Achieving Personal Prosperity — Is It All About Money and Happiness?

Sure, money and happiness are on the list, but let’s see what else is a component of a truly prosperous life.

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Much of what we have been taught about prosperity and how to achieve it is misguided. Although its pursuit underwrites billion-dollar industries — books, programs, courses, videos — for most, the path to prosperity remains mysteriously elusive.

Few are foolish enough to believe that living in prosperity means that we have an excess of money. Rather, prosperity’s essential components — money, happiness, and sustainability — must be in alignment to truly live a prosperous life.

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How do we define prosperity?

First, there’s money

For this discussion, money is considered income sufficient to support our goals. Earning “enough” money is absolutely essential to prosperity. So, how much money is enough? Although the answers will vary individually, we should consider “enough” as that which supports our financial dreams

in a way that upholds our deeply held values and principles. This boundary will keep us from trespassing into a mindset where money distracts or alienates us from those very values and principles. Although we may occasionally re-draw our borders, keep in mind that the line remains flexible but not fluid. If we forfeit our integrity to gain a financial advantage, is there money enough to compensate for the loss?

Then there's happiness.

After the question "How much money is enough?" comes the question "Am I happy enough?" Consider the following aspects of happiness:

- State of mind – having positive feelings about ourselves and the world
- Authenticity – living life consistent with our deepest beliefs, values, and principles, knowing that our earnings are aligned with our passions and purpose
- Commitment – adhering to what we most value, such as family and relationships
- Health and wellness – pursuing an abundance of health in mind, spirit, and body

And finally, there's sustainability.

This is perhaps the most overlooked component of prosperity. The following four questions are prompts for reflection on how sustainable we really believe our current or future prosperity to be.

1. **Can I feel good about it?** Some rightly get anxious when the money they make comes from doing something outside of their comfort zone. You may have to courageously endure momentary discomfort in order to align your earnings with what authentically motivates and gives your life meaning. This may be a big adjustment for some, and it may take some time to acclimate. However, when you love the work you do because you care about it,

you become more attentive to details, more committed to excellence, and more productive. Most importantly, working from your core shields you from being defeated by the occasional setback or failure.

2. **Can I sustain the work required over the long term?** Basically, do you have the passion and interest to keep at it for years and decades? Burning out or destroying your health by doing something that drags you down is not a long-term solution, and any prosperity you generate using such approaches eventually evaporates. If you wake up each day in dread of going to work, in the long run, you won't be good at your job, and you won't be successful. Someone who is passionate about the same work will likely outperform you.
3. **Is the prosperity I contemplate ethical, beneficial to others, and environmentally sound?** Success can never be measured by economic profit alone. Is your ethical compass pointing true north? Are your motives pure? Are you profiting at the expense of others? Only wealth that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs is sustainable wealth.
4. **Does it offer lasting value?** There is no room in sustainable prosperity for get-rich-quick schemes or flash-in-the-pan opportunities. Sustainable prosperity is based on the law of the harvest. Simply put, the old saying is true: you reap what you sow. Consider what seeds you are planting. Will you be satisfied with your harvest? Will your crops help the communities in which you work and live?

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The prosperity journey starts with questions

Successful journeys begin with thoughtful preparation. Honest recognition of our current beliefs and actions is critical. Consider the following questions:

1. What does my lifestyle look like?
2. How much money do I need to maintain my ideal lifestyle?
3. What can I do to improve the most important relationships in my life?
4. How important is a sense of physical well-being?
5. How much exercise do I need each week?
6. What can I do to improve myself?
7. What can I do to improve my self-image and self-confidence?
8. How do I see my spiritual relationship to prosperity?
9. What makes me happiest? Why?
10. How much do I value an environmentally sustainable life?

Does money make us happier?

One of the most common beliefs, acknowledged by us or not, is that a high income is directly associated with happiness. We tend to believe that the more money we have, the happier and more satisfied we will be. It does little good to challenge this belief, even though experience teaches us that it is not always the rule.

What we can say about the relationship between money and happiness is that money does indeed make us happier, but only to the extent that it frees us from anxiety about meeting our basic needs, such as food and housing. In other words, if a person is poor, without necessities such as food, housing, transportation, or medical care, and they feel unhappy about it, then certainly money will contribute to their happiness.

When happiness is related to basic human needs, there’s nothing better than money.

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More than money

Prosperity is connected to the determination to improve one’s situation. Most times that improvement has something to do with money, and determination and money are comfortable companions. The pursuit of money, not the love of it, is commendable and respectable if our intentions are in line with our values. Each one of us must determine what a life of prosperity looks like. The more clear-sighted we are about our circumstances, desires, and goals, the more precise our definition of prosperity will be.

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