

Ideas from ***Spiritual Economics***:

The Principles and Process of True Prosperity, 2001 edition by Eric Butterworth
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In this incredible age of much stuff and a cell phone in many children's pockets it's almost a conscious person's duty to examine our use of words like *abundance*, *affluence* and *prosperity*. Butterworth does just that based on ancient, biblical and philosophic truths. In referring to *affluence* he writes, *It's literal meaning is "an abundant flow," and not things at all. When we are consciously centered in the universal flow, we experience inner direction and the unfoldment of creative activity.* And then, *The word **prosperity** comes from the Latin root which literally translates: "according to hope" or "to go forward hopefully." . . . Considered in the broadest sense, prosperity is "spiritual well-being."* To be prosperous is to feel grateful for our mind, body, creative juices and our health and to be alive. It is to celebrate what we have. As my husband has told our children for years, *To be comfortable in life all you need to do is spend less than you earn.* The Quaker's saying, *"When you pray, move your feet,"* certainly helps pay the bills.

Many of us chase the carrot of happiness through a Caribbean cruise, a better car, a computer and television in each bedroom and an intercom system to connect us while we end up feeling angry at one another as we declare bankruptcy. There is nothing inherently wrong with stuff that adds pleasure to our life.

But we delude ourselves if we think stuff creates happiness. All you need to do is watch a Dr. Phil episode featuring a wealthy family name calling and swearing at each other in their back garden swimming pool. Butterworth writes, *Perhaps we need a new model of success, where the "good life" refers more to "values" than to "valuables."* The question is, to move up the income ladder does it happen through expansion of your personal God given gifts or does it sacrifice your soul to do it? As Butterworth says, *Make a new commitment to think of your work not as place to make a living but as an opportunity to make a life.*

Henry Thoreau wrote, *If one advances confidently in the direction of his dreams, and endeavors to live the life which he has imagined, he will meet with a success unexpected in common hours.* We must first decide on the life we wish to lead from the inside out and be the person we positively imagine. We see success and failure through the lens of who we are. Do you see yourself as successful, prosperous and affluent?

I sometimes doubt. A couple of weeks ago I was in a state of questioning my success and purpose. I had the good fortune to be in the presence of Azim Jamal, author of ***The Corporate Sufi***. He said to me. "Patricia, stop looking at what is missing and focus on what you have accomplished." I was looking through, as Eric Butterworth would describe, the *wrong window*. By looking out *the window of flow and abundance*, not

lack of accomplishment, I was able to create a different image of myself and my life-- as prospering. Butterworth promotes mental discipline or focusing on the positive and the possible.

Butterworth closes his book with the concept of giving. Whenever we North Americans want to comprehend our economic wealth we can think of countries where the average child has three belongings--a loin cloth, bowl and spoon. Should we tithe as in giving one tenth of our profits as many traditions encourage? It's an individual and family decision to decide what to keep and what to give. As Butterworth ended his *Spiritual Economics* book with this quote by Canon Farrar so shall I end this summary:

I am only one, but I am one.

I can't do everything, but I can do something.

What I can do, I ought to do.

And what I ought to do,

By the grace of God I will do.

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