

# KIM: Letting go is one investment you'll never regret

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Year-end is traditionally a time for reflection and introspection. With the hope and clean slate of the New Year, it's also a time for making changes in your life.

Carl Richards is a Certified Financial Planner (CFP), founder of [www.behaviorgap.com](http://www.behaviorgap.com), columnist for *The New York Times* and author. Richards has the uncanny ability of conveying sometimes complex investment concepts in a common sense manner, often with a sketch on a cocktail napkin.

In a recent column, Richards referenced a story from Jon Muth's book, *Zen Shorts*.

*"Two traveling monks reached a town where there was a young woman waiting to step out of her sedan chair. The rains had made deep puddles and she couldn't step across without spoiling her silken robes. She stood there, looking very cross and impatient. She was scolding her attendants. They had nowhere to place the packages they held for her, so they couldn't help her across the puddle.*

*"The younger monk noticed the woman, said nothing, and walked by. The older monk quickly picked her up and put her on his back, transported her across the water, and put her down on the other side. She didn't thank the older monk; she just shoved him out of the way and departed.*

*"As they continued on their way, the young monk was brooding and preoccupied. After several hours, unable to hold his silence, he spoke out. 'That woman back there was very selfish and rude, but you picked her up on your back and carried her! Then, she didn't even thank you!'*

*"I set the woman down hours ago,' the older monk replied. 'Why are **you** still carrying her?'"*

According to Richards, "there is an actual cost to holding onto things we should let go of. It can come in the form of anger, frustration, resentment or something even worse. The question is can you really afford to keep paying the bill?"

"The faster we learn to drop our emotional dead weight, the more room we create for something better. We have only so much bandwidth, time and energy. Do we really want to invest any of our precious resources—financial or otherwise—into something that will return nothing but misery?"

Richards acknowledges letting go can be emotionally difficult. Not everyone deserves forgiveness and he's not preaching some moral truth. No, he's talking about smart investing.

"Think of the energy and the time you put into the things that happen to you as investments. With that in mind, the simple question I'm asking is, what return are you getting by holding onto something painful, frustrating or irritating?"

"We get a much larger return on investments we make into love, happiness and personal well-being, than we do investing in hate, anger and indignation. By continuing to invest in the things that hurt you, you only cause yourself more hurt."

In sum, the things we have the most trouble letting go of are the things we need to let go of the most. As we head into 2017, pick something to set down. Then drop it and pause to savor what it feels like to no longer carry that burden and pay that price. Invest that extra in something that's more productive and makes you happy. You won't regret it.



*provide information reasonably sufficient upon which to base an investment decision and should not be considered a recommendation to purchase or sell any particular stock or other investment.*