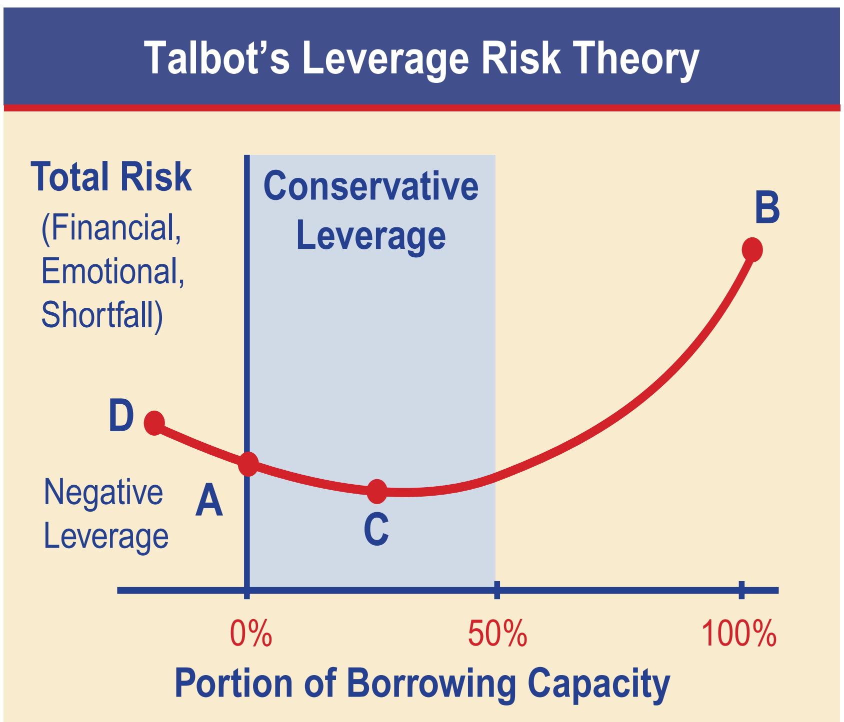
Conservative Leverage

Less Risky Than No Leverage?

Evaluating the strategy of leveraging should not be an "all or nothing" decision.

The total risk of leveraging is the sum of the financial risk of losing money, the emotional risk of stress, and the shortfall risk of not having enough money to meet your retirement goals.



Unless you're already financially independent, not leveraging at all results in some shortfall risk and thus some level of total risk (point A). Leveraging the maximum that you can causes high levels of financial and emotional risk (point B).

Understood and implemented responsibly with long-term time horizons, leverage should magnify positive returns and decrease shortfall risk.

Consider the risks of leveraging such a small portion of your borrowing capacity, say 10-30%, that there are no financial or emotional risks.

If the shortfall risk goes down and there is no financial or emotional risk, the total risk of leveraging a small, conservative amount is lower than the total risk of not leveraging at all (point C).

Many people use bad debt or negative leverage with high financial, emotional, and shortfall risks (point D). Avoid negative leverage and never leverage the maximum. Only consider leveraging a small, conservative amount that results in no financial or emotional strain.

Ironically, a small, conservative amount of leverage should be less risky than no leverage, and as a bonus, produce higher returns.

