



THE  ETTER TRADERS

THE BEAR MARKET PLAYBOOK

Navigate the Crypto Winter. Survive. Thrive.

2026 EDITION

TABLE OF CONTENTS

01	The Top-Bottom-Recovery-Rally (TBRR) Theory	5
	The Pattern That Changed Everything	
02	Why Bear Markets Are a Gift	16
	Reframing the Narrative	
03	The Bear Market Survival Checklist	20
	What to Do Right Now	
04	The Cycle Degradation Truth	26
	Why 97% of Coins Betray You	
05	How to Spot the Bottom	31
	The Signals That Matter	
06	Which Coins Survive Bear Markets	41
	Separating the Living from the Dead	
07	DCA Strategies That Actually Work	46
	Smart Accumulation Without the Stress	
08	Position Sizing for the Bottom	51
	Don't Go All In on the First Bounce	
09	The Bull Run Preparation Blueprint	55
	Be Ready Before Everyone Else	
10	Free Tools & Resources	60
	Your Arsenal	

DISCLAIMER

This document is for educational purposes only and does not constitute financial advice. Trading and investing in cryptocurrency involves substantial risk of loss. Past performance does not guarantee future results. Always do your own research and consult with a qualified financial advisor before making investment decisions. The author and The Better Traders are not responsible for any financial losses incurred from acting on information in this document.

A NOTE FROM AARON

Ladies and gentlemen, let me be real with you.

If you're reading this, you're already ahead of 99% of people in crypto. Not because this document contains some magic formula – it doesn't. But because you're doing the one thing almost nobody does: learning from the cycle while it's happening.

I've been in this market since 2017. I learned to trade during the 2018 bear market – one of the most brutal periods in crypto history. Bitcoin dropped 84% in exactly twelve months. Most people quit. Most people swore off crypto forever. And most people missed the greatest wealth-building opportunity of their lives.

I didn't quit. I studied. I traded. I developed systems. And when the recovery came, I was ready.

That bear market is the reason The Better Traders exists today. It's the reason I built the TBO indicator. It's the reason I've spent thousands of hours on YouTube teaching people how to read charts, manage risk, and think in cycles.

And now, the pattern that has been extremely accurate since 2013 has played out again. Bitcoin topped on October 6, 2025 at approximately \$126,000 – and the bear market is here.

This playbook is everything I know about how to handle it. Not just survive it – but use it as the launchpad for generational wealth.

Let's get to work.

– Aaron Dishner (MooninPapa)



CHAPTER 1

Top-Bottom-Recovery-Rally (TBRR) Theory

The Pattern That Changed Everything

CHAPTER 1

The Top-Bottom-Recovery-Rally (TBRR) Theory

The Pattern That Changed Everything

Ladies and gentlemen, what I'm about to share with you is the single most important framework I've ever developed for understanding crypto markets. I call it the Top-Bottom-Recovery-Rally theory.

This isn't some complicated algorithm. It's not based on Fibonacci retracements or Elliott Wave counts that take a PhD to understand. It's a simple, repeating four-year pattern that has held true since 2013, and once you see it, you can't unsee it.

Here's the cycle:

TOP → BOTTOM → RECOVERY → RALLY → repeat.

Four phases. Four years. Over and over again.

We built a free tool to visualize this — the Better Crypto Calendar (<https://calendar.thebettertraders.com>). It maps out the entire 4-year cycle alongside monthly performance heatmaps showing historical patterns. Open it right now if you want to see where we are in the cycle at a glance. Bookmark it. You'll be coming back to it a lot.

The 4-Year Bitcoin Cycle

Bitcoin historically follows a 4-year cycle pattern aligned with each new year. Understanding this pattern helps simplify your long-term strategy:



Top Year

The year Bitcoin heads toward its cycle peak. Distribution into euphoria or complacency.

2017, 2021, 2025...



Bottom Year

The descent to the cycle low. Capitulation and accumulation phase.

2018, 2022, 2026...



Recovery Year

Slow and steady recovery from the bottom. Building momentum for the next rally.

2019, 2023, 2027...



Rally Year

The explosive rally phase. Maximum opportunity and optimism.

2020, 2024, 2028...

This pattern was shared by [Aaron Dishner](#) from [The Better Traders](#) in December 2024 and has accurately marked the market phases, including the 2025 Top year.



Watch the full explanation on YouTube

The Crypto Calendar — The 4-Year Bitcoin Cycle visualized. Top → Bottom → Recovery → Rally, repeating every four years since 2013.

The Top-Bottom-Recovery-Rally Cycle: The Data Since 2013



The TBRR Theory – BTC Price Action 2013–2025

Let me lay it out for you:

Year	Phase	What Happened
2014	BOTTOM	Bitcoin crashed from ~\$1,100 to ~\$170. Blood in the streets.
2015	RECOVERY	Slow grind back. Nobody believed. Smart money accumulated.
2016	RALLY	Bitcoin started running. Broke previous highs. Excitement built.
2017	TOP	Bitcoin hit ~\$20,000. Euphoria. "This time is different."
2018	BOTTOM	Bitcoin dropped 84%. Crypto declared dead – again.
2019	RECOVERY	Quiet accumulation. Bitcoin rebuilt from \$3,200.

2020	RALLY	Institutional adoption. Bitcoin broke \$20K, then \$30K, then kept going.
2021	TOP	Bitcoin hit ~\$69,000. NFT mania. "Supercycle" narratives everywhere.
2022	BOTTOM	Bitcoin dropped 77%. FTX collapsed. Despair.
2023	RECOVERY	Quiet rebuilding. Bitcoin climbed from \$16,500.
2024	RALLY	Bitcoin broke all-time highs. ETF approvals. New ATH above \$100K.
2025	TOP	Bitcoin topped at ~\$126,000 on October 6, 2025. The cycle turned.
2026	BOTTOM	Where we are now.

"But Aaron, How Can You Be So Sure?"

I hear this all the time. And look – I'm not claiming to be a prophet. I'm a pattern trader. I follow the data. And here's what the data shows:

This pattern has repeated three complete times since 2014. That's not a coincidence. That's not cherry-picking. That's (Image 1: BTC/USD Monthly chart – all 4 TBRR cycles labeled with Top, Bottom, Recovery, Rally dates since 2013) over a decade of consistent behavior.

Now, could it break? Of course. But the burden of proof is on the cycle breaking, not on it continuing. When something works since 2013, you respect it until it doesn't.

"I've been preparing mentally for the bear market... This pattern has been extremely accurate since 2013."

The Drawdown Data: Severity Is Decreasing

Here's where it gets really interesting. Not only do bear markets happen like clockwork, but they're getting less severe each cycle.

Bear Market	Peak-to-Trough Drawdown	Duration
2011	-93.75%	—
2013–2015	-86.96%	~14 months
2017–2018	-84.00%	12 months (Dec to Dec)
2021–2022	-77.00%	12 months (Nov to Nov)
2025–2026 (projected)	~-72%	~12 months (projected)

Do you see the pattern? Each bear market is brutal, but less brutal than the last:

- 93.75% → 86.96% → 84% → 77% → ~72% (projected)

The market is maturing. More institutional money. More infrastructure. More believers who've been through cycles before and know to accumulate rather than panic sell.

What Does a 72% Drawdown Mean in Dollar Terms?

Let's do the math. Bitcoin topped at approximately \$126,000 on October 6, 2025. If it drops approximately 72% from that level:

BTC Top	72% Drop Puts It At...
\$126,000	~\$35,280

My base case target for the 2026 bottom: approximately \$35,000 Bitcoin.

Now, I know what you're thinking: "That sounds insane. Bitcoin at \$35K?" Ladies and gentlemen, in December 2017, if I told you Bitcoin would drop from \$20,000 to \$3,200, you'd have called me crazy too. And that was an 84% drop. I'm calling for a smaller drop than that.

What About Altcoins?

Here's where it gets painful. If Bitcoin drops 72%, expect altcoins to drop 90% to 95%.

That's not a typo. Ninety to ninety-five percent.

In every bear market, altcoins get absolutely devastated. Many never come back. We'll cover this in detail in Chapters 4 and 6, but for now, just understand: the bear market is exponentially worse for ALTs than for Bitcoin.

The Supporting Evidence

I don't just rely on the year pattern alone. Multiple technical indicators confirmed this framework:

The Better Traders Divergence Indicator – The Top-Spotter



BTC/USD Monthly – The Better Traders Divergence indicator flagging all four cycle tops with red signals. Five for five.

This is one of the tools I'm most proud of building. The Better Traders Divergence indicator identifies bearish divergence clusters – not just a single divergence, but groups of them stacking up. And it has flagged every single major top in Bitcoin's history:

Cycle Top	Year	Better Traders Divergence Signal
Post-first major rally	2011	Bearish divergence cluster present
First parabolic blow-off	2013	Bearish divergence cluster present
ICO mania peak	2017	Bearish divergence cluster present
NFT/DeFi euphoria peak	2021	Bearish divergence cluster present
Most recent peak	2025	Bearish divergence cluster confirmed

Five for five. And it just got confirmed again at the exact top in October 2025.

What makes a "cluster" different from a regular divergence? A single bearish divergence can be a false alarm – momentum dips briefly, then catches up to price. But when you see multiple divergences stacking on top of each other across indicators and timeframes, that's a cluster. It means the underlying momentum is systematically failing to keep up with price. The engine isn't just sputtering – it's running out of fuel.

The Better Traders Divergence indicator automates this detection. It scans for these clusters and highlights them directly on your chart, so you don't have to eyeball it. This is one of the exclusive tools available inside The Better Traders Club.

Monthly RSI Weakness – The Hidden Warning



BTC/USD Monthly – RSI divergence across 4 cycle tops (2013, 2017, 2021, 2025). Note the declining RSI peaks: 98.33 → 97.21 → 96.87 → 90.74.

Here's something most retail traders miss entirely: BTC's monthly RSI was making lower highs even as price made higher highs above \$100,000.

Let me break that down:

- In 2017, when BTC hit ~\$20,000, the monthly RSI peaked around 98.33
- In 2021, when BTC hit ~\$69,000 (a HIGHER price), monthly RSI peaked around 90.74 – lower than 2017
- In 2024–2025, BTC surpassed \$126,000 (MUCH higher price), but monthly RSI peaked even lower – around 75–80

Price was screaming higher. Momentum was screaming lower. This was macro-scale bearish divergence – the kind that plays out over months and years, not days.

Think of it like a car going uphill. In 2017, the engine was at full RPM. In 2021, it was straining. In 2025, it barely made the climb. The price can still go higher in the short term – engines don't die instantly – but the trend was unmistakable.

This RSI degradation across cycle tops is one of the most powerful supporting data points for the Top-Bottom-Recovery-Rally thesis. The market is maturing, gains are diminishing, and the correction was baked into the momentum structure.

On-Balance Volume (OBV) – Follow the Smart Money



BTC/USD Monthly – OBV with moving average. White boxes mark the OBV/MA crossover accumulation zones at each cycle bottom.

On-Balance Volume tracks cumulative buying vs. selling pressure. When price goes up on a given period, that period's volume is added to OBV. When price goes down, it's subtracted. Simple concept, powerful insight.

Here's what OBV told us leading into the top: it wasn't confirming the price highs.

At previous cycle tops, we saw OBV stall and flatten before the crash. The smart money – institutions, whales, experienced traders – was distributing (selling into strength) while retail was buying the hype. OBV caught this because volume on up-days was weakening relative to volume on down-days.

The OBV pattern at tops:

1. Price makes a new high → OBV makes a new high (healthy – trend confirmed)
2. Price makes another new high → OBV makes a lower high (warning – buying pressure fading)
3. Price consolidates or makes yet another high → OBV starts declining (danger – distribution in progress)

We saw this in 2017. We saw it in 2021. And we saw it again in 2025.

When you combine stalling OBV with declining RSI and Better Traders Divergence clusters, you get a triple-confirmation that the rally was running on fumes. Any one of these signals alone could be dismissed. All three together? That's a pattern that demands respect.

This dashboard concept reinforces that it's not just one signal – it's convergence.

BTC bear market drawdowns across 5 cycles – each cycle less severe than the last.

The Convergence: Why Three Signals Beat One



All Three Indicators Marking the Top – TBT Divergence, Monthly RSI, OBV

Let me tie this together, because the power isn't in any single indicator – it's in the convergence.

Indicator	What It Measures	Signal at Every Top?	2025 Result
Better Traders Divergence	Momentum cluster divergence	5/5 tops	Confirmed at \$126K top
Monthly RSI	Momentum strength	Declining at each top	Lower high confirmed
OBV	Buying vs. selling pressure	Stalled at each top	Failed to confirm highs

When all three align, the probability of a major top is historically 100%. Five cycles. Five tops. Five times all three signals fired.

I don't say this to scare you. I say this to prepare you. This is what me and everyone else in The Better Traders Club saw – expecting to see a loss of momentum, and that's exactly what happened. While everyone else was looking at price and seeing new highs, we were looking at momentum and seeing exhaustion. That's the difference between a trader and a gambler.

"But What About the Halving?"

I get this question constantly. Many analysts tie the crypto cycle to Bitcoin's halving events (the every-4-year reduction in mining rewards). And yes, halvings do happen roughly every four years.

But here's my take: the Top-Bottom-Recovery-Rally cycle is NOT tied to halvings.

The Top-Bottom-Recovery-Rally pattern is a purely year-by-year observation since 2014. Halvings have a definite role of Bitcoin's growth and distribution model over time. I should also add that the Halving does typically happen in the Rally years. But the Top-Bottom-Recovery-Rally framework stand on its own based on price action and market psychology. Don't overcomplicate it. The pattern is the pattern.

Looking Back: The Hubris at the Top

Now that we know the top is in, it's worth reflecting on just how complacent and arrogant the market became at the end of the Top year.

In late 2025, the predictions were absolutely outrageous. Bitcoin to \$500K. Ethereum to \$50K. "The supercycle is here." "The 4-year cycle is broken." Influencers and analysts were falling over each other with increasingly ridiculous price targets, convinced that this time – somehow – the pattern that had held since 2013 wouldn't apply to them.

Sound familiar? It should. We heard the exact same narratives in 2017 ("Bitcoin to \$1 million by 2020!") and in 2021 ("The supercycle means no bear market this time!").

Every single time, the market humbles those who ignore the cycle. Every single time, the people who respected the pattern came out ahead.

The lesson is simple: when everyone around you is making outrageous predictions and claiming the cycle is broken, that IS the cycle. That euphoria, that arrogance, that certainty – it's the final signal that the Top is in.

We saw it. We prepared. And now we execute.

The Bottom Line on the Top-Bottom-Recovery-Rally Theory

Here's what you need to take away from this chapter:

1. The 4-year Top-Bottom-Recovery-Rally cycle has been the most reliable pattern in crypto since 2013.
2. 2026 is a Bottom year – and we're in it.
3. Drawdowns are decreasing in severity – but a 72% BTC drop from \$126K still means ~\$35K.
4. Altcoins will be hit much harder – expect 90-95% drawdowns.
5. Multiple technical indicators confirmed this thesis – all three fired at the October 2025 top.
6. Have a plan for execution.

The rest of this playbook is about how you use this knowledge to come out the other side wealthier, smarter, and more prepared than ever.



CHAPTER 2

Why Bear Markets Are a Gift

Reframing the Narrative

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Why Bear Markets Are a Gift

Reframing the Narrative

I need you to hear me on this, because it goes against every instinct you'll have when the bear market is raging:

Bear markets are where fortunes are made.

Not bull markets. Bear markets.

Every single person who has made life-changing money in crypto did it the same way: they bought during the bear market when everyone else was too scared, too broke, or too disillusioned to even open their exchange app.

Think about it:

- If you bought Bitcoin at \$3,200 in December 2018 and held through the 2021 cycle top of \$69,000, that's a 21x return.
- If you bought Ethereum at \$80 in the 2018 bear and held to its 2021 peak of \$4,800, that's a 60x return.
- If you bought Solana at \$8 during the 2022 bear and held to its peak above \$295 in January 2025, that's a 31x return.

These aren't fantasy numbers. These are actual returns that actual people achieved – not through leverage, not through meme coins, not through luck – but by simply buying quality assets at bear market prices and holding through the Recovery, Rally, and Top years.

My Story: How the 2018 Bear Market Built Everything

Let me get personal for a moment.

I started getting serious about crypto trading in 2017, right when everything was going bananas. Like a lot of people, I got caught up in the euphoria. And like a lot of people, the 2018 bear market humbled me.

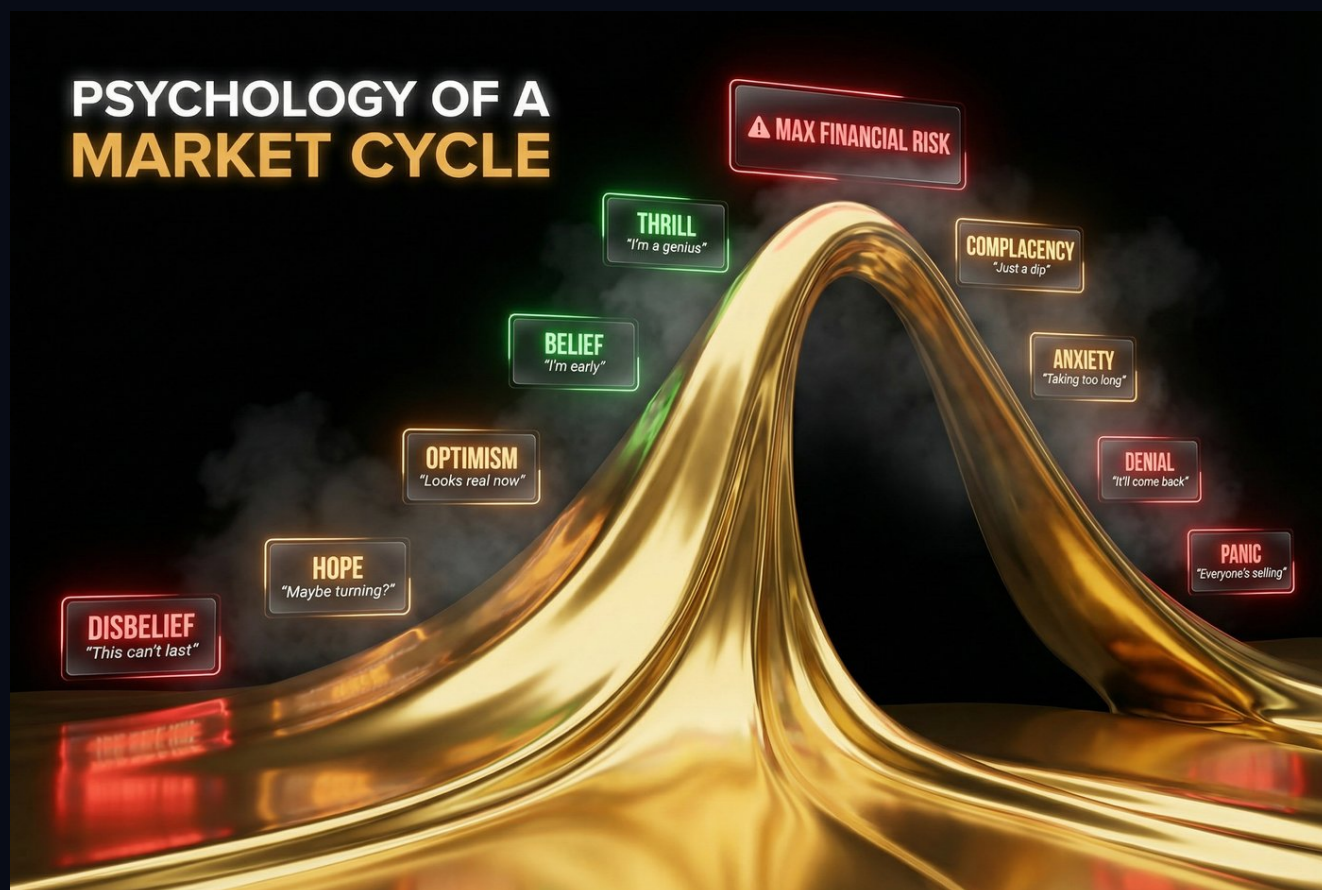
But here's the difference: I didn't quit.

Instead of walking away, I used that bear market to learn everything I could about trading. I studied charts. I developed indicators. I backtested strategies. And I traded – on the spot market, not with leverage. Just good old-fashioned buying low and selling high using something called "AB Trading" strategies.

During that bear market, I grew my portfolio significantly. Not because I was some genius, but because I had a system, I had discipline, and I had a market that was handing out discounts to anyone brave enough to show up.

That period is the foundation of my 15 Minutes to Financial Freedom course – the AB trading strategy that works in any market condition, bull or bear, because it's based on structure, not hope.

The Psychology Trap



The Psychology of a Bear Market

Here's why most people can't do what I'm describing. It's not a knowledge problem – it's a psychology problem.

During bear markets, your brain is working against you:

- Fear tells you the market will never recover
- Loss aversion makes you sell at the worst possible time
- Social proof – everyone around you is panicking, so you panic too
- Recency bias – you can only see the current pain, not the historical pattern
- Exhaustion – months of decline wear you down emotionally

This is exactly why the Top-Bottom-Recovery-Rally framework is so powerful. When you know the cycle, you can separate your emotions from your actions. You're not guessing. You're not hoping. You're following a pattern that has repeated since 2013.

The Bear Market Wealth-Building Math

Let me show you some simple math that should get you excited rather than scared.

Let's say you set aside \$10,000 in stablecoins during the Top year (2025) and deploy it strategically during the Bottom year (2026):

Investment	Bear Market Buy	Top Year Sell	Potential Return
Bitcoin	~\$35,000	~\$150,000+ (next cycle)	~4.3x (\$43,000)
Quality Alt #1	Down 90% from peak	Recovery to 50% of peak	~5x (\$50,000)
Quality Alt #2	Down 93% from peak	Recovery to 60% of peak	~8.6x (\$86,000)

Now, these are conservative estimates for the Recovery period – not even the next cycle's top. The point isn't the exact numbers. The point is this: \$10,000 deployed at the bottom has the potential to become \$50,000-\$100,000+ over the next cycle.

That's the gift. That's what bear markets offer to people who are prepared.

What Bear Markets Are Actually For

Let me reframe what a bear market really is:

- It's a sale. The same assets that were overpriced at the top are now on clearance.
- It's a filter. The weak projects die, leaving only the strongest standing.
- It's a classroom. You learn more about trading in six months of a bear market than in three years of a bull market.
- It's a reset. Leverage gets flushed. Scams get exposed. The market comes back healthier.
- It's an opportunity. The biggest wealth transfers in crypto happen during bears – from the impatient to the patient.

So as the bear market rages – I want you to remember this chapter. I want you to look at the red candles and see opportunity, not disaster.

The market emotion cycle – do the opposite of what your emotions tell you.

"In every bear market, there is a transfer of wealth – from the unprepared to the prepared."

– Aaron Dishner (MooninPapa)

CHAPTER 3

The Bear Market Survival Checklist

What to Do Right Now

CHAPTER 3

The Bear Market Survival Checklist



Bear Market Decision Tree – Hold, Reduce, or Accumulate

What to Do Right Now

Alright, let's get practical. Theory is great, but you need action steps. Here is your bear market survival checklist – things you should be doing right now while we're in the bear market.

We're in the storm now. The bear market is confirmed – Bitcoin topped at ~\$126K on October 6, 2025 and the cycle has turned. The time for preparation was during 2025. But it's not too late to take action. Here's what matters now.

THE CHECKLIST

1. Assess Your Current Position

If you're still holding significant positions from the 2024 rally and 2025 Top year, you need to make some hard decisions right now:

- Evaluate what you're holding – is it worth holding through the bear, or should you cut losses now?
- Move a portion to stablecoins (USDT, USDC) – capital preservation is key
- Pay yourself – if you have any remaining gains, take some profit to fiat. Real money. In your bank account.
- Remove trailing stops that are too tight – the volatility will shake you out

The goal is to have dry powder – capital ready to deploy at discount prices as the bear progresses.

2. Eliminate Leverage – Completely

Ladies and gentlemen, I cannot stress this enough: close every leveraged position immediately.

Leverage is the number one account killer in bear markets. It's not even close. I've seen people lose their entire portfolios – years of gains – because they were 5x long when the market dropped 30% in a week.

- Close all margin positions
- Close all futures positions
- If you're yield farming with borrowed assets, unwind it
- If you don't understand something fully, close it

Zero leverage. That's the rule. During a bear market, spot is king.

3. Audit Your Portfolio – Ruthlessly

Go through every single coin you hold and ask yourself one question:

"Will this project still exist and be relevant in 2028?"

If the answer is no, or you're not sure, sell it. During a bear market, weak projects don't just drop 90% – many of them go to zero. Permanently.

Here's a quick filter:

- Strong development team still shipping
- Real revenue or utility (not just hype)
- Top 50 by market cap with consistent volume
- Survived at least one previous bear market
- [!] Meme coins with no utility
- [!] Projects with anonymous teams

- [!] Anything that pumped 100x with no fundamentals
 - [!] Tokens you can't explain in one sentence
-

4. Build Your Stablecoin War Chest

Your stablecoin position is your ammunition for the rest of the bear market. Here's how I think about it:

- Target: As much as you can reasonably move to stablecoins while prices still have room to fall
 - Split across platforms: Don't keep everything on one exchange. Use 2-3 reputable exchanges plus a hardware wallet
 - Consider earning yield on stablecoins (conservatively) while you wait – but understand the risks of any platform you use
-

5. Secure Your Assets

Bear markets are when exchange collapses happen. FTX went down in the 2022 bear. Mt. Gox went down in the 2014 bear. The pattern is clear.

- Move significant holdings to a hardware wallet (Ledger, Trezor)
 - Never keep more than you can afford to lose on any single exchange
 - Enable 2FA on everything – preferably an authenticator app, not SMS
 - Write down and securely store your seed phrases
 - Test your recovery process – can you actually access your wallet if you need to?
-

6. Build Your Watchlist

During the deepest part of the bear market, you won't want to make emotional decisions. Build your watchlist NOW while you're thinking clearly:

- 5-10 coins you want to accumulate during the bear
- Target prices for each (I'll show you how to calculate these in Chapter 7)
- Allocation percentages – how much of your war chest goes to each
- Set alerts on TradingView or your platform of choice

We'll cover which coins to watch in Chapter 6.

7. Develop Your Trading Skills

The bear market is going to last approximately 12 months based on historical patterns. That's 12 months of opportunity – but only if you know how to trade.

Skills to develop NOW:

- Learn AB pattern trading (spot market)
- Understand TBO indicator signals
- Practice reading dominance charts
- Get comfortable with stablecoin dominance analysis

Use this time wisely. The bear market is the best classroom in crypto.

For deeper skills:

- Mastering Passive Income Course – Master the TBO Pro indicator and passive/bot trading strategies
 - 15 Minutes to Financial Freedom – Learn AB spot trading for bear market conditions
 - The Smarter Trader – Advanced active trading strategies and techniques
-

8. Protect Your Mental Health

This one isn't about money – it's about you.

Bear markets are emotionally brutal. Even when you're prepared, watching your portfolio drop day after day takes a toll. Here's what I recommend:

- Limit chart checking to 2-3 times per day maximum
 - Unfollow fear-mongering accounts on social media
 - Stay connected with a community that understands cycles (like The Better Traders Club)
 - Remember your plan – you have one now. Trust it.
 - Stay active – exercise, get outside, maintain your non-crypto life
 - Turn off push notifications from exchanges during high volatility
-

9. Set Calendar Reminders

Based on the Top-Bottom-Recovery-Rally framework:

- Q1-Q2 2026: Bear market in full swing – monitor for bottom signals
 - Q3-Q4 2026: Historical bottom zone – begin deploying capital (see Chapter 5 for signals)
 - Q1-Q2 2027: Recovery phase begins – full accumulation mode
-



CHAPTER 4

The Cycle Degradation Truth

Why 97% of Coins Betray You

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The Cycle Degradation Truth

Why 97% of Coins Betray You

This chapter alone is worth the download. What I'm about to share with you is one of the most important – and most ignored – truths in crypto:

97 out of 100 altcoins will not recover their previous all-time high in the next cycle.

97% of altcoins degrade cycle-over-cycle.

Let me say that again, because it needs to sink in: almost every altcoin performs worse in each subsequent cycle compared to the one before.

What Is Cycle Degradation?

Cycle degradation means that a coin's peak-to-peak return decreases with each market cycle. In other words:

- The 100x gem from 2017 becomes a 10x in 2021
- The 10x from 2021 becomes a 2x in 2025
- The 2x from 2025 becomes a 0.5x in 2029 (it never reaches its old high)

This isn't theory. This is data. We built an entire tool to track it – the Better Portfolio Planner (<https://planner.thebettertraders.com>) – and I've personally written over 100 detailed research notes inside that tool, one for every coin I've analyzed across multiple cycles. Each note includes my cycle-over-cycle assessment, degradation status, and forward-looking take.

That's hundreds of hours of research, curated in one place, free for you to use.

The Data: 97% Degrade

Here's what the Portfolio Planner data reveals across every token we've analyzed through multiple market cycles:

- ~97% of tokens show cycle-over-cycle degradation in returns
- Only ~3% maintained or improved their performance
- Average degradation: Returns decrease by approximately 60-80% each cycle

- Of the top 100 coins from January 2018, the majority never reached their 2017 highs – many don't even exist anymore
- Of the top 100 coins from January 2022, a significant percentage are already showing degradation patterns vs. 2021 peaks

This isn't cherry-picked data. This is the entire market, analyzed systematically. The Portfolio Planner lays it bare.

Real Examples of Degradation

Let me show you what this looks like in practice. These are real patterns from the Portfolio Planner data:

Classic Degradation – The "Fading Star"

Coin	2017 Cycle Return	2021 Cycle Return	2024 Cycle Return	Status
Example A (L1)	+8,500%	+1,200%	+350%	↘ Each cycle weaker
Example B (DeFi)	N/A (didn't exist)	+15,000%	+900%	↘ Degrading fast
Example C (Payment)	+45,000%	+600%	Never recovered ATH	Effectively dead

The "Dead on Arrival" – Never Recovered

Some coins from the 2017 top 20 never recovered their all-time highs. Not in 2021. Not in 2024. They're still down 80–95% from peaks set seven years ago. The Portfolio Planner tracks these so you don't make the mistake of "holding forever" on a coin that's in permanent decline.

The Rare Exceptions – The "Improvers"

Now, here's the exciting part. About 3% of coins actually improved cycle-over-cycle. These are the gems you want to find during the bear market:

What do the improvers have in common?

- Growing real-world adoption (not just speculation)
- Increasing developer activity each cycle
- Expanding into new use cases
- Strong tokenomics with controlled supply

The Portfolio Planner helps you separate the 97% from the 3%. That's its entire purpose. Open it. Read the notes. Use the data.

How to Read a Portfolio Planner Note

Each of my over 100 notes follows a consistent framework:

1. Cycle History – How the coin performed in each market cycle (peak returns, drawdowns)
2. Degradation Assessment – Is it degrading, stable, or improving?
3. Key Metrics – Market cap trajectory, dominance trend, volume patterns
4. Forward-Looking Take – My assessment of whether this coin is worth accumulating in the next bear
5. Risk Rating – High/Medium/Low for bear market accumulation

These aren't generic one-liners. They're full analytical notes, updated with each cycle's data. Think of them as over 100 individual research reports, all in one free tool.

Why Does Degradation Happen?

Several factors drive this pattern:

1. Market cap growth – It's mathematically harder to 100x from \$10 billion than from \$10 million
2. Competition – New, shinier projects steal market share each cycle
3. Dilution – Token unlocks and inflation eat into returns
4. Narrative shifts – What was exciting in 2021 (DeFi 1.0, basic NFTs) becomes old news
5. Developer attrition – Teams lose motivation or funding during bears

What This Means for Your Bear Market Strategy

The cycle degradation truth should fundamentally change how you approach the bear market:

1. Don't assume your 2024 winners will be your 2028 winners. History says most won't be.
2. Be willing to let go of coins you're emotionally attached to. Data beats feelings.
3. Focus on coins in the early stages of their cycle – newer projects with strong fundamentals may outperform established coins.
4. Use the Portfolio Planner to check degradation data before you build your bear market watchlist.
5. Bitcoin is the exception – BTC has consistently set new all-time highs each cycle. When in doubt, accumulate BTC.

The Portfolio Planner: Your Secret Weapon

SEARCH

BTC, ETH...

CYCLE CHANGE

All Coins

MIN ROI %

-100

8

All

Established

New Only

#	COIN	ROI 2025 %	23-25 RUN-UP %	18-21 RUN-UP %	CYCLE CHANGE %	BEAR PROJ.	BULL PROJ.	AARON'S NOTES
1	BTC Bitcoin	650.39%	662%	2.1K%	-68%	376%	993%	Must-have hold, had the least drawdown in every cycle
2	ETH Ethereum	290.33%	315%	5.8K%	-95%	175%	788%	Terrible cycle degradation despite being #2
3	BNB BNB	401.19%	471%	16.7K%	-97%	249%	942%	Decent performance but risky if the exchange collapses
4	XRP XRP	782.83%	987%	1.1K%	-12%	676%	1.3K%	Hard to argue with its performance even though it's a cursed chart
5	SOL Solana	2.2K%	2.9K%	51.7K%	-94%	893%	3.2K%	Great performer when memes were hot in 2023-24

The Portfolio Planner – Cycle degradation data showing ROI, run-up comparisons, and Aaron's personal notes on BTC, ETH, BNB, XRP, and SOL across multiple market cycles.

We built the Better Portfolio Planner specifically to help you make data-driven decisions about which coins to hold through cycles.

What it does:

- Tracks cycle-over-cycle performance for hundreds of tokens
- Shows degradation trends visually
- Helps you identify the rare coins that are improving each cycle
- Gives you data to build a bear market watchlist with confidence

It's free alpha. I could have locked it behind The Better Traders Club. I didn't. Because I believe this data should be accessible to everyone. If it helps you – and it will – consider joining the Club for the indicators, live analysis, and community that complement the data.

<https://planner.thebettertraders.com>

The Hard Truth

Ladies and gentlemen, I know this chapter is tough to read. Nobody wants to hear that their favorite altcoin is statistically likely to underperform next cycle. But this is what separates prepared traders from hopeful gamblers.

The data doesn't lie. 97% of coins degrade.

Use this knowledge. Let it guide your bear market accumulation strategy. And above all, don't marry your bags – marry the process.



CHAPTER 5

How to Spot the Bottom

The Signals That Matter



CHAPTER 5

How to Spot the Bottom

The Signals That Matter

Alright, so you know the bear market is here. You've got your war chest ready. Now the million-dollar question: how do you know when it's time to buy?

I'm not going to lie to you – nobody picks the exact bottom. Nobody. If someone tells you they can, they're either lying or lucky. But you don't need the exact bottom. You need to be in the right zone, buying when the risk-to-reward is heavily in your favor.

Here are the signals I watch.

Signal 1: TBO Indicator Signals on Key Timeframes

The TBO (Trending Breakout Indicator) is the backbone of everything I teach. If you've watched my YouTube channel, you know I reference it constantly. Here's what to watch for during the bear market:

What to Watch

- Daily TBO: When the TBO starts printing TBO Close Shorts on the daily, ideally several just above TBO Support, that's your first major signal
- Weekly TBO: A confirmation on the weekly is a big deal, but it will often be late
- TBO Support/Resistance Lines: When price reaches the TBO Support zone on the weekly, we have approached a historical buying zone

The TBO Lines Explained

- Fast Line – The most reactive. First to flip.
- Mid-Fast Line – Confirms the Fast line's signal.
- Mid-Slow Line – The momentum shift confirmation.
- Slow Line – The final confirmation. When the Slow line flips, the trend change is real.

The Pattern at Bottoms

At true cycle bottoms, you typically see:

1. Price reaches or pierces below TBO Support



Signal 1 – TBO Indicator at the Macro Bottom

2. The weekly TBO cloud lines stop pointing aggressively downward and begin to flatten out, telling us bearish momentum is slowing...



BTC/USD Weekly – TBO indicator showing the 2022–2023 cycle bottom formation. Orange signals fired right at the macro low near \$22,000.

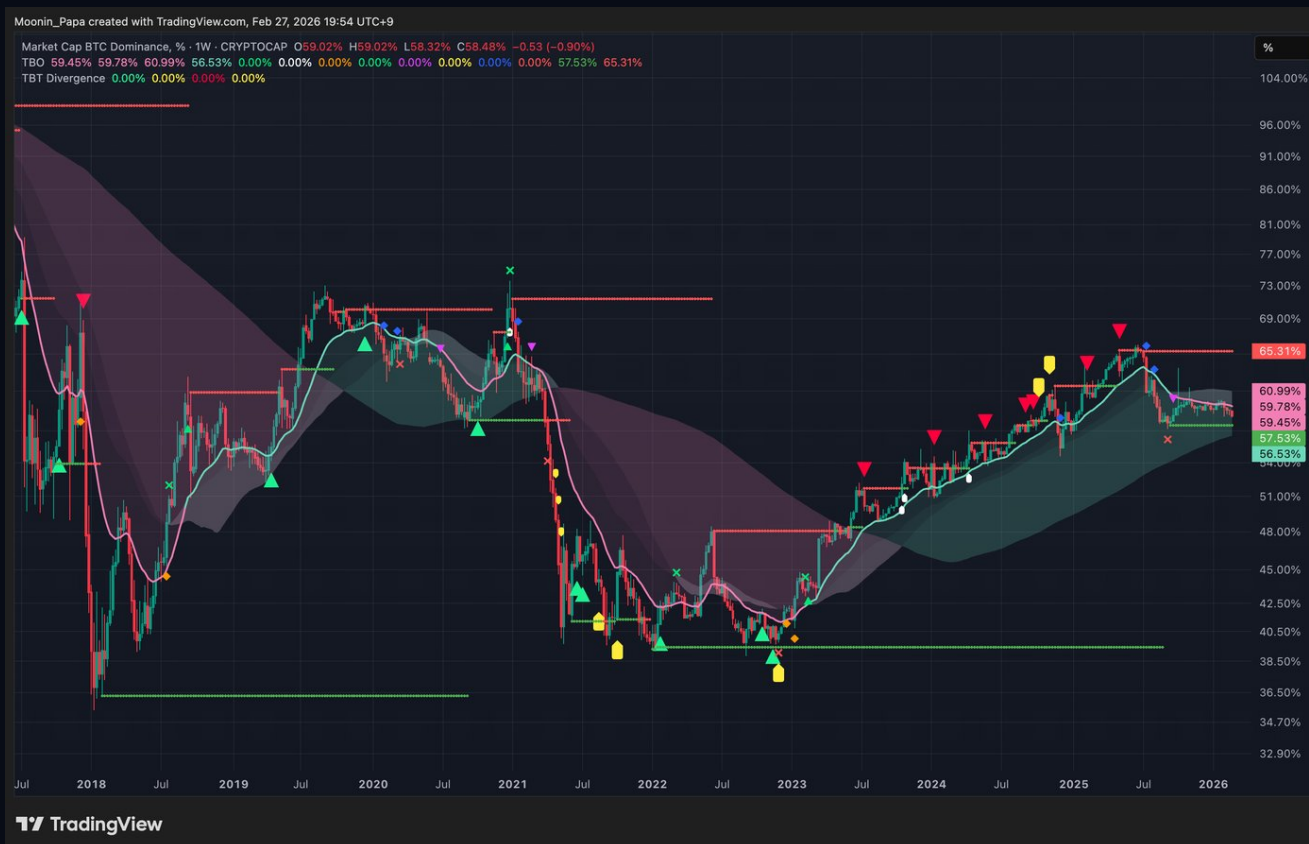
3. TBO Close Shorts print on the daily time frame, telling us that the bearish downtrend might be coming to an end



BTC/USD Daily – TBO indicator showing Close Short signals at the end of the 2022 downtrend

4. Eventually, the weekly TBO confirms as well – which will be our confirmation signal

Signal 2: Bitcoin Dominance Tells the Story



Bitcoin Dominance (BTC.D) – Weekly. Rising dominance signals altcoin weakness and capital rotation to BTC.

Bitcoin dominance (BTC.D) is one of the most underrated tools in crypto. It tells you where money is flowing.

During the Bear Market:

- BTC dominance tends to RISE – as capital rotates out of alts into BTC (relative safety)
- BTC dominance peaks in the 55-65% range – this often coincides with maximum altcoin weakness
- BTC dominance stabilizes then falls – this signals the bottom forming and alts starting to recover

What to Watch:

- BTC.D falling = early/weak bear territory (stay cautious on ALTs)
- BTC.D weakness to 40-50% = the entire crypto market is in a free fall
- BTC.D stabilizes = bottom forming (watch for confirmation)

Signal 3: Stablecoin Dominance Peaks



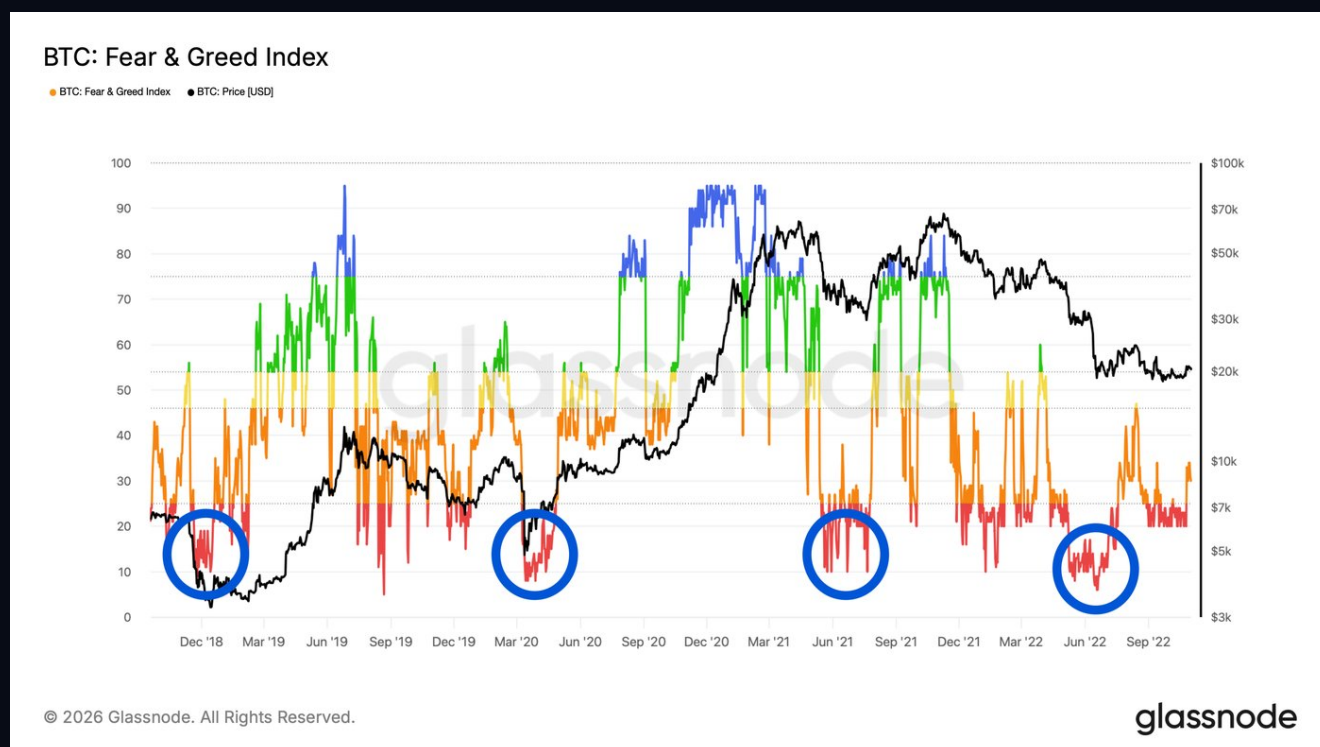
USDT Dominance (USDT.D) – Weekly. Peak stablecoin dominance marks periods of maximum fear and historic buy zones.

Stablecoin dominance (USDT.D or total stablecoin market cap dominance) is the inverse of market confidence.

- High stablecoin dominance = maximum fear. Everyone is sitting in stablecoins, too scared to buy.
- Stablecoin dominance peaks and rolls over = money starting to flow back into crypto.

This is a beautiful contrarian signal. When stablecoin dominance hits extreme highs, it means there's a massive wall of capital sitting on the sidelines, ready to re-enter. That money has to go somewhere.

Signal 4: Fear & Greed Index Extremes



Signal 4 – Fear & Greed Index at Extreme Fear

The Crypto Fear & Greed Index measures market sentiment on a scale of 0 (Extreme Fear) to 100 (Extreme Greed).

Historical Bottom Readings:

- November 2018 bottom: Fear & Greed dropped to approximately 5-6 – absolute terror
- 2022 bottom: Similar – the index hit around 6 in June 2022, with a prolonged period in "Extreme Fear" territory
- The pattern: Bottoms form after the Fear & Greed index reaches single-digit territory and stays there for several weeks

How to Use It:

- Watch for an extreme drop to 5 or 6 = Max fear and pain is setting in, but the bottom is likely not in yet
- Sustained single digits = Likely a signal for a short-term bottom, but prices could still fall lower
- A quick bounce up toward 30 after an extended period of extreme fear = A good sign that the bottom may be forming

The key insight: it's not just about hitting extreme fear – it's about staying there. Brief dips into fear during a bull run don't count. You need sustained extreme fear.

Signal 5: Volume Capitulation



BTC/USD Weekly – Volume capitulation during the 2022 bear market. The LUNA collapse (June) and FTX collapse (November) both produced massive volume spikes marking significant bottoms.

Capitulation is when the last sellers give up. It's the "I can't take this anymore" moment. Here's how you spot it:

- Massive volume spike on a sharp down move – the final flush
- Then volume dries up – nobody wants to trade, nobody cares
- Finally, volume starts building again on green candles – new buyers entering

The volume pattern at bottoms looks like this:

1. Big volume + big red candle (capitulation event)
2. Volume drops to multi-month lows (apathy phase)
3. Volume slowly picks up on green candles (accumulation phase)

Signal 6: Historical Timing



Year-over-year monthly returns comparison across Bottom Years (2014, 2018, 2022, 2026). Historical data showing the volatility pattern during bear market years.

Based on the Top-Bottom-Recovery-Rally framework, bottoms have historically occurred in the Q4 of the Bottom year – specifically October through December:

- 2014 bottom: January 2015 (but the base formed in late 2014)
- 2018 bottom: November 2018
- 2022 bottom: November 2022

So for the projected 2026 bottom, I'm watching the October–December 2026 window most closely.

The Better Crypto Calendar (<https://calendar.thebettertraders.com>) takes this further. It includes a monthly performance heatmap – a color-coded visualization of how each month has historically performed across every year. When you pull up the heatmap for Bottom years (2014, 2018, 2022), you'll notice:

- Q1-Q2 of Bottom years tend to show deep red (continued selling pressure)
- Q3 often shows a mix – the bottom is forming but not yet confirmed
- Q4 (especially Nov–Dec) is where the green starts returning – the recovery igniting

This heatmap isn't a crystal ball, but it gives you a probabilistic framework for when to expect the tide to turn. Combined with the other five signals above, it helps you narrow the window significantly.

Pro tip: Open the Crypto Calendar monthly during 2026. Watch the heatmap patterns in real-time. When current month performance starts deviating positively from historical bear patterns, that's another data point for your confluence checklist.

Putting It All Together: The Confluence Checklist

No single signal is enough. You want confluence – multiple signals firing at the same time. Here's your bottom-spotting checklist:

Signal	Status at Bottom
TBO Daily	TBO Close Shorts have fired (the more the better)
TBO Weekly	The weekly Cloud is flattening out and compressing
BTC Dominance	Has fallen between 40-50%
Stablecoin Dominance	Peaking over 15%, likely with a blow-off top
Fear & Greed Index	Below 10 and has put in a good bounce up toward the 30 range
Volume	Capitulation → Apathy → Accumulation
Timing (Top-Bottom-Recovery-Rally)	Q4 2026 window

When 4+ of these signals align, you're likely at or very near the bottom.

A Word of Caution

I want to be crystal clear: you will not catch the exact bottom. Nobody will. And trying to will drive you crazy and likely cause you to miss the opportunity entirely.

Instead, think in zones. If Bitcoin drops to the \$35,000-\$45,000 range and multiple signals on this list are firing, you don't need to wait for \$35,000 exactly. Start buying. Scale in. Be methodical.

The difference between buying at \$35,000 and \$42,000 is irrelevant when Bitcoin is heading to \$150,000+ in the next cycle. Don't let perfect be the enemy of profitable.



CHAPTER 1

Which Coins Survive Bear Markets

Separating the Living from the Dead

CHAPTER 6

Which Coins Survive Bear Markets

Separating the Living from the Dead

In every bear market, a mass extinction event occurs. Hundreds – sometimes thousands – of crypto projects die. Their tokens go to zero. Their teams disappear. Their communities evaporate.

And yet, some projects not only survive but come back stronger. These are the ones you want to own at the bottom.

Let me show you how to tell the difference.

The Bear Market Graveyard

Let's look at history:

2018 Bear Market Casualties

Of the top 20 coins by market cap in January 2018, the carnage was staggering. I've documented all of this in the Portfolio Planner – you can pull up each coin and read my notes on exactly what happened:

- BitConnect – outright Ponzi scheme, went to zero
- NEM (XEM) – was top 10 in Jan 2018, never recovered its ATH, now barely top 100
- IOTA – was top 10, still down 90%+ from its 2017 peak seven years later
- Lisk, Qtum, Nano – all top 20 in 2018, all effectively irrelevant today
- Even EOS – raised \$4 billion in its ICO, was top 5 – never recovered its ATH

The Portfolio Planner tracks all of this. Every coin. Every cycle. Every failure. Open it. Read the notes. The graveyard is educational.

2022 Bear Market Casualties

- LUNA/UST: From top 10 to literally zero. \$60 billion erased in days.
- FTT (FTX Token): Exchange collapsed, token worthless.
- Celsius, Voyager, BlockFi: Lending platforms gone, customer funds frozen.
- Axie Infinity (AXS): The poster child of play-to-earn, down 95%+ and showing classic degradation.
- Countless smaller projects quietly faded away – and the Portfolio Planner caught every one of them.

What Survivors Have in Common

After studying multiple cycles, here's what the survivors share:

1. Real Utility and Revenue

Projects that generate actual revenue or provide genuine utility have the best survival rate. If a project can sustain itself financially through a bear market, it's far more likely to be around for the recovery.

Ask: Does this project make money? Can the team keep building without token price appreciation?

2. Active Development

Check GitHub commits. Check development activity. During bear markets, fake projects stop building. Real projects keep shipping.

Ask: Is the development team still active? Are they shipping updates? Is the roadmap progressing?

3. Battle-Tested – Survived a Previous Bear

The single best predictor of surviving a bear market is having already survived one. Coins that weathered 2018 AND 2022 are the most battle-tested assets in crypto.

Ask: Has this coin survived at least one full bear market cycle?

4. Strong Market Position

Coins that maintain or grow their market cap ranking through bear markets tend to outperform in the next cycle. If a coin was #15 before the bear and comes out at #12, that's a positive signal.

Ask: Is this project gaining or losing market share within its sector?

5. Community That Stays

Check social metrics during the bear. If the community evaporates when price drops, the project has a "speculators only" problem. Strong communities stick around regardless of price.

Ask: Does this project have a community that cares about more than just price?

Categories of Bear Market Survivors

Tier 1: The Untouchables

These are the coins most likely to survive any bear market and set new highs in the next cycle:

- Bitcoin (BTC) – The king. Has survived every bear market and always set new ATHs.
- Ethereum (ETH) – The platform. Survived multiple bears, massive ecosystem, although clearly underperformed in 2025's Top year.

Tier 2: Battle-Tested Blue Chips

Coins that have survived at least one complete bear market with strong fundamentals:

- Look for: Top 20 market cap, active development, real utility, institutional adoption
- These typically drop 80-90% but recover

Tier 3: Strong Newcomers

Newer projects that didn't exist in previous cycles but show exceptional strength:

- Look for: Fast-growing ecosystems, strong development teams, real revenue
- Higher risk but potentially higher reward
- Be selective — most newcomers will die

Tier 4: Avoid

- Meme coins — no utility beyond speculation
- Projects with anonymous teams and no track record
- Anything that pumped purely on narrative with no fundamentals
- Tokens with excessive upcoming unlocks/inflation

Sector Analysis: What Thrives After Bears

Not all crypto sectors recover equally. Historically:

Strong Recovery Sectors:

- Layer 1 platforms (the infrastructure of crypto)
- DeFi blue chips (the "banks" of crypto)
- Infrastructure/tooling (picks and shovels)

Weaker Recovery Sectors:

- Metaverse/gaming tokens (narrative-dependent)
- NFT-related tokens (hype cycle-dependent)
- Fork tokens and copycat projects

Emerging Sectors to Watch:

- AI x Crypto (new narrative, could be the DeFi of next cycle)
- Real World Assets (RWA)
- DePin (Decentralized Physical Infrastructure)

Building Your Bear Market Shopping List

Based on everything in this chapter, here's the step-by-step process. Notice how The Better Traders tools are woven into every step – this isn't accidental. We built these tools specifically for this workflow:

1. Start with BTC and ETH – these are your core positions (50-60% of bear market deployment).
Bitcoin has recovered from every bear market in history. Non-negotiable core.
2. Open the Portfolio Planner (<https://planner.thebettertraders.com>) – read the notes on every coin you're considering. Check degradation status. If it's degrading, think twice. If it's in the rare 3% of improvers, that's a green flag.
3. Add 3-5 Tier 2 blue chips that pass the Planner's degradation check – diversify across sectors.
4. Include 1-2 Tier 3 high-conviction bets – your "moonshots" (small allocation, 5-10% max).
5. Set target prices based on projected drawdowns (90-95% from ATH for ALTs). Use the drawdown table from Chapter 1 as your guide.
6. Open the Crypto Calendar (<https://calendar.thebettertraders.com>) – mark the Q4 2026 window as your primary accumulation target. Set monthly check-ins.
7. Review and update the list monthly during the bear using fresh Portfolio Planner data and Crypto Calendar timing.

The whole workflow: Portfolio Planner tells you WHAT to buy. Crypto Calendar tells you WHEN to buy. The TBO indicator (Chapter 5) tells you the SIGNALS to watch. This is a complete system.



CHAPTER 7

DCA Strategies That Actually Work

Smart Accumulation Without the Stress

CHAPTER 7

DCA Strategies That Actually Work



DCA Strategy Comparison

Smart Accumulation Without the Stress

Dollar Cost Averaging (DCA) is the single most effective strategy for bear market accumulation. It's simple, it's proven, and it takes the emotion out of buying.

But not all DCA strategies are created equal. Let me show you the approaches that actually work.

Strategy 1: Fixed DCA

The simplest approach. You invest a fixed dollar amount at regular intervals, regardless of price.

How it works:

- Pick an amount (e.g., \$200/week)
- Pick an interval (weekly or bi-weekly)

- Buy your target coins consistently
- Don't look at the price. Don't adjust. Just execute.

Best for: People who want a "set it and forget it" approach. Works well for BTC and ETH accumulation.

Pros:

- Zero emotion involved
- Dead simple to execute
- Works in any market condition

Cons:

- You'll buy some at higher prices during the early bear
- Doesn't account for market conditions
- Leaves money on the table if you have a lump sum

Strategy 2: Moving (Dynamic) DCA

This is my preferred approach. Instead of buying the same amount every week, you increase your buys as prices drop further.

How it works:

- Set "zones" based on drawdown percentage
- Increase allocation as price enters deeper zones
- Deploy the largest amounts at the deepest discounts

Example Framework (BTC):

Drawdown from ATH	Weekly DCA Amount	Zone
-40% to -50%	\$100	Starter Zone
-50% to -60%	\$200	Accumulation Zone
-60% to -70%	\$400	Heavy Accumulation
-70% to -80%	\$600	Maximum Buy Zone

Best for: People who want to be strategic and have a lump sum war chest to deploy.

Pros:

- Buys more at lower prices (better average cost)
- Still systematic and rules-based
- Maximizes the bear market discount

Cons:

- Requires more attention
- Risk of running out of capital if you misjudge zones
- May never hit deepest zones

Strategy 3: TBO-Guided DCA

This is the advanced approach – using the TBO indicator to time your DCA entries.

How it works:

- Only buy when TBO gives specific signals on the daily or weekly timeframe
- Increase size when signals appear on higher timeframes
- Pause buying when TBO shows short-term BEARISH signals (even within the larger bear trend, there are bounces you don't want to chase)

Signal-Based Rules:

- TBO Close Shorts on daily → Execute small buy
- TBO BULLISH on weekly → Execute medium buy
- TBO at Support on weekly → Execute large buy
- Full confluence from Chapter 5's signals → Deploy remaining capital aggressively

Best for: Active traders who understand TBO signals and want to optimize entries.

Choosing Your Strategy

Strategy	Skill Level	Time Required	Potential Advantage
Fixed DCA	Beginner	5 min/week	Simplicity, consistency
Moving DCA	Intermediate	30 min/week	Better average cost
TBO-Guided DCA	Advanced	1-2 hrs/week	Optimized entries

My recommendation: If you're new to this, start with Fixed DCA. It's better to execute a simple plan consistently than to overcomplicate things and freeze up. You can always graduate to Moving DCA or TBO-Guided as you gain confidence.

The Golden Rule of DCA

Whatever strategy you choose, follow this rule:

Never deploy more than 10% of your total war chest in a single week.

This protects you from the #1 DCA mistake: going "all in" at what you think is the bottom, only to watch prices drop another 30%.

Spread it out. Be patient. The bear market isn't going anywhere — you have months to accumulate.



CHAPTER 8

Position Sizing for the Bottom

Don't Go All In on the First Bounce

CHAPTER 8

Position Sizing for the Bottom



Position Sizing Pyramid — Starter to Full Allocation

Don't Go All In on the First Bounce

I see this mistake every single bear market without fail: someone correctly identifies that we're near the bottom, gets excited, and dumps their entire war chest into the market the first time Bitcoin bounces.

Then it drops another 20%. And they have nothing left.

Position sizing is the art of being right about the bottom and still having money to buy when you're slightly wrong about the timing.

The Dollar Allocation Framework

Here's how I think about deploying capital across the bear market:

Total War Chest: 100%

Divide it into 4 tranches:

Tranche	Allocation	When to Deploy
Tranche 1	15%	When BTC drops 50%+ from ATH
Tranche 2	25%	When BTC drops 60%+ from ATH
Tranche 3	35%	When BTC drops 70%+ from ATH (target zone)
Tranche 4	25%	Reserved for either: deeper drop OR early recovery confirmation

Why This Distribution?

- Tranche 1 (15%): Small initial position. Gets you in the game. If the market drops more, you haven't overcommitted.
- Tranche 2 (25%): Larger position as conviction grows. You're seeing multiple bottom signals start to align.
- Tranche 3 (35%): Your largest deployment. This is in the target zone based on Top-Bottom-Recovery-Rally and you have confluence from Chapter 5's signals.
- Tranche 4 (25%): The safety net. Either used if we drop further than expected, or deployed once recovery is confirmed.

Scaling Into ALTs

For altcoins, the framework is similar but more conservative, because ALTs drop harder and are less predictable:

Stage	What to Buy	From Which Tranche
BTC drops 50-60%	BTC only	Tranche 1
BTC drops 60-70%	BTC and ETH	Tranche 2
BTC drops 70%+	BTC, ETH, selected ALTs	Tranche 3
Recovery confirmed	New listings with promise	Tranche 4

The rule: Bitcoin first, ALTs second.

You build your BTC position first because it's the safest bet and the first to recover. Then you scale into ALTs as confidence grows.

Risk Management Rules

Rule 1: No Single Coin Gets More Than 25% (Except BTC)

Even your highest-conviction alt should not exceed 25% of your total deployed capital. Bitcoin can be 30-50%.

Rule 2: Set Stop Losses on ALTs (Not on BTC)

For alt positions, set stop losses at 20-30% below your entry. If an alt breaks down further than expected, cut it. You can always re-enter.

For Bitcoin, you're DCA-ing and holding. No stop loss needed – you're buying for the cycle.

Rule 3: Keep a Reserve

Always – ALWAYS – keep at least 10% of your original war chest in stablecoins even after full deployment. This is your emergency fund. Markets can always surprise you.

Rule 4: Track Everything

Keep a spreadsheet logging:

- Date of every buy
- Price at purchase
- Amount purchased
- Total deployed vs. remaining war chest
- Average cost per coin

This removes emotion and gives you data to make decisions.

The Anti-FOMO Protocol

During the bear market, you will see bounces. Bitcoin will drop to \$45K and then bounce to \$55K, and you'll think "I missed the bottom!" This is where discipline matters most.

When you feel FOMO:

1. Check your deployment schedule – are you where you should be?
2. Check the bottom signals from Chapter 5 – how many are firing?
3. Check your remaining war chest – can you afford to buy more here?
4. Remember: the bear market lasts ~12 months. There is no rush.

If you stick to the tranche system, FOMO becomes irrelevant. You have a plan. Follow it.



CHAPTER 9

The Bull Run Preparation Blueprint

Be Ready Before Everyone Else

CHAPTER 9

The Bull Run Preparation Blueprint

(Image 9: BTC Monthly – TBO buy signal firing at the 2022 bottom, annotated with entry confirmation criteria)

Be Ready Before Everyone Else



Bull Run Entry – The Setup Before the Crowd

(Image 10: BTC Monthly – TBO sell signal zones at cycle tops showing the distribution phase and staged exit levels)

This is where the magic happens. The bear market is your accumulation phase. But the next bull run – that's your harvest.

And the people who make the most money aren't the ones who scramble to figure out their strategy when Bitcoin is already ripping. They're the ones who had everything set up months before the bull run started.

Let's get you ready.

Your Pre-Bull Run Checklist

1. Build Your Watchlist During the Bear

By the time the next Recovery phase starts (2027 based on Top-Bottom-Recovery-Rally), you should already have:

- A finalized portfolio with clear allocation percentages
- Price alerts set at key levels for every coin you own
- A ranked list of which coins to hold longest vs. which to sell first
- Sector exposure that's diversified but not diluted

Use the Better Crypto Calendar to track where we are in the cycle:

<https://calendar.thebettertraders.com>

2. Set Your Exit Strategy BEFORE the Bull Run

This is the part almost everyone gets wrong. They plan their entries meticulously and completely ignore exits. Then emotions take over at the top and they ride it all the way back down.

Your exit strategy should include:

- Target prices for each coin (based on realistic multiples, not hopium)
- Incremental profit-taking – don't try to sell the exact top. Take profits in stages:
- Sell 25% at 2x
- Sell 25% at 3-4x
- Sell 25% at 5-7x
- Let 25% ride (house money)
- A hard deadline – based on Top-Bottom-Recovery-Rally, the next TOP year is 2029. Start taking serious profits by late 2028/early 2029.
- A "no matter what" rule – if your portfolio hits [X amount], you take profits. Period. No "what if it goes higher."

3. Set Alerts, Not Alarms

During the recovery and rally, you don't need to watch charts 24/7. Set up alerts on TradingView for:

- Key resistance levels being broken
- TBO signals on weekly timeframe
- BTC dominance shifting

- Your specific exit price targets

Let the alerts come to you. Check charts once or twice a day. Live your life. The strategy is already in place.

4. Prepare Your Tax Strategy

This is boring but critical. Capital gains taxes can eat 20–40% of your profits depending on where you live. During the recovery phase, consult with a crypto-friendly tax professional about:

- Long-term vs. short-term capital gains
- Tax-loss harvesting during the bear
- Jurisdiction-specific rules
- Record-keeping requirements

5. Have an "Enough" Number

Before the next bull run, decide what "enough" looks like for you.

- Is it paying off your house?
- Is it quitting your job?
- Is it \$100K? \$500K? \$1M?

Write it down. Tell someone you trust. When you hit that number, execute your exit strategy without hesitation.

The biggest regret in crypto isn't selling too early. It's watching your life-changing gains evaporate because you got greedy.

The Top-Bottom-Recovery-Rally-Based Timeline

Here's your roadmap for the next full cycle:

Period	Phase	Your Action
2026	BOTTOM	Deploy capital using DCA strategies. Accumulate.
2027	RECOVERY	Hold. Add on dips. Build watchlist for rally.
2028	RALLY	Ride the momentum. Set exit alerts. Begin profit-taking at targets.
2029	TOP	Execute exit strategy. Rebuild war chest for next cycle.



CHAPTER 10

Free Tools & Resources

Your Arsenal

CHAPTER 10

Free Tools & Resources

Your Arsenal

Ladies and gentlemen, I want to leave you with something practical. Everything I've taught in this playbook is actionable – but it's even more powerful when you have the right tools.

Here's what The Better Traders has built for you – much of it completely free.

Free Tools

Better Portfolio Planner

What it does: Tracks cycle-over-cycle degradation for hundreds of tokens with over 100 detailed research notes written by me personally. Each note includes cycle history, degradation assessment, key metrics, forward-looking analysis, and risk rating. This isn't auto-generated content – it's hundreds of hours of manual analysis distilled into actionable notes.

What you'll find inside:

- Degradation status for every major coin (the 97% vs. the 3%)
- My personal notes on each coin's cycle-over-cycle performance
- Historical return data across multiple market cycles
- Risk ratings for bear market accumulation
- Which coins survived, which died, and why

Why you need it: This is Chapter 4 in interactive form. Before you put a single dollar into any coin during the bear market, check its degradation status in the Planner. Read my notes. Make a data-driven decision instead of an emotional one. This tool alone could save you from buying a degrading asset that never recovers.

It's free alpha. I could have locked it behind The Better Traders Club. I didn't. Because I believe this data should be accessible to everyone. If it helps you – and it will – consider joining the Club for the indicators, live analysis, and community that complement the data.

Access: <https://planner.thebettertraders.com>

Better Crypto Calendar

What it does: Visualizes the complete 4-year Top-Bottom-Recovery-Rally cycle with monthly performance heatmaps showing historical patterns. See at a glance where we are in the cycle, how each month has historically performed during each phase, and when key transitions (Top → Bottom → Recovery → Rally) typically occur.

Key features:

- 4-year cycle positioning – always know which Top-Bottom-Recovery-Rally phase you're in
- Monthly performance heatmap – color-coded historical data for every month across every year
- Bottom-year pattern recognition – see when previous bear markets ended
- Forward-looking cycle dates – project the next Top, Bottom, Recovery, and Rally years

Why you need it: When you're in the depths of the 2026 bear market and your portfolio is bleeding, open this calendar. See where you are. See where you're going. Remember the pattern. It's your emotional anchor in the storm.

How I use it: I check the Crypto Calendar at the start of every month. I compare current performance to the historical heatmap. If we're in a Bottom year and the heatmap shows Q4 historically turns green – that's when I start getting aggressive with my DCA. It's simple, visual, and it works.

Access: <https://calendar.thebettertraders.com>

Courses & Education

15 Minutes to Financial Freedom

This is our flagship course that started it all, and covers everything you need to know to reduce the time you spend trading to just 15 minutes a day. This course outlines the exact strategy I used to grow my portfolio during the 2018 bear market. Best of all, the strategies taught in this course work in any market condition – bull, bear, or sideways.

Best for: Learning to actively trade during the bear market while others sit idle.

Access: <https://www.thebettertraders.com/15minutes>

Mastering Passive Income (MPI)

This is our advanced passive/bot trading course. Deep dive into the TBO Pro indicator, automated trading strategies, and how to generate passive income from crypto markets – even during a bear market. Learn to set up and manage trading bots that work while you sleep.

Best for: Understanding the TBO signals referenced in Chapters 5 and 7, and building passive income streams.

Access: <https://www.thebettertraders.com/masteringpassiveincome>

The Smarter Trader (TST)

This is our advanced active trading course. Take your trading to the next level with sophisticated strategies, advanced chart analysis, risk management frameworks, and the tools professional traders use every day. Built for traders who've mastered the basics and want to sharpen their edge.

Best for: Experienced traders who want to level up their active trading skills and maximize bear market opportunities.

Access: <https://www.thebettertraders.com/thesmartertrader>

YouTube Channel

Search MooninPapa on YouTube. Thousands of free videos covering:

- Trading strategies for any market condition
- TBO indicator tutorials
- Market cycle analysis
- Bear market navigation content

This is the largest free educational resource I offer. If you found this playbook valuable, you'll love the channel.

Watch free: <https://youtube.com/@MooninPapa>

The Better Traders Club

The Better Traders Club is our community hub. It's where I share my most detailed analysis, where members discuss setups, and where you'll find the support system you need to get through the bear market.

What you get:

- Access to exclusive indicators (TBO, Better Traders Divergence, and more)
- Live analysis sessions
- Community of cycle-aware traders
- Direct access to educational content library

Why it matters for bear markets: The #1 reason people fail in bear markets is isolation. They're sitting alone watching red candles. The Better Traders Club gives you a community that understands cycles, stays rational, and keeps each other accountable.

Join here: <https://www.thebettertraders.com/club>

Your Next Steps

You've read the playbook. You understand the cycle. You have the tools. Now it's time to act.

Here's what I recommend:

1. Today: Go through the Survival Checklist (Chapter 3). Check off what you've done. Start on what you haven't.
2. This week: Open the Portfolio Planner and check every coin in your portfolio for cycle degradation.
3. This month: Build your bear market watchlist and set your DCA strategy (Chapter 7).
4. Ongoing: Check the Crypto Calendar monthly to stay oriented in the cycle. Watch Aaron's free content on YouTube for current analysis.
5. When the bottom of the Bear market arrives: Execute your plan. Don't deviate. Trust the process.

Final Words

Bear markets are not the end of the story. They are the beginning of the next chapter.

Every person who built life-changing wealth in crypto did it by being prepared when others weren't. By buying when others were selling. By having a plan when others were panicking.

You now have that plan.

The Top-Bottom-Recovery-Rally theory gives you the framework. The survival checklist gives you the action steps. The bottom signals give you the timing. The DCA strategies give you the execution. And the tools give you the data.

All that's left is you.

I've been preparing mentally for the bear market because this pattern has been extremely accurate since 2013. And I'm not preparing out of fear – I'm preparing out of excitement. Because I know what comes after the bottom: Recovery. Rally. And the next life-changing bull run.

I'll see you on the other side.

Stay patient. Stay prepared. And as always – stay awesome, and stay in the green.

– Aaron Dishner (MooninPapa)

The Better Traders

RESOURCE LINKS

Resource	URL
Portfolio Planner	https://planner.thebettertraders.com
Crypto Calendar	https://calendar.thebettertraders.com
YouTube (MooninPapa)	https://youtube.com/@MooninPapa
The Better Traders Club	https://www.thebettertraders.com/club
15 Minutes to Financial Freedom	https://www.thebettertraders.com/15minutes
Mastering Passive Income	https://www.thebettertraders.com/masteringpassiveincome
The Smarter Trader	https://www.thebettertraders.com/thesmartertrader

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