

1. Do they care about you?
2. How important are you to them?
3. Will they keep you informed?
4. Are they accessible?
5. Do they understand your needs and objectives?
6. Can they meet your needs and objectives?
7. How do they manage their own money?
8. How much experience do they have?
9. Will they assist you with planning, including:
 - establishing objectives?
 - establishing appropriate asset allocation?
 - tracking net worth?
 - tailoring assets to objectives?
 - coordinating asset allocation to time frame?
10. Are they a fanatic? (*Morningstar*: "Do they love what they are doing?")
11. What has their performance been through complete market cycles? (Can you expect better relative performance in bull markets or in bear markets?)
12. Does their strategy make sense?
13. Do the securities they hold fit their strategy?
14. Ask them to provide references, and ask the references:
 - How long have they managed money for you?
 - How well informed do they keep you?
 - How have they performed in up markets?

- How have they performed in down markets?
 - Do they coordinate your investments with your objectives, income tax plans, and estate plans?
15. How much risk is taken to achieve performance?
 16. How often will they meet with you?
 17. What are their fees?
 18. Are there "soft dollar", "12b-1", termination, or other charges?
 19. Will the benefits I receive exceed the costs? (*Do they add value?*)
 20. Will I enjoy this relationship?

All of the above is important. If you do not have a high comfort level with your answers to the above, and especially items 1, 7, 8, 10, 15, 19, and 20, you should investigate further. An excellent guide is a book titled, *Winning the Loser's Game – Timeless Strategies for Successful Investing*, fifth edition, by Charles D. Ellis. This book is also valuable in helping you establish your objectives.