



Get Rich and Then Get Over It

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Do you have topic ideas? Comments or questions?

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We are all driven by dreams of wealth, of imagining how we could live well and have far fewer worries once we got that pot of gold behind us. We might dream of great cars, great houses, great women, or great jewels. This sort of thinking drives our whole society and it probably drives you somewhat too. I have some advice that suggests that you, business owner or entrepreneur, look beyond such fantasies.

1. Where the Fable Began

There is nothing wrong with money, but it is not all it is made up to be by the masses, since most people do not know. And that is because most people do not have money. But they are ever so good at imagining what their life would look like if only they had more coins to rattle around.

Support for this notion that money can't buy happiness comes from just looking at some very rich people in unhappy circumstances: Conrad Black, Princess Diana, Elvis, Marilyn Monroe, Brittany Spears, etc., etc.

But since time immemorial, we all seemed to have wanted to win that lottery, strike it rich, marry into money etc. "Oh, he's a doctor" she says to her friends of her new suitor – as if that explains it all. Read: he's moneyed and thus my jackpot has arrived.

The whole premise of this paper is that money will not be what you imagine it to be. Go back to several years ago when you dreamed of owning a certain car (or other material thing). You pined for it, planned for it, read magazines and specification about it and when you acquired it you were in seventh heaven. As the years went by, you may have enjoyed that BMW and maybe even still be proud of it, but it has not nearly the excitement it once had for you. Why? Because you have experienced it and moved from fantasy to reality. Personally, having owned a host of exotic cars including Alfa Romeos, Rovers, Cadillacs, Rivas and European great ones, I now drive a little Honda. I no longer need the car as I 'needed' it back then. The same is true of getting a university degree. Once you get it, you

realize it is no big deal. Then you get on with life. And so it is true of acquiring money. Therein lies my advice to you. Yes, of course, get your money – but then get on with life. Don't make the money your life.

2. The Disadvantages of Money

Having had money at one time, I discovered some unpleasant truths. They are as follows:

- Everyone wants a piece of your wealth.
 - o So people with the greatest ideas in the world knock incessantly on your door
 - o As do an unending lineup of your friends who just need \$10k to tide them over in this singular emergency
 - o So do charitable organizations when they discover your name on the society list
 - o The tax-man is right in there too, deciding that you now deserve a tax audit every two years. Not only do you have to give a lot, you have to be subjected to the indignity that pre-supposes that are lying about the amount you own
 - o And if you have any ex-wives floating around, they are ready to move in, accompanied by a high profile lawyer, to stake their unsubstantiated claim
 - o The phone never stops ringing when you are simply trying to relax at home in the evening
- The taxes will seem unfair to you – the less said about that the better



- Now with the money in place you have to do something with it. Watching it buoy up and down on the stock market is really distressing. Reading all the investor newsletters and reports that do little to help you control the money's journey chew up your valuable relaxation time.
- Bankers are suddenly friends you don't want and so are portfolio advisors
- People are plainly obsequious, treating you with dignity, status and smiles you have not earned – but the money is perceived to be worth it. As soon as the money disappears, watch the dignity, status and smiles go with it.
- You face the real danger of losing touch with your fellow humans. You don't walk anywhere anymore. You have no idea how to take a bus, much less what it really costs: "What do you mean you won't give me change for my \$10?" You get out of the habit of doing physical labour. You don't unblock the drain anymore but shell out \$100 for someone else to do it who took two weeks to arrive. The world actually becomes less real. You stand a chance of thinking that that unreal world is actually real.

3. Don't give up your Entrepreneurial Dreams

We are not suggesting that money is bad. We are not suggesting you give up your entrepreneurial dreams. By all means keep them, nourish them and grow them. In our opinion there is nothing better than being a successful entrepreneur or taking the steps to get there. After all, we at CCCC have devoted our lifetimes to help people along that path. What we are suggesting, however, is that you realize your real focus and not be automatically mesmerized into the North American fantasy.

4. What do most People Want?

What do you want? You want probably what most people want: happiness. The assumption is that happiness is defined by money. In fact it is not. First of all we need our health and family. Before anything else, take care of those two so that you can participate fully in the excitement of life. Next, take a look at happiness. At CCCC we have defined the seven needs of people to achieve happiness as follows:

1. To be in control of the decisions, which fall within the persons' own domains
2. To be appreciated on the job, manifested by being listened to by people important to them

3. To feel that in their work, they are contributing to something worthwhile in the grand scheme of things
4. To achieve success in what they are doing
5. Upon achieving success, to move to the next level of task, of increasing complexity or variation, i.e. to learn
6. To feel that they are growing from that learning
7. To be allowed to make mistakes, since mistakes create the deepest learning imprint. Allowing mistakes permits people to take the risk to open new doors.

Whether a worker or an employer we are all driven by these – and so is your active two-year old seeking control, appreciation, success at stacking two blocks before moving onto three blocks, etc. (And if your marriage is in trouble how many of these seven are being assaulted?)

As an entrepreneur setting out on your own quest, you have probably activated all seven of these too. Knowingly or unknowingly, they will have become your real goals. Money was just a fancy disguise you used so that everyone else could understand your demonic drive.

However if your goal is solely to make money you will probably have relinquished a few of the seven needs, i.e. made a compromise on your quest for happiness. Thus you will not be able to reach the happiness goal. (I know: I tried the get-rich-quick route at least a half-dozen times.) Instead, you will become successively more and more frustrated – even if you become rich. (I believe we've all seen our share of angry rich people!)

5. Re-set your Goals

We suggest you simply recognize the truth and not be phased – even a little – by the North American Horatio Alger myth that money buys happiness. What buys happiness are the 'big seven' above. Set them as your goals; the money will follow.

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