

Is paying higher financial advisor fees worth it?

How scoring works

- Behavior & execution = 2× weight*
 - Everything else = 1× weight
 - Check all that apply, then apply weights.
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1. Behavior & decision-making (2× weight)

- I've panic-sold or stopped investing during downturns
- I chase trends or "hot" investments
- I overtrade or constantly tinker
- I regret major past financial decisions

Raw score: ___ / 4

Weighted score: Raw × 2 = ___ / 8

2. Accountability & execution (2× weight)

- I know what to do but don't always do it
- I delay rebalancing, saving increases, or planning tasks
- I want a second opinion before big decisions

Raw score: ___ / 3

Weighted score: Raw × 2 = ___ / 6

3. Tax & income complexity (1×)

- Multiple income streams (W-2 + 1099, rentals, business)
- Equity compensation (RSUs, ISOs, NSOs)
- High marginal tax bracket (≈32%+)
- Tax strategy materially affects my outcomes

Score: ___ / 4

4. Life complexity & competing goals (1×)

- Multiple large goals competing for cash flow
- Unsure how to prioritize or sequence goals
- Major life decisions with financial impact

Score: ___ / 3

5. Wealth, estate & downside risk (1×)

- Net worth ~\$500k+ or growing rapidly
- Estate, legacy, or charitable planning matters
- A mistake here would be hard to reverse

Score: ___ / 3

Total weighted score

Add all weighted sections:

Section	Score
Behavior (max 8)	
Accountability (max 6)	
Complexity & wealth (max 10)	
Total score	

How to interpret your weighted score

0–6 → DIY is likely optimal

- Strong behavior
- Low mistake risk
- Fees likely outweigh benefits

Best fit: DIY investing, occasional checkups

7–13 → Hybrid advice sweet spot

- Either moderate complexity **or** mild behavioral risk
- Guidance likely improves consistency

Best fit: Flat-fee or subscription financial planner

14–19 → Full-service likely adds value

- Behavioral risk or execution gaps dominate outcomes
- Delegation reduces expensive mistakes

Best fit: Fiduciary financial advisor

20–24 → Wealth management strongly justified

- High behavioral stakes + complexity
- Coordination, discipline, and execution matter more than cost

Best fit: Wealth manager with integrated planning

***Why behavior is weighted higher**

A single panic-sell decision can cost more than decades of advisory fees, while most complexity issues compound slowly.

This weighting aligns with research on **behavioral gap** and real investor returns.

Reference:

AARP: [Interview an Advisor™ tool](#)

Bankrate: [How to find a financial advisor near you - 5 ways to get matched with the right one](#)

Example of completed assessment:

1. Behavior & decision-making (2× weight)

- I've panic-sold or stopped investing during downturns
- I chase trends or "hot" investments
- I overtrade or constantly tinker
- I regret major past financial decisions

Raw score: 0 / 4

Weighted score: Raw × 2 = 0 / 8

2. Accountability & execution (2× weight)

- I know what to do but don't always do it
- I delay rebalancing, saving increases, or planning tasks
- I want a second opinion before big decisions

Raw score: 1 / 3

Weighted score: Raw × 2 = 2 / 6

3. Tax & income complexity (1×)

- Multiple income streams (W-2 + 1099, rentals, business)
- Equity compensation (RSUs, ISOs, NSOs)
- High marginal tax bracket (≈32%+)
- Tax strategy materially affects my outcomes

Score: 3 / 4

4. Life complexity & competing goals (1×)

- Multiple large goals competing for cash flow
- Unsure how to prioritize or sequence goals
- Major life decisions with financial impact

Score: 2 / 3

5. Wealth, estate & downside risk (1x)

X Net worth ~\$500k+ or growing rapidly

X Estate, legacy, or charitable planning matters

A mistake here would be hard to reverse

Score: 2 / 3

Total weighted score

Add all weighted sections:

Section	Score
Behavior (max 8)	0
Accountability (max 6)	2
Complexity & wealth (max 10)	7
Total score	9

Score: 7–13 → Hybrid advice sweet spot

- Either moderate complexity **or** mild behavioral risk
- Guidance likely improves consistency

Best fit: Flat-fee or subscription financial planner