Defining Wealth

Success has many measurements, but the universal scale is wealth. Yet, wealth seems to escape a simple definition—either in the mind’s eye or on the balance sheet.

- How do you define wealth?
- Has your definition changed over the years?
- Is wealth only a matter of money?
- How do you keep score?
- When will you have “enough” if ever?

If you see wealth as a financial target, it’s a number that probably changed over the years—reflecting not only inflation, but also your own achievements. If you originally wanted to be a millionaire, you may have already reached that goal. After all, until recently the booming stock and real estate markets easily helped lift youthful dreams of becoming a millionaire into reality.

When you achieve a level of success, your dreams and goals have a way of expanding. Reach one milestone, and you’re ready for another. That original $1 million goal may have long ago moved to $10 million, or even higher.

Now that there are more than 400 billionaires in the United States (or at least there were at last count—in October 2008), you might not be willing to settle for mere millions!

Money has a way of coming and going. A reality check of your investment performance over the past year might prove that point. If it were as easy to keep millions, as well as create them, the task might not be so highly motivating!

There’s nothing like an economic slowdown and a bear market to bring money goals into perspective. In fact, if money is your only definition of wealth, you’d better fasten your seatbelt. This rough ride is not over in either the economy or the investment markets.
I’ll never forget a billionaire musing to me about the value added by his latest acquisition. He said, “it could be lollipops”. The dollars are just for the counting.” Already having more money than he could spend or enjoy, the wealth-building process was just a way of measuring his stake in the game, his performance against his competitors.

“There’s more to wealth than keeping score by counting financial assets.”

It’s a race that starts early, and for some, a race that never ends. Most recently, the focus has been on youthful accumulation of wealth. Google co-founders Sergey Brin and Larry Page are under 40 and each is worth more than $18 billion. They’re still working at it—an inspiration to countless entrepreneurs.

But is the accumulation of wealth ever finished? Few billionaires throw in the towel and quit. Sure, Bill Gates is devoting his life to being charitable, but he’s still deeply committed to the continued growth of Microsoft.

Rupert Murdoch, approaching 80, continues to expand his media empire, though Forbes estimated his net worth at $8.3 billion in 2008. Kirk Kerkorian, 91, is ranked No. 41 on the list of global billionaires with an estimated $16 billion net worth. Last year he lost billions on his shares of Ford and MGM. But he’s still in the game as Las Vegas’ largest casino owner by room count. Or by lollipops!

There’s more to wealth than keeping score by counting financial assets. Any one of these wealthy people would trade their wealth for good health. Just ask billionaire Mike Milken, who famously invested his fortune to find a cure for prostate cancer, from which he suffered.

Obviously, not all your wealth is in the form of countable assets. For some, it’s fame. For others, it’s family. John Travolta would surely trade his fame and fortune if he could have saved the life of his teenage son.

After a certain point, some find their wealth becomes merely a tool to be used on behalf of others. They turn to global projects like curing disease or feeding starving children in Third World countries. Warren Buffett joined Bill Gates in his global philanthropic endeavors. Oprah has endowed a school in Africa and countless projects in America.

The one thing money cannot buy is time. That’s a humbling thought. Which is the most precious asset: time or money? Fortunately, life doesn’t require us to make a decision for one or the other—only to balance them wisely.

In the past year, many wealthy people have come in for a rude shock. Real estate and stock market values collapsed. Financial institutions like Lehman and Bear Stearns have wiped out fortunes that were once taken for granted. Bernard Madoff is accused of stealing the assets of charitable foundations and retirees who considered themselves wealthy, or at least comfortable.

The wealth is gone, the people remain. For many, it’s too late to start over. Others are too dispirited to attempt the climb again. Yet, one way or another all will survive. And in the losing of wealth comes greater perspective. The lessons
that cost the most, teach the most. Wealth is tough to achieve and even more difficult to maintain.

Human nature teaches that we will continue to strive for success, for wealth, for accomplishment. In that regard, today’s economic problems create the opportunities for tomorrow’s wealth creation.

Americans are fortunate to live in a free-enterprise system that promises and almost always provides equality of opportunity. But America has never guaranteed equal results. That is the definition of socialism, a system that has been tested to death around the world.

American success stories are motivated by aspiration, not by guilt. It’s not our style to play the politics of envy, attempting to take away all the rewards of success. Instead, we’re inspired by the achievements of others. Successful people become role models for others. That is perhaps America’s greatest gift - the ability to inspire and offer hope for others within a system that rewards creativity.

So look forward, not back, in your quest for wealth. And be sure to give yourself broad enough definitions of success and wealth to recognize your accomplishments as well as the time to appreciate them.

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**Test Your Peanut IQ!**

We’ve all read the news recently that peanuts make excellent carriers of salmonella, but what else do you know about this recently beleaguered legume?

- From what continent do peanuts originate?
- How much peanut butter does the average American eat each year?
- On average, how many peanuts does a typical 18 oz. jar of peanut butter contain?
- Why does peanut butter stick to the roof of your mouth?
- Who invented peanut butter?

Look for the answers on the sixth page of this FACES newsletter.

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**When Cooking Meats on Grills**

It has been shown that when cooking meats on grills that we tend to cook the meat at too high a temperature and cause the formation of heterocyclic amines that are carcinogenic. Also, the flare-ups and smoke rising from fat that has dripped down being burned up and being absorbed onto the meat may have some carcinogenic effect.

Heterocyclic amines are a group of mutagenic and cancer causing compounds, produced during the cooking of many animal products. They are listed in the federal government’s list of known carcinogens. Grilled meats have some of the highest concentration of them as they form when meats are heated during cooking.
According to the National Cancer Institute, there are four factors that influence their formation: type of food, method of cooking, cooking temperature and cooking time. They are found in cooked muscle meats. Vegetables do not do this . . . so okay to grill.

Temperature is the most important factor as meats cooked at high temperatures have the most. Cooking methods at high heats are frying, broiling and barbecuing. One study showed that when the cooking temperature was increased from 200 degrees to 250 degrees, the content of heterocyclic amines was raised threefold. Slow cooking or roasting at low temperatures produces a smaller amount of them.

Meats cooked at high temperatures, such as on the grill, have more carcinogens than meats cooked at low temperatures. When cooking on the grill one can take some precautions to reduce the formation of cancer causing agents. According to The Cancer Project, the five worst foods to grill are chicken breast, beef steak, pork, salmon and hamburger.

Ways suggested by the American Cancer Society to modify the effects include:

1. Microwave meats to partially cook the before putting it on the grill. This reduces the cooking time and exposure to high heat.
2. Marinate the meat. Marinating the meat before cooking reduces the formation of carcinogens. According to the American Cancer society, an acid based marinade may prevent them from forming.
3. Reduce the temperature (turn down the heat) on the grill.
4. Move meat to the edge of the grill. Carcinogens form when fats from the meat drip down and sizzle on the hot briquettes or parts of the grill. The edges of the grill are usually cooler than the middle.
5. Don’t burn your meat. Use a meat thermometer to make sure meat is cooked to the right temperature and remove it.
6. Flip the meat frequently. Flipping the meat helps it to cook faster and prevents these compounds from forming.
7. Select smaller cuts of meat. Smaller cuts, like on kabobs, require less cooking time, so there is less time for carcinogens to form.
8. Trim the fat from the meat to prevent the fat dripping that cause flare ups.

MAY – More Simple Ways to Lose Weight

- Take wheels off luggage.
- Choose an activity that fits into your daily life.
- Park further from the store and walk.
- Ask a friend to exercise with you.
- Make time in your day for physical activity.
- Exercise with a video if the weather is bad.
- Bike to the barbershop or beauty salon instead of driving.
- Keep to a regular eating schedule.
- If you find it difficult to be active after work, try it before work.
- Take a walk or do desk exercises instead of a cigarette or coffee break.
- Perform gardening or home repair activities.
- Avoid laborsaving devices.
- Take small trips on foot to get your body moving.
- Play with your kids 30 minutes a day.
- Dance to music.

Next month 15 more tips!!!

**Conflict Resolution**

Conflict is part of life and usually occurs when people disagree about problems or situations. Learning how to settle disagreements is an important skill for children to master. It is possible to settle a disagreement and work things out peacefully. That process is known as conflict resolution. Conflict resolution helps us out in the most difficult times without fighting others, running away from a situation or going against our feelings and beliefs. People’s different points of view and strong feelings can cause a conflict. Younger people especially experience conflict when dealing with and handling bullies, jealousy, gossip, differences, prejudices, broken friendships and possessions. Trying to avoid the other person and/or attacking them are not the best solutions when dealing with conflict. It is best to work together to solve disagreements.

**Resolving Conflict**

Settle emotions and calm down. Do not let strong feelings lead to an argument. Stop arguing, threatening or name-calling. Try cooling off by relaxing your body, counting to 10, breathing deeply or leaving the room.

Write the problem down and focus on the problem not the person.

Turn the problems into opportunities and possibilities. Think of solutions you can use to solve the problem. It is best to create multiple solutions.

Listen to others, they will listen back. By respecting their thoughts and needs, they will respect yours. Your goal here is to build power with others not over them.

Tip: Rather than interrupting, ask questions when the person is done talking. Restate what you’re hearing. Doing so will let the other person know whether or not you are understanding their point of view.

Don’t play the blame game. Attacking the other person won’t help solve the problem. Express your feelings without blaming others.

Recognize what you may have done wrong. Owning your part of the conflict is an important step to resolution.

Compare and contrast each solution. Your main goal is to mutually agree on the solution.

Tip: Negotiation is key. Sometimes mediation is needed with a third party there to help out with communication, coming up with solutions and following through a plan.

In the end, the solution(s) will help reconstruct the relationship.
Battling Bullies

Bullying is the process of intimidating or mistreating someone weaker or in a more vulnerable situation. The following are a few suggestions on how to battle bullies without physically fighting back:

- **Ignore . . .** the bully. Showing signs of weakness is what they strive to see. Stand proud and don’t let it get to you. You can also ignore the bully by walking away from the situation. It is harder for them to bully someone who won’t stand still to listen.

- **Agree . . .** with the bully. Refuting what they do or say is what they think is funny. Agreeing with them will make the situation awkward for them.

- **Humor . . .** the bully. Make it so you get the last laugh. Tell a joke!

- **Develop** new or nurture existing friendships. Friends often serve as buffers and provide support in vulnerable situations.

- **Offer** support to the victim by expressing words of kindness or condolence. Show disapproval of bullying behavior by not joining in the laughter or teasing.

- **Seek** immediate help from an adult and report bullying incidents to appropriate personnel.

Test Your Peanut IQ

- the answers

1. **From what continent do peanuts originate?** Peanuts originated in South America, where they have been cultivated for more than 2,000 years. Spanish and Portuguese traders brought them back to Europe. Currently the largest producer of peanuts in the world is China, followed by India, and the U.S. is a distant third.

2. **How much peanut butter does the average American eat each year?** The average American eats about 3 pounds of peanut butter every year. Marlon Brando was an avid peanut butter fan. It was rumored that after visits by the actor, his hosts would discover emptied peanut butter jars in their kitchens.

3. **On average, how many peanuts does a typical 18 oz. jar of peanut butter contain?** On average, it contains 850 peanuts. It’s because of this that about half of the Georgia peanut crop goes to making peanut butter. Peanut butter is not as popular in the rest of the world as it is in America. Two thirds of the international peanut production goes to making peanut oil, which is very popular in cooking, due to its high smoking point (the temperature at which it begins to smoke).

4. **Why does peanut butter stick to the roof of your mouth?** Peanut butter sticks because of its ability to almost instantly absorb moisture, due to its high protein content (30 grams per cup). It’s like the Sham Wow® of food! This may also explain why it is a secret weapon for removing chewing gum from fabric or hair.
5. Who invented peanut butter? John Harvey Kellogg, contrary to common belief, it was not George Washington Carver. There is evidence that the ancient Incans created an ancient mash, and John Harvey Kellogg, the cereal magnate, marketed a nut butter in 1890, years before Dr. Carver’s famous experiments at Tuskegee University, where he discovered over 300 uses for peanuts, as adhesives, ink, fuel and cosmetics, among others. His research revolutionized agricultural practices in the southern U.S.

May Spotlight

4-H Is Soaring To New Heights Summer 2009

The 4-H motto is “To Make the Best Better,” so make the best better by enrolling now to learn something new and meet new people. The 4-H office along with those giving leadership to the activities hope you have an enjoyable summer and invite youth ages 5-19 to take advantage of the many opportunities offered in the Avenues of Interest Summer Program. We invite you to join us for an exciting summer!!! Any youth in Onslow County may enroll in one or more workshops. You do not have to be a 4-H’er to register, just come by the 4-H office at 4024 Richlands Hwy, Jacksonville. Call us at 455-5873 or you can also check our website to see if classes are full (http://onslow.ces.state.nc.us/). All programs have a registration fee which must be paid when you register. Registration will not be held at the workshop or activity. Make checks payable to NCCES-ONSLOW COUNTY. All monies collected are used for supplies and or instructor fees. Again, do not miss out on an exciting summer of 4-H activities.