

Don't Guess With Your Future.

HOW TO PICK THE
RIGHT FINANCIAL ADVISOR

AN iWEALTH GUIDE



iWealth
Your Dreams Become Our Goals
Planning • Investments • Insurance

A Note From Brad Connors, Founder of iWealth

Selecting the right financial advisor is one of the most important decisions you'll make for your financial future. This isn't something to approach based solely on personality, a referral from a friend, or whoever shows up first in a Google search. Your advisor should help guide you through decades of decisions, from how you invest and plan for retirement, to how you prepare for the "what-ifs," and ultimately how you protect the people and priorities that matter most.

That's why the selection process should be grounded in objective criteria, not emotion. You deserve clear, professional guidance from someone who has the credentials, experience, and planning tools to serve you well, not just today, but through every chapter ahead.

Retirement today often lasts 30 years or more. That's a long stretch of life to fund, manage, and navigate, especially with rising healthcare costs, changing tax laws, and market cycles that can shift without warning. You need a plan designed around your values and goals, and you need a team that understands how to help you adjust as life unfolds.

That's precisely why we created this guide. I hope it provides a straightforward framework for evaluating advisors, asking the right questions, and selecting a financial partner who will stand with you for the long haul.

Your financial life deserves thoughtful planning and dependable guidance.

I'm glad you're taking the time to make an informed decision.

To your financial future.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Brad". The letter "B" is large and stylized, with a cursive flourish. The name "Brad" is written in a simple, cursive script.

A grayscale photograph of a person's hands writing in a notebook with a pen. The notebook is open, and the person is focused on their work. The background is blurred, showing what appears to be a desk and possibly a computer monitor.

Start With Your Own Needs First

Most people jump straight into comparing firms, services, or fees. But the first step is understanding *what you actually want* from a financial advisor.

Take a moment to think through your goals and concerns:

- Retirement is approaching, and you want help with your goal of ensuring your money lasts.
- You may have a growing family and need a long-term plan.
- Or perhaps you've saved well, but you're unsure how to make everything work together: investments, taxes, estate planning, insurance, and cash flow.

Getting those thoughts on paper helps you recognize what kind of advisor relationship will benefit you the most. Some people want detailed planning and frequent check-ins. Others prefer a

simpler, lighter-touch approach. There's no right or wrong answer. What matters is finding someone who meets *you* where you are.

It also helps to be honest about how you respond emotionally to money.

- Do you get anxious when the market drops?
- Do you find yourself wanting to chase the latest "hot" investment idea?

Understanding those patterns helps you find a financial professional who can guide you through the noise and keep your long-term goals at the center.



Understand How an Advisor Is Paid

Two key terms are at play here: *fee-only* and *fee-based*.

A **fee-only** advisor is paid only by you. Their compensation is clear, direct, and free from sales incentives. This model maintains transparency in its advice because the advisor has no financial incentive to recommend one product, strategy, or fund over another.

A **fee-based** advisor may earn a combination of fees and commissions. That doesn't make them "bad"; it simply means you need to understand when products or incentives might influence recommendations.

If you want true transparency, a fee-only model tends to be the cleaner, more straightforward approach.

Know What Truly Matters: Experience and a Fiduciary Commitment

Credentials can be helpful, but they don't tell the whole story. A string of letters after someone's name doesn't automatically mean they're the right person to guide your financial life. What matters far more is whether the advisor has real, long-term experience working with clients like you, and whether they're legally and ethically committed to putting your interests first.

Advisors who have spent years helping families through market highs and lows bring a level of judgment that can't be taught in a classroom. They've seen how people react during stressful times, they understand the emotional side of investing, and they know how to keep clients grounded when everything feels uncertain. That kind of perspective only comes from time and repetition.

Just as important is the advisor's fiduciary status. A fiduciary is held to the highest standard of care, and they are required to act in your best interest at all times, not just when it's convenient.

This single factor often has a greater impact on the quality of advice you receive than any credential could ever have. If an advisor can't clearly state that they operate as a fiduciary in an advisory relationship, it's worth questioning why.

Credentials can support an advisor's knowledge, but experience and a true fiduciary commitment are the foundations of a relationship built on transparency. Those are the qualities that will matter most as your financial life becomes more complex and your planning needs evolve.

Evaluate the Technology & Tools That Support You

Today's best planning relationships extend far beyond a single annual meeting and a stack of printed reports. The technology your advisor uses directly influences how clearly you see your financial picture.

iWealth's **FDC Plan On Purpose**[®] platform is a great example. It consolidates all your finances, including income, investments, retirement projections, tax considerations, and goals, into a single, secure dashboard that you can access at any time.



Instead of wondering if you're on track, you can see it in real time. The mobile app makes it easy to check your progress, review recommendations, and stay connected through every stage of life.

When you evaluate other advisors, ask whether they offer similar tools:

- Do you receive a personal financial website?
- Are your accounts consolidated in one place?
- Can your plan be updated quickly as life changes?

Technology should make your financial life easier, not more complicated.

Look at the Firm Behind the Advisor

Even if you connect with a particular advisor, the firm supporting them plays a big role in your experience. You want a stable organization that prioritizes planning, transparency, and client service, not product sales.

Independent firms often have more flexibility in the advice they give because they aren't tied to proprietary products. They're also structured to focus on long-term planning rather than short-term transactions.

It's worth asking:

- How long has the firm been around?
- Who owns the firm, and to what extent are they involved in its operations?
- Does the team work collaboratively, or are each advisor on their own?
- What types of clients does the firm typically serve?

These questions help you understand whether the firm's strengths align with what you're looking for.

Have Meaningful Conversations With Each Advisor

Once you've narrowed your list to a few strong options, schedule conversations. Treat these meetings the same way you'd approach hiring someone for a key position in your life, because that's exactly what you're doing.

Inform the advisor about your goals, primary financial concerns, and the factors that prompted your search. Then ask them to walk you through their planning process. For instance:

- How do they build a retirement income plan?
- How do they incorporate tax strategies?
- What planning tools and reports will you receive?

Pay attention to how the advisor responds when life gets messy or uncertain. You might ask:

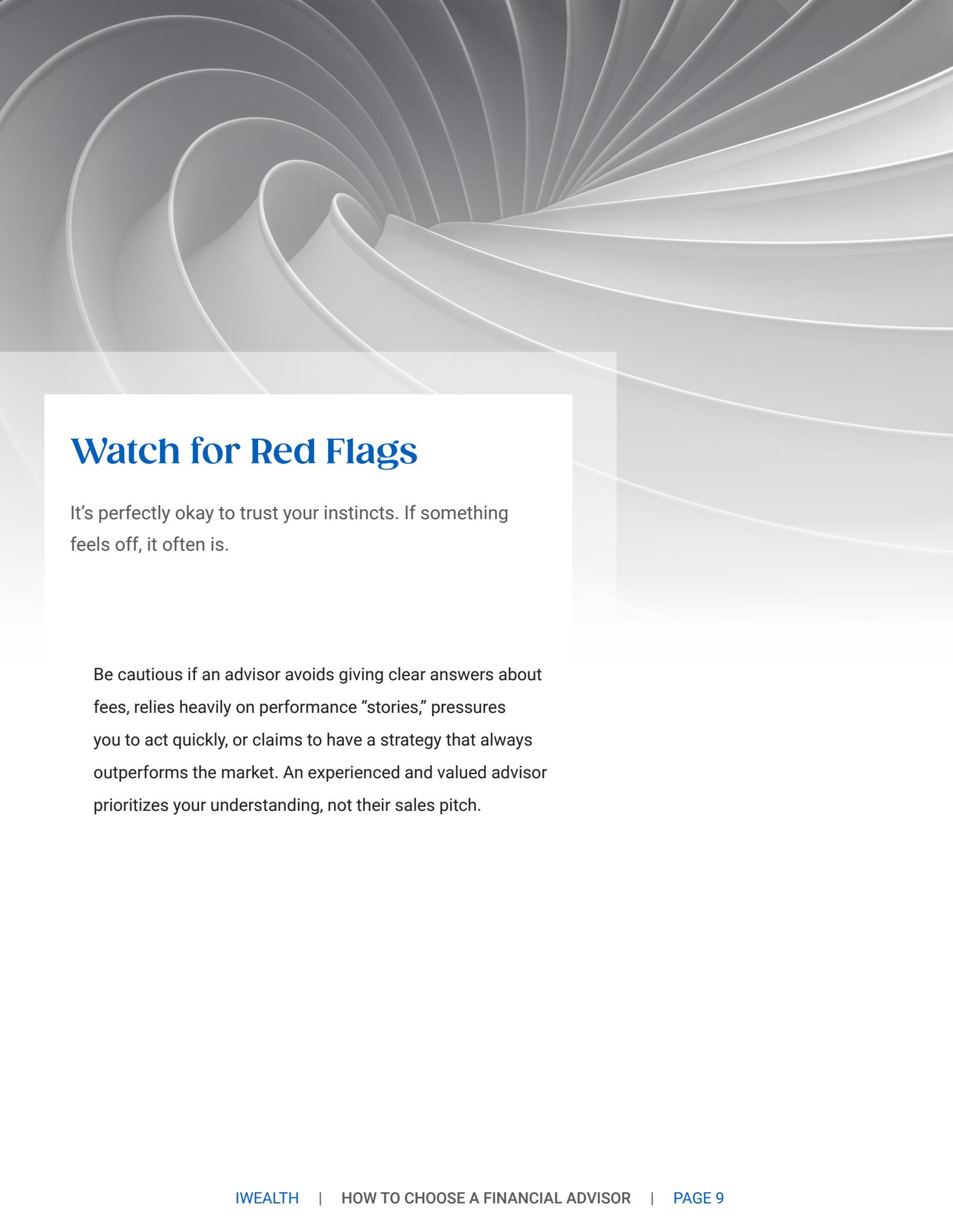
- "How would you help me stay disciplined during a market downturn?"
- "What happens if I call with a concern or need guidance quickly?"

These simple questions reveal a lot about communication, availability, and support.

Most importantly, pay attention to how you feel during the meeting.

- Do you feel listened to?
- Respected?
- Rushed?

Your comfort level matters just as much as any document or credential.



Watch for Red Flags

It's perfectly okay to trust your instincts. If something feels off, it often is.

Be cautious if an advisor avoids giving clear answers about fees, relies heavily on performance “stories,” pressures you to act quickly, or claims to have a strategy that always outperforms the market. An experienced and valued advisor prioritizes your understanding, not their sales pitch.

Make Your Choice With Clarity and Confidence

When everything lines up: your goals, the advisor's qualifications, the firm's approach, and the personal connection, you'll feel it. That's when you know you're stepping into a partnership that will grow with you, adapt with you, and help you make smart choices at every stage of life.

If you'd ever like to explore how iWealth supports clients using the **FDC Plan On Purpose**® financial planning system, you're always welcome to [reach out](#).

Whether you're planning for retirement, navigating life transitions, or simply ready to get more organized financially, finding the right advisor should give you clarity, not confusion.

MEET YOUR WEALTH ADVISORS



Brad Connors

CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER, CWS®, CEPA®

Brad Connors is the President and CEO of iWealth, with over 30 years of experience in financial planning and wealth management. Brad specializes in working with business owners and their families, with the goal of serving as the trusted “quarterback” to help organize and manage their financial lives.

In addition to his leadership role, Brad is also an accomplished author and speaker, known for his book “Fish Don’t Clap: Planning for a Purposeful Retirement.”

Brad and his wife, Trudi—his high school sweetheart—reside in Waterville, MN. They have two adult children, Kendra and Corbin, and enjoy spending time on the lake, traveling, and attending sporting events. In his spare time, Brad is an avid golfer, hunter, and fisherman, and he loves traveling with his family.



MEET YOUR WEALTH ADVISORS



Shawn Pomeroy

VICE PRESIDENT, CPFA®

Shawn joined iWealth in 2012 as Vice President with a focus on project management and process improvement. Today, Shawn's primary focus is on advising clients and retirement plan participants and helping them determine and working toward achieving their financial goals. Shawn also works closely with small business owners to design and manage their 401k plans. Shawn holds a Professional Plan Consultant designation and enjoys being a fiduciary in advisory relationships as he works with individual clients and retirement plan participants with financial planning and goal based savings plans.

Prior to joining iWealth, Shawn has worked both in the financial industry as a registered representative and in the manufacturing sector with extensive experience in building client focused teams in Human Resources, Operations, Manufacturing and Quality Assurance.

Shawn resides in Waseca with his wife Tracy where they have raised two sons. In his spare time, Shawn enjoys volunteering in groups that protect and aid the residents of Waseca County through being active in the SkyWarn and the Waseca County Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) programs, instructing several different Red Cross first aid courses and remains an active leader in the Scouting program.



MEET YOUR WEALTH ADVISORS



Gary Guentzel

RETIREMENT, INVESTMENT & ESTATE PLANNER

Gary began his career in the financial services industry in 1978. He is a founding partner of Estate & Financial Services and is an LPL Registered Representative. With many years of experience in investment management, retirement, estate and financial planning, Gary believes in being a financial quarterback and a team player with other professionals.

Gary and Tammra are the proud parents of their daughters Ciara, Calissa, Alyx and Tory. Gary also appreciates a love of the outdoors and is involved in farming and gardening. When not working with clients, Gary enjoys spending his time hunting, fishing, playing softball and spending time with his family which includes several dogs and pet ducks.



MEET YOUR WEALTH ADVISORS



JP Eykyn

WEALTH ADVISOR, CRPC™

Johnathon “JP” Eykyn has been a dedicated Wealth Advisor at iWealth since May 2021. He is a graduate of Waseca High School and went on to pursue a degree in Financial Economics while playing hockey at Gustavus Adolphus College. JP holds his SIE, Series 7, and Series 66 licenses through LPL Financial, as well as the CRPC designation.

Residing in Waseca, MN, JP shares his home with his wife, Sally, and their German Shorthaired Pointer, Koda. He is actively involved in the community as a member of the Waseca Rotary Club. In his free time, JP enjoys a variety of outdoor activities, including spending quality moments with family and friends, golfing, playing hockey, hunting, and making the most of the fleeting summer months.





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507-835-9111 | www.iWealth4me.com