

Build a Balanced Portfolio of Psychological Wealth

For many of us, our definition of wealth is based on the number listed on our bank account statements, or the success of our financial portfolios. But another, more holistic definition of personal wealth is emerging, which its proponents are calling "psychological wealth". The study of an individual's psychological wealth emerged when certain psychologists became dissatisfied with the overwhelming focus on "negative psychology", and were instead intrigued by an entirely different question: **what makes us happy.**

So how do you achieve psychological wealth? Psychologists suggest that happiness is made up of a combination of several factors which, taken together, contribute to our overall sense of psychological wealth. Just as you might say you have achieved financial success when you have a well-rounded, diversified portfolio, the same is true for the remaining factors of psychological wealth.

The Four Pillars of Psychological Wealth:

Physical - You need to foster your physical well-being by being active and taking pleasure in life. Enjoy food, sex, and recreation - but all within moderation, of course. Go ahead and splurge on that decadent dessert. As long as you maintain a healthy diet the majority of the time, the emotional benefit of occasionally treating yourself will outweigh the calories.

Spiritual - Flex your spiritual muscles. While religious gatherings and church groups are a natural way to feed your spiritual side, you don't have to associate with a religion to be spiritual. This can be as simple as getting outside into nature, turning off your phone, and just being silent for a while.

Social - Work on your relationships and strive to connect with others. The western world especially is full of lonely and isolated people. In our quest for independence, for better jobs, or for an education, we often move far away from our families and the communities we grew up in. It takes time and effort to rebuild those relationships, and to regain a sense of belonging in a new community. But we are social animals, and a solid network of individuals whom we can trust and rely on is essential to our psychological wealth. This is perhaps the most important element of attaining psychological wealth.

Financial - So is there a relationship between money and happiness? Yes, there is, albeit a smaller one than we typically assume. Our financial success, our material possessions, and our job security receive more attention because they are easier to measure, but they are not the most vital, nor are they insignificant. It is important for people to feel self-sufficient and secure, but beyond that, you can greatly improve your psychological wealth by focusing on *how* you spend your money. Donating to causes you believe in, buying lunch for a friend, or choosing *not* to buy that big screen t.v. you know you don't need, are all ways to positively affect your psychological wealth.

So yes, money matters - up to a point. Succeeding in life is not just about the number of years you live and the number of possessions you accrue in that time; it is about the quality of those years and the relationships you build within the time you are given. Success is not just about the balance in your bank account, but whether you spend your money in ways that reflect your personal values and foster connections with others. Make the effort to improve your psychological wealth and overall happiness, and you may be surprised by the far-reaching positive effects on your own life, and the lives of the people around you.