

Media Questions & Answers for Bennett Zimmerman

Author of *Go! Stock Go!*

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Biography

Bennett Zimmerman is a businessman-author who worked for BMG Music and the strategy consulting firm of Bain & Company. He studied at Harvard Business School, Dartmouth College, and he still credits Newcomb School, a Long Beach, California institution with teaching him everything he ever needed to know. In 1994, he opened Israel Emerging Growth Fund, L.P. and has worked as a financial advisor.

What is the one-sentence synopsis of your book?

Go! Stock! Go! is a humorous cartoon illustrated storybook showing how every member of a family, young or old, can learn how to make money work for them in the stock market today.

Please tell us a little about your book. Why is it a must-read?

Go! Stock! Go! introduces the Johnson Family and the investor personalities they encounter on their way to Wall Street. As the Johnsons learn the fundamentals of long-term investing, they begin to follow reports on their companies with increased investor savvy, and create lasting family values together. These concepts and practices can be applied to any family.

Let's meet the Johnson Family:

Day-trading Harry Johnson chases speculative tips from friends at the club . . . until his wife Sue helps him learn and teach the fundamentals of long-term investing to their skateboard-wielding son, Nathan.

As he learns, Nathan directs \$800 from his emerging lawn-mowing empire into shares of profitable companies that make money for him.

Nathan's sister, high school rebel Rita, rejects capitalism until she discovers she can invest in green companies that share her goal to clean-up the earth, and make profits, too. Rather than "Occupy Wall Street!" she changes direction to "Buy Wall Street!"

As the story unfolds, the Johnsons enjoy their time invested in watching The Business Channel with favorite reporter Dudley Bullmarket, who becomes a trusted partner in research. Through their shared experience, the Johnsons create lasting family values together.

Do you think adults will benefit from your book as well as children?

Go! Stock! Go! is a story on risk and reward written for people of all ages who work for their money, and want their money to work for them. While designed with children in mind, this book and is user friendly for kids, teenagers, and adults.

The fundamental mechanics and math required to evaluate stocks are presented in an understandable format with a memorable storyline that challenges understandings of risk and reward, while making investing money even more fun than spending it.

Go! Stock! Go! offers an advanced section entitled "Let's Talk Stock" to provide an added level of knowledge for older readers. As a life-long companion, ***Go! Stock! Go!*** does not talk down to kids. It also challenges adults to learn along with their kids the investment math and investment maturity required for long-term success in investing.

What do you think is an appropriate age for learning about stocks and investing? For money management?

Go! Stock! Go! is written in a fun and understandable format for kids, but is also unintimidating to adult members of a family searching for straightforward ways to explain the stock market to their kids(and themselves!).

Go! Stock! Go! relies on arithmetic and introduces new terms for financial measures and ratios, similar to what a student might find in middle school math and science.

In practical terms, young investors will also require a parent or guardian to set up a custodial account with them.

Is there a message you want readers to take from your books?

The primary message of ***Go! Stock Go!*** is that saving should begin early in life. Early savings from allowances, gifts, and earnings is money that can stay and work a lifetime for them.

If you could give a stock market investor your three biggest advice tips, what would those be?

1. Stock tips or any casual recommendations should not be the basis of your investment choice.
2. Stocks are only pieces of companies, and those companies should already be familiar to that investor.
3. Stock investors need not be intimidated. Even beginning investors can easily understand often used terms and measurements to determine for themselves whether a stock is expensive or cheap.

Where did the idea come from for your books?

After storing most of my textbooks from K-8 through Harvard Business School, very few books remained on my bookshelves - except for the usually profound books by Dr. Seuss, which contain important lessons for life.

With most financial texts barely understandable - even by university students - I wrote ***Go! Stock! Go!*** to prove that the stock market could be made clear to children and adults through the use of straightforward prose and drawings, much as I would have imagined while growing up.

If *See Jane Run* could teach me to read, then ***Go! Stock! Go!*** can teach stock investing to anyone.

What other books would you compare this book to within your genre?

Rich Dad, Poor Dad is similar in that it compared people with different spending and investment practices. ***Go! Stock! Go!*** will appeal to *Rich Dad, Poor Dad* readers who might have children or young relatives with whom they'd like to share fundamentals of stock market investing.

Once, after attending a Children Bookwriters Convention, I found that very few books were written for advanced children, or adults like myself who still enjoy the storybook format well past our youth.

How did you become interested in stock market investing?

I remember The Stock Market Game (from Whitman) that we played in the 1970s. The board featured the names of well-known companies. With the roll of the dice, the prices for half of the stocks would move up, while the others would move down.

Players learned to buy shares near the low-end of the trading range, and to sell shares near the high-end.

The game might have introduced casino-like tactics to children without explaining what stock, or shares, in a company really were in the first place – pieces of companies that either generated profits or losses for their investors.

Are your characters based on real or imaginary people?

Like most situation comedy families, the Johnsons from *Go! Stock! Go!* are the prototypical 1950s *Leave It to Beaver* type of family, which has transitioned through many eras where mothers have assumed leadership roles, teenagers have developed higher social conscience, and youth have become savvy at a younger age. Although children quickly learn and acquire skills with new technology, they still need their parents' experience, expertise, guidance, and wisdom.

The father, Harry Johnson, reminds me of the dad in *Dennis the Menace*. Skateboard-wielding Nathan reminds me of Bart Simpson, while his sister Rita, the high-school Russian major, is a cause-driven social activist.

When did you begin investing? Any humorous or poignant stories to share?

My mom came to this country without a penny or a high-school education, and eventually became a pediatrician by profession. She encouraged us to make long-term dreams and to begin saving for them with pennies placed into an old-fashioned piggy bank.

When the piggy banks overflowed with coins or dollar bills, she helped us make deposits at the bank using our own savings books. My mother taught us how to ask for updates from tellers and use vintage machines that cranked out magical interest payment statements – funds which augmented our own diligent efforts.

As my siblings and I grew older, my mother set up custodial accounts to purchase shares in utility companies. She showed us how to follow their performance in the newspaper and told us to watch for the arrival of dividend checks, which we also deposited into our savings accounts.

Mom showed us how saving and investing money could be even more fun than spending it.

Why did you become a writer?

My unique approach to writing is to make difficult topics easy using clarity and humor. I became a writer to explain complicated concepts in simple terms by imagining that I'm teaching the young fifth-grader who still resides in me and other readers.

During our grammar school years we learned with text, bold images, and easy examples. This approach made early lessons fun, relevant, and understandable.

However, higher education and jargon-filled academic texts have added layers of complexity, making retention difficult even for university students. Such barriers don't help those newly interested in learning about any subject.

Decades ago, business leaders adopted use of power point presentations to visually explain financial concepts, which were formerly understood only by those with advanced training in accounting, business, or mathematics.

Without needing to earn tenure or a PhD, I can write with the same excitement and sense of wonder we experienced as children during our first grade-school writing assignments. In fact, one of my favorite teachers, Mr. Spivey, always reminded us to write with pizzazz.

Who are your favorite authors and books?

G-d, King David, Ayn Rand, and Elton John. G-d, for providing a Beginning, Middle, and hope for a better End. King David, for bringing twelve tribes together in peace as one. Ayn Rand, a Russian immigrant, for explaining in 1000+ pages why capitalism helped everybody. And Elton John for his resiliency and friendship through song – and for teaching a generation how to play piano a bit differently from those who came before him.

Any hidden talents you'd like to share with readers?

I'm also a singer and piano player, and recently recorded under the stage name of Toby Bennett!

What should people ask you about, but seldom do?

Questions outside of the stock market which impact it, such as why I believe there is a very optimistic scenario for our planet. This scenario and solutions doesn't come just from common sense, respect, and the golden rules most of us master while growing up. Our future must also include an understanding of how our economy succeeds in providing jobs and wealth to all its participants.

For Americans, our ideas about political democracy and protection of individual rights serves as a backbone to our happiness as a society, and as a beacon to other leaders in the world today.

What (or who) inspires your writing?

I'm inspired when people set aside their intimidation of expert topics and begin to use their education and common sense to expand their understanding of topics that were once the exclusive domain of experts.

For example, American presidents Jefferson, Madison, and Monroe, as well as other participants involved in the U.S. Constitution, relied on new ideas and sound judgement to create a living document which has helped make the United States, and the world, a better place.

Literacy, in any topic, has always produced a more lively and enlightened audience, which is better equipped to join in discussion with teachers, leaders, and experts.

What's the best fun letter you've received?

A woman told me she read ***Go! Stock Go!*** with her 13 year-old daughter. They learned a new subject together, and used this knowledge to improve their lives.

If you could tell your readers anything, what would that be?

I have six simple tips for readers and new investors:

1. Write down the names of ten companies you know.
2. Search for the symbols of those companies with any search engine, or on any financial website.
3. Use the terms and measures to compare companies: P/E Ratio, Dividend Payout Rate, and Market Cap (or size). (Learn how to easily calculate these measurements in ***Go! Stock! Go!***)
4. Investor savvy comes over time. With practice, you'll soon be able to determine whether a stock is over- or under-valued.
5. Understanding the stock market becomes easier with practice, and can be a friendly topic for everyone.
6. And, ***Go! Stock! Go!*** makes the new investor journey fun.

Do you have a Website or Blog?

I enjoy hearing from readers at bennett@gostockgoinvest.com. Visit me at www.gostockgoinvest.com, or on Goodreads at http://www.goodreads.com/author/show/8939165.Bennett_Zimmerman.

Where can readers find Go! Stock! Go!?

Find ***Go! Stock! Go!*** at these online retailers, or order from any bookstore.

Amazon: <http://www.amazon.com/Bennett-Zimmerman/e/B00QHDA000>
Barnes & Noble: <http://www.barnesandnoble.com/w/go-stock-go-bennett-zimmerman/1120428999?ean=9780990789017>

What are you working on now?

The Fourth Way World, a work that examines how business discipline offers a way to measure top-line improvements in the quality of human, economic, and political rights throughout the world.