invest in, which sounds cool, though they're really just regular off-the-shelf exchange traded funds. Still, they're a much better deal than investing in an expensive CBA-Colonial managed fund.

OK, that's the positive. Now for one big negative. The only reservation I have with all these investing apps is they can lead to you checking your balance too much. The best thing you could do is to delete the app off your phone and forget about it for a few years while you focus on your fiancee.

Forewarned is forearmed

Janelle writes: One minute I was living the high life at a business awards night in Cairns — two weeks later I was diagnosed with breast cancer. I heard the big "C word" and felt the walls come crashing in around me. What followed was six months of high-dose chemo, an operation, eight weeks of radiation, and another six months of preventative chemo. Yet I am happy! I am living in the present moment, and above all else my finances are in order — no credit card debt and only $80,000 left on my mortgage. The trick was that (before my illness) I'd read your book, Scott. I have also had the courage to put all my financials in order for my family. Thank you, sending positive vibes your way.

Barefoot responds: In a week that's been dominated by front-page doom and gloom finance headlines, your story stands out like a shining star. People waste a lot of effort thinking about things they have zero control over, but putting off the things they have total control over, like getting your own situation sorted. Here's to your continued health and happiness. You Got This!

The Barefoot Investor for Families: The Only Kids' Money Guide You'll Ever Need
HarperCollins
RRP $29.95

Time to stop scaredy-pants naysayers

NOEL WHITTAKER

IT'S been a turbulent week for investors, with share markets jumping all over the place in response to factors that include a trade war with China and civil disobedience in Hong Kong.

Volatility is nothing new, but it does have the potential to worry inexperienced investors. One morning they wake up and the markets are showing a sea of green — they sigh in relief and hope the market is resuming its upward movement. The next day it's all red, they feel sick and groan, "is this going to be the start of another GFC?"

Those emotions are normal and predictable, but they are blown out of proportion by the media. As soon as the market has a couple of bad days we hear, "it's a fearful time for those about to retire!" It's a nonsense statement, but it feeds on the belief that shares are inherently risky, and should be avoided at all cost.

Think about it. A person who is aged 65 and about to retire with $600,000 in super has pretty good odds of living for another 30 years. Anybody who has studied the history of markets knows there are two certainties — the best returns will come from shares, and anybody investing in shares can expect four negative years out of every 10. This does leave six good ones to take advantage of.

So why is a person about to retire at 65 in a different position to someone aged 75, who's already retired? They both should have many years to look forward to, and can expect their portfolios to rise and fall along the way.

All that the media's scaremongering commentary does is make them lose sleep at night.

And then we get the worn-out expression, "as a result of market turbulence investors are fleeing to the safe haven of gold." More nonsense.

The only reason anybody invests in gold is because they believe that its price in the future will be higher than its price today. Maybe it will, maybe it won't, but as far as I'm concerned investing in gold is a gamble, and the last thing I want to do at my stage in life is to start gambling with my superannuation. For anybody to buy gold, there must be someone who is prepared to sell it: somebody is going to be right, and somebody is going to be wrong. If a punt is what you want, go to the races.

The problem is that too many investors have short memories. In October last year the headlines were: "Shares dive to 12-month low." Within two months they had changed to "Market posts best gain in two years" as the All Ordinaries hit 5662. At date of writing the All Ords was sitting around 6550, which is a gain of about 16 per cent since Christmas. This is a gain enjoyed by those of us who stick with our portfolios and don't try to time the market. But many investors missed out because they were scared off by the fall last October.

Repeatedly I hear words like "I am going to stick with cash until I get a clear sign the market is on the way up again." That's a fool's game. The biggest jumps always come after the biggest fall, and they come suddenly. The secret of investing success is to choose good assets and hang in there for the long term.

Noel Whittaker is the author of *Making Money Made Simple* and other books on personal finance. His advice is general in nature and readers should seek their own professional advice before making any financial decisions.

ASK THE EXPERT

Send your questions to Noel Whittaker **noelwhit@gmail.com** or tweet **@NoelWhittaker**

Q I am a 78-year-old widow and recently sold my home to go into retirement village. I want to invest the $250,000 left over from the sale.I have a superannuation account with North Online and was told the money could go into The Australian Property Fund, however I am worried about the 15 per cent death tax. I already have $120,000 in that fund. I have heard about insurance bonds and need to know the best thing to do with the $250,000.

A You are talking about the downsizing superannuation contribution which is treated as a non-concessional contribution and does not fall foul of the 17 per cent death tax rules that apply to the taxable component of your fund left to a non-dependent. There could be death tax on the earnings of the downsizing contribution, as well as the existing balance. The best way around it is to give a trusted person an enduring power of attorney with instructions to withdraw your super tax-free when death is imminent and place the money in your bank account. As for insurance bonds, the fund pays tax at 30 per cent from the first dollar earned.

Don't let tech put bullies in the box seat

WORKPLACE MATTERS
Gary Martin

THE idea of trashing colleagues through bullying is far from new, nor is it news that repeated, unreasonable behaviour directed towards an individual or group of employees creates a risk to workplace health and safety.

Now a newer and more insidious form of bullying is taking hold of the modern workplace — cyberbullying.

It empowers perpetrators to cause even greater distress and humiliation to colleagues, enables them to act in a more reckless fashion, and to wreak havoc beyond the immediate workplace environment by allowing the abuse to spill into the public domain.

Cyberbullying is abhorrent workplace behaviour that takes the form of ongoing intimidation, threats and humiliation, amplified through technology. It represents a much bigger threat than more traditional forms of bullying.

For the workplace cyberbully, the possibilities of attack are endless. Often colleagues are not even aware they have been targeted until long after an attack has been launched.

While the most frequent and potentially damaging form of workplace cyberbullying makes use of social media to share rumours, outright lies or even personal photos, perpetrators can also harass colleagues though mobile phones, instant messaging and email.

Workplace cyberbullies can post threatening messages on a colleague's social media site, set up social media profiles to make fun of a co-worker, hack into a victim's personal accounts, tormenting them from within a colleague's user profile and among the victim's own connections.

Anonymous posts on social media are written and not spoken, enabling an element of permanency not often encountered with more traditional forms of bullying.

This serves to elevate a colleague's distress, not to mention the potential for such posts to be viewed by a wide audience to create even greater humiliation for the victim. And because cyberbullying is not restrained by time or location, harassment can continue outside the workplace to leave little if any respite for victims.

If you are experiencing bullying in your workplace, there are steps you should take in response.

As with any type of bullying, you should report this unacceptable behaviour to someone more senior or a workplace health and safety representative or, at the very least, a trusted colleague.

If you lodge a complaint, your employer should conduct an investigation in a timely and thorough manner, even if you are not able to identify the perpetrator.

Avoid the temptation to reply to messages that you receive because often your reaction will be exactly what a perpetrator will be looking for.

Keep all evidence of your bullying colleague's attacks on you. If the cyberbullying occurs through a social media site, attempt to block the source of the attack.

Above all, take the high road and attempt to maintain your composure at work — your goal needs to be to remain professional, calm and focussed.

Professor Gary Martin is chief executive at the Australian Institute of Management WA