fantastic news in 2020 as Natalie passed her big IBCLC exam! She wrote this test in September but as this is a large, international accreditation, she had to wait until December to get her result. I knew that she nailed this thing, but she was nervous for the three months that she had to wait. Natalie got a 90% and is now officially, an International Board Certified Lactation Consultant. It's a tremendous achievement and we couldn't be more proud of her.

We look forward to talking to you in January and catching up some more. On behalf of our family, we wish you all a very Happy New Year! All the best in 2021!!!

Bryce A. Borden

¹John Hopkins University & Medicine: - <https://coronavirus.jhu.edu/map.html> [1]

²Fox News: - <https://www.foxnews.com/health/us-coronavirus-hospitalizations-top-125000-amid-record-breaking-death-toll> [2]

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[1] <https://coronavirus.jhu.edu/map.html> [2] <https://www.foxnews.com/health/us-coronavirus-hospitalizations-top-125000-amid-record-breaking-death-toll>