

The Wellbeing of Wealth

The word *wealth* has ancient roots dating back more than 4,000 years. Within the evolution of the Indo-European language, wealth's root word *wel* means to wish, to will. The word morphed through changing cultures and times. In Old English, the root word had become *wela* with a double meaning of wellbeing and riches.

Western culture defines wealth as anything that can be exchanged for money, making well-being dependent on whether people can afford to survive. Yet our culture goes beyond securing basic needs. We fetishize them to the degree it becomes a race to see who can spend the most money on the basics of life.

For the past 300 years, capitalism has promised that increasing the availability of material goods will increase our wellbeing. All along, some have questioned the link between money and wellbeing. Now we know that pursuing more than we need imperils life and Earth. We get the opposite of wellbeing when we indulge every whim, desire, and comfort.

Once we have the means to survive, then we have the potential of discretionary time. Eating in a soup kitchen or at a high end restaurant meets the same basic need. We spend all our time making money to buy our basic needs or scrambling to find ways to secure them, either because we cannot afford the market price for basic needs, or we use them to display our wealth. We do not have time to do much else.

Those on the path of the sacred Earth Interbeing find meaning and purpose by furthering life on Earth. We devote ourselves to overcoming our culturally conditioned harmful beliefs and behaviors and learn how to live as Earth Interbeings. By recognizing our common neediness, we care for those who have the greatest needs through mutual aid. Those with more than enough share with those with less than enough. Because of our equality, we ensure that all beings have what they need to survive by living humbly and sufficiently.

We learn how to meet our basic needs in ways that furthers life and the Earth through generosity and giving back for what we take. Our mutual wellbeing becomes our wealth.

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