



There's More to Life Than Money

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It's easy to know how well you did in school, the baseball game, or even at work. But how do you grade success in life? There's more to life than money.

In school we receive grades; in baseball we count runs; and at work we get performance reviews. But life isn't quite that simple. We may ask ourselves: "Do I have more good days or bad days? Am I doing better today than yesterday? Do I give more than I take? Am I doing better or worse than others?"

At the end of a day, we may say: "Three people smiled at me, someone thanked me for doing them a favor, and my kids told me they loved me." Not bad.

But . . . it's really hard to put a figure on intangibles such as a smile, a thank you, and the love of our children. And because these intangibles are difficult to quantify (and frequently not in the public eye), we often discount their true worth. Instead, we turn to more recognizable ways to measure success — *money and the things it can buy*.

And why not?

Money is tangible. You can feel it. You can count it. You can flaunt it. You can use it to impress others, while impressing yourself.

Money is flexible. You can save it or spend it. You can buy something for yourself or a friend. Or, you can invest your money and hopefully turn it into more money.

Money spells success. (Or does it?) It's tempting to assume that if we have a better car, a bigger house, and take more vacations, we're leading "the good life." But, are we leading a meaningful life?

The truth is, money can't buy everything. For example, money can't buy peace of mind, good friends, a close-knit family, work-life balance, a worry-free day, good karma, time to relax, good health, a golden anniversary, quality time with your kids, a new beginning, natural beauty, happy memories,

to name just a few. Many people are actually poor because the only thing they have is money.

If You Live for Money, It's Time to Get a Life

Are you willing to sacrifice your dreams for more money? Some folks justify continuing in a miserable job situation by acknowledging that they're well compensated. The truth is, life is short. People who live a [life of purpose](#) wake up each morning excited to pursue their dreams and make a difference. — Money can't guarantee that.

Are you willing to compromise your honor for more money? Everything has a price, but not everything should be for sale. Some folks make money by being ruthless or doing unscrupulous things. People with a clear conscience have core beliefs and values that influence their decisions, shape their day-to-day actions, and determine their short- and long-term priorities. The result is that they spend more time listening to their inner voice. — Chances are, they sleep well at night.

Are you willing to squander your happiness for more money? Some people don't understand the meaning of enough. They think the grass is always greener on their neighbor's side of the fence. Others understand the difference

between wanting and needing. As the Yiddish proverb says, "The *truly* rich are those who enjoy what they have." — Nowhere in the proverb is the word money mentioned.

Are you willing to forgo relationships for more money? Think about "the takers." You know them. They measure every action by how much they will personally benefit, while "the givers" do things without expectation of personal gain. Givers receive as much satisfaction (and as many karma points) by creating win-win relationships and giving to others than if they had benefited personally. — Which are you?

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Are you willing to compromise quality of life for more money? Some people eye a prize without considering the sacrifices required to achieve it. Success has its own tradeoffs. It may demand long hours, time away from family or a significant financial commitment. The key is to understand the requirements for success before embarking on your journey. — Choose wisely.

Are you willing to forgo peace of mind for more money? There are those who feel that happiness lies in having more. So they never have enough. As a consequence, they set very high expectations and are constantly **worried and stressed-out**. — Do you call that happiness?

Are you willing to miss out on life for more money? Some people don't take time to smell the roses. It's hard to calculate the value of memories, such as a clean bill of health, first kiss, crossing the finish line, grandchildren, passing the driver's test, 10-year reunion, acceptance letter, visit from the tooth fairy, cheers from the crowd, retirement, "Mama . . . Dada," bedtime stories, potty training, a beer and a burger, and "I love you, too." It's important to focus on the journey as well the destination. — There's **no dress rehearsal in life**.

Are you willing to cash in your personal dignity for more money? Some people are consumed with seeking the approval of others. The most important person to satisfy, however, is you. It's your life. So do your best. Be your own person. And remember, you're not finished until you **do yourself proud**. As John Mason, author, said, "You were born an original. Don't die a copy." — It's time to be the real you.

Money . . . What's It All Worth?

I'm not saying that money isn't important. Rather, this is a plea to acknowledge that there's more to life than money. We must assign appropriate value to the intangible areas of our

lives, such as our honor, personal relationships, peace of mind, and quality family time, to name a few examples. If we take these things for granted, and lose them as a result, we are on the road to personal bankruptcy.

It's important to keep money in perspective. Do you spend more money satisfying your desires than fulfilling your needs? Do you let money dictate your activities, affect your relationships, and consume your thoughts? Is money a constant cause of anxiety and a source of stress? If you answer yes to these questions, you may be becoming a slave to your money.

When you look back on your life one day, will you gauge success by the power that you attained and the wealth that you accumulated? Or, will you measure the degree to which your life was rich in character and purpose? Will it matter that you led an honorable existence, made a difference in people's lives, and left the world a better place for your children? Albert Einstein said it well, "Not everything that can be counted counts, and not everything that counts can be counted." The choice is yours. There's more to life than money. ●

Frank Sonnenberg, a marketing strategist, has written four books and published over 300 articles. *Managing with a Conscience (2nd edition)* is recognized as one of the top 10 Small Business Books of 2012 • Trust Across America named Sonnenberg one of the Top 100 Thought Leaders of 2011, 2012 and 2013 • Sonnenberg was nominated as one of America's Most Influential Small Business Experts of 2012 • In 2011, *Social Media Marketing Magazine* (SMM) selected Sonnenberg as one of the top marketing authors in the world on Twitter. www.franksonnenbergonline.com | Personal Values • Personal Responsibility ©2013 Frank Sonnenberg. All rights reserved.