

# Money is not always the means to become rich

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- **SMITHA HARI**

As contradictory as it may sound, money is not the only way one can experience the feeling of being rich. Money is important. But often, one tends to overlook other aspects of life which can make him rich. A person's attitude, conduct, language, experiences, thoughts, skills and mental maturity can also make him rich. And yes, happy! There are so many aspects in life other than money which can make a person rich.

The first such aspect is a person's attitude. Attitude is perhaps the single most important factor, next to character which can get a person places, make him famous and teach him to 'live'. Everyone faces setbacks in various forms, at some point. Fighting the setbacks and bouncing back is what counts the most. With a positive attitude, even a financially poor man can become a financially rich person. There are many famous personalities across the world that stand testimony to this fact. Irving Berlin once said, *"Life is 10 percent what you make it and 90 percent how you take it."* How true!

The second factor is a person's behaviour and his actions. Having a positive attitude is definitely important, but reacting to a situation positively is what actually counts. Different people react to different situations in different ways. For example, a businessman can choose to conduct his business ethically or immorally. Dishonest practices can get him fame and money in a short time, but this is short lived too. Association with positive people who can help in spreading positivity is important. Steven Covey, the author of *The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People* said, *"It's not what happens to us, but our response to what happens to us that hurts us."*

The next way of feeling rich is having the right experiences in life. A billionaire who is just making money is not really rich. Searching for new experiences in every turn of life can help in enriching life. Taking a vacation, visiting new places, reading a good book, donating money and making new friends can help one experience the true richness in life.

Focusing on opportunities and updating skills is another way of enhancing richness in life. Constantly learning, growing and seeking wisdom is a sure way of becoming wealthy. One way of doing this is by exploring interests and increasing knowledge in this field of interest. Skills are alone not enough; applying this knowledge and experimenting is what will really get a person to the next level.

World over, there are several examples of rags to riches stories. People who have had humble beginnings have grown to create opportunities for themselves and become famous, and yes -rich! Be it Rajinikant, Oprah Winfrey or Dr. APJ Abdul Kalam - these people have definitely not become 'rich' because of money. They have had that extra factor which made them go the extra mile and achieve greatness. The hard work and humility of Rajinikant, the grit, determination and Never Say Die attitude of Oprah and the clear aim in life, hard work, perseverance and knowledge of Dr. Kalam have helped these people to become truly enriched as individuals.

Changing social trends in the world at large and in India in particular, support the argument that money is not the only way to become rich. One such interesting factor is the high level of suicide rates in the country. Wikipedia states that Indians constitute 20% of the reported suicide cases in the world. According to the National Crime Records Bureau, in 2012, the number of reported suicides in the country was 1,35,445, while the number of reported murders in the same year was 34,434, indicating that suicides were close to four times the murders in the country. If the reason behind these suicides is examined, it is found that only about 6,379 cases were due to bankruptcy, poverty and unemployment. A huge 30,792 cases were due to family problems.

What is the reason behind these high numbers? These statistics make it clear that richness in life is not just by having money. Rather, having a peaceful life with the right attitude and strong will power is the key to being rich. Recent suicide rates of high profile, financially rich people also corroborates this viewpoint.

The secrets to getting rich, not just in terms of money but in all perspectives, are likely to be there in every religion. Studying and following the religion one believes in is very important. There are many insights which can be found in all religious teachings. Nevertheless, simply following a religion blindly will not help in enriching a person. Spirituality is also essential. By seeking to understand the real self and discover the sub conscious mind, a person can understand deeper things about himself. One way to attain this is through meditation. Meditation can give a person new insights, new thoughts and make him feel rich too.

Improving the mind should be done hand in hand with improving the body. This means physical fitness is essential and co-exists with mental finesse. To keep the body active, exercising is the most commonly followed and easy practice. Yoga is another way of attaining richness, as it combines both the physical body and the mental abilities of a person. By following a disciplined approach of exercising, practicing yoga and meditating every day, one can become a truly well rounded personality.

All leaders are readers. Reading is yet another way of attaining fulfilment in life. Selecting the best books in the area of interest which is known for its usefulness can help in enriching knowledge. Observing people who are rich in all senses, understanding what they do differently

and learning and emulating them can be a great starting point in this journey of attaining richness.

As Ayn Rand rightly put it, *“Money is only a tool. It will take you wherever you wish, but it will not replace you as the driver.”* Becoming rich is a journey and not a destination, and money is just one of the means and not the end of this journey.