

# THE MOUNTAIN PASS



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Spring Newsletter

## Responsible Investing

I was asked the other day why investing with companies that have good environmental, social and governance policies is important to me.

Here is what I said: "I have been following this distinctive approach for a long time. It has been beaten down by mainstream advisors for so long, but in the last few years it has been coming out of the woodwork and now, in my opinion, it is more important for us to use our wallets to direct the way that companies work."

No more bologna about 'investor first'!

We need to hold big companies accountable for what they do to the environment (abandoning an oil spill and focusing funds on rebranding is not ok), what they do socially (forcing their employees to collect food stamps in the US because their wages are so low is not ok) and what they do financially (storing profits offshore to avoid income taxes in their home countries is not ok).

Lets look a little closer at responsible financial and business practices as that's my jam.

"US President Dwight Eisenhower's administration had the highest marginal tax rate of 90% on revenue over \$400,000 (approximately \$6M in today's dollars).

BUT - not many people actually paid that amount because they were enticed to spend the money they were making, and rarely made it to that net income! Put simply, if a company pays their employees more, they deduct that from their revenue and their taxable income is lower, ergo they pay less tax.

What happens when they do this?

The employees making more money can actually spend more, they don't need to rely on government benefits (so not as much of a strain on the government coffers) and the company can actually feel good.

In short, companies need to be accountable for what they do, and SRI/PRI/ESG funds support this!

Let's think about the world we are going to leave for our future generations! I will explain more about this type of investment funds on the back page.

*Spring is nature's way of saying, 'Let's Party!'*

- Robin Williams



# FEATURE BUSINESSES



## David Barker, Abundance Canada

David Barker is a Gift Planning Consultant with Abundance Canada, a registered, Canadian public foundation. With 40 years of experience in financial services and a high degree of integrity, David guides individuals and businesses, of any means, on the path toward a Generosity Plan (TM), unleashing the power of purpose, strategy, and efficiency in their charitable giving.

David built a career in insurance, investments, and banking. During that time, he began to understand that generosity is an integral part of a financial plan. As a financial advisor, he took great joy in helping his clients incorporate generosity, bringing balance to their financial plan and allowing them to give back to their community, their country, and the world. When an opportunity arose to devote all his time to generosity planning, he jumped at it. A key factor in deciding to join was that Abundance Canada does not fundraise for any specific charity, rather it connects donors to the causes they love.

David describes himself as a generosity Sherpa, guiding people and businesses in identifying their charitable goals, exploring the most efficient ways to achieve them today, over time and after we are gone, and then making it happen. Canada's tax system provides exceptional incentives for giving; however, that is just part of why we give. Whether you would like to bring focus and efficiency to your giving, or you are just beginning to explore ways to incorporate generosity into your financial plan, David is available for a complimentary consultation at [dbarker@abundance.ca](mailto:dbarker@abundance.ca). To learn more about David and the Generosity Plan, visit [www.abundance.ca](http://www.abundance.ca).

## Nicole Hewat, World Tree Chocolate

World Tree Chocolate was created with the desire to introduce more Guelphites to high quality, truly ethical craft chocolate. With wonderful support from community, both local and international, World Tree has blossomed into a celebration of diversity.

While we still sell a wide range of bean-to-bar chocolate bars from around the world on our website, we also strive to educate about the diversity that flavour has to offer. This has led to a lot of pairings being featured on our Instagram ([@worldtreechocolate](https://www.instagram.com/worldtreechocolate)), focusing on food grown by local organic farmers. We are sure to tag local farms and businesses, so check out our posts to learn more about where to find delicious food around Guelph.

Art, especially painting, has become a big part of our offerings as well. The outer husk of the cocoa beans can be used to make beautiful pigment and paint. Cocoa butter can also be mixed with natural pigments



to create something like an oil paint that doesn't dry. You can find a range of paintings made with cocoa husk ink/paint, and a book illustrated with photos of cocoa butter paintings on [our website](#) and Instagram.

We feel it is important to incorporate our values into our business model, so along with sharing information through our social media, we donate 10% to organizations doing great work, like Afri-Can FoodBasket.

Chocolate is a treat that has been with us for so long, but isn't widely understood. We invite you to explore all that chocolate truly has to offer!





## Jesse Tetrault (PTS, FIS), Bent Bar Fitness

Jesse (she/her) provides personal training, online training, and group fitness through her one-woman enterprise, Bent Bar Fitness. Getting into exercise is really hard work, but Jesse is here to create an environment where you can thrive. At Bent Bar, training sessions are all about health, longevity and feeling good in your body. You'll never see a scale or a measuring tape because fitness is about how you feel, not what you can lose.

Bent Bar Fitness started as a response to the all-too-many bad experiences with gym culture. After Jesse heard horror stories from friends, she decided to make her own space for anyone who wants to feel more comfortable while exercising. Her approach is body neutral, and focuses on incremental improvements to overall health, happiness and wellbeing through movement, healthy habits and spending time outdoors.

Currently Jesse is offering a monthly walking challenge for anyone who is interested in getting their steps in. There is also a Facebook group to connect with other local walkers! Once the spring comes back, there will be outdoor fitness in the park. You can buy a class pack early and get a discount! If you're looking for a personalized approach, Jesse offers 1-on-1 personal training and partner training, either online through Zoom or at the studio in Downtown Guelph. There is also online programming if you want to train on your own time. Please visit [www.bentbarfitness.com](http://www.bentbarfitness.com) for more information or to schedule a free consultation (through our contact page).



## Shanan Cunningham, Embrace Network

Embrace Network Guelph is a community of heart-centred entrepreneurs who come together to connect, learn, and grow their businesses. We are currently offering networking meetings virtually using Zoom with a focus on getting to know each other. There are many networking events focused on passing out business cards and crossing your fingers, hoping that someone will contact you, but Embrace Network is different: Shanan Cunningham uses her background in training design to help entrepreneurs develop memorable referrals that build trust.

How do we do that? At our meetings, everyone gets an opportunity to introduce themselves, describe their business, and answer the question of the day brought forth by the facilitator.

Shanan likes to challenge members to share their obstacles and successes in a collaborative discussion. We provide constructive, supportive feedback for each other. We explore each other's value propositions, goals, barriers, and successes. At the end of a meeting, everyone knows each other better and has insight to how each person operates their business. This generates quality referrals. The kind of referral that builds trust and inspires the person to take action and contact them.

If you are looking for a different networking experience, one where people will know who you truly are and why you do what you do, and are able to give you great referrals - check out Embrace Network every Monday at 1:00pm and every Thursday at 10:30am EST. Details can be found on [Facebook](#) and Instagram [@embracenetworkguelph](#).





## What is responsible investing?

This model of investing puts environmental, social, and governance issues at the forefront of the selection and management process of investments. What are some examples of ESG issues that are looked at in the management process?

**Women in leadership.** According to the CSA, women hold only 14% of all board seats of publicly-traded companies in Canada. And about 40% of Canadian boards are all-male. This is a problem not only because it is ethically problematic, but also because companies with strong representation of women on their boards tend to outperform on a number of financial metrics.

**Executive compensation.** Over the past two decades, compensation awarded to top Canadian executives has grown at a much faster rate than wages paid to the average Canadian worker. This growth in CEO pay can contribute to rising social inequality, negative media attention and reputational risk for the companies involved, and raises questions about a company's overall governance and incentive structures.

**Climate change.** There is a broad consensus among governments that the world needs to transition to a low-carbon economy to maintain a safe and stable climate. Responsible investors need to understand how companies are managing their exposure to climate-related risks and opportunities.

If you would like to learn more about transitioning your portfolio over to funds that use ESG-based investing principles, contact me and we can discuss the idea further.

## Your homework this spring:

Review your investment portfolio and do some research about what those investments are used for. See if you can determine what they are funding, how they treat the environment, how they treat and compensate their employees and what their reputation is for financial practices and business management.

## Weekly Wednesday Webinar's With Wright Wealth!

**Examples of webinar topics:**  
- Aunt Millie's Estate  
- Responsible Investments

Webinars are held via  
Microsoft Teams

Email [trevor@wrightwealth.ca](mailto:trevor@wrightwealth.ca) for more info or to be put on the invitation list.



(\*) Life Insurance, Group Benefits, segregated funds and services provided through Group Medical Services, Financial Horizons Group, The Edge Benefits Inc., and Carte Risk Management Inc. (\*\*) Mutual Funds provided through Carte Wealth Management Inc. (\*\*\*) Banking products & services offered through referral arrangement. (\*\*\*\*) Tax preparation and services provided through Touchpoints Tax Preparation Services.

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