



"Five Questions for a More Fulfilling Life"

In the book, *The Geometry of Wealth*^[1], author Brian Portnoy defined wealth as "funded contentment," which he further clarified as "the ability to underwrite a meaningful life."

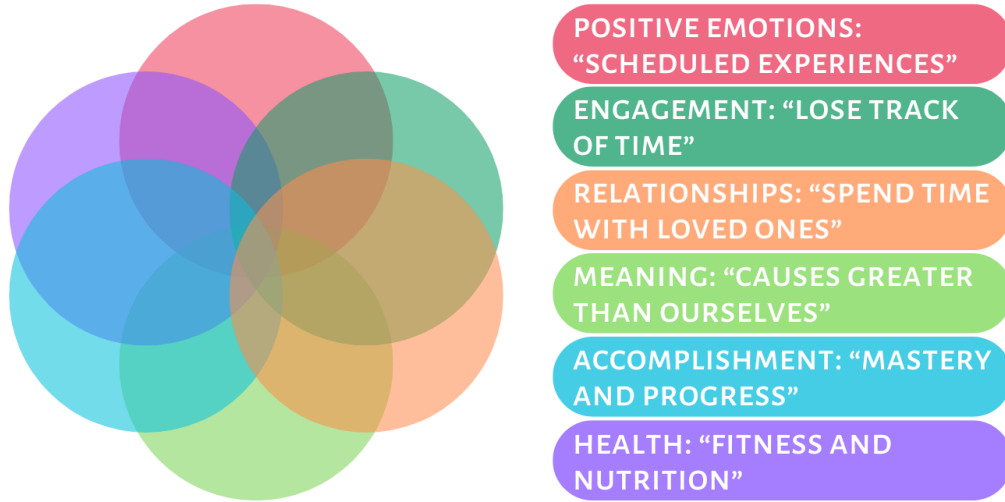
This is an excellent definition of wealth and is one we can *and should* strive for. Because without meaning or purpose, our money is mostly directionless. And without money, the pursuit of meaning and purpose is nearly impossible. So, as much as we may not like to acknowledge this, money, meaning, and purpose are all interconnected.

Given that we routinely address the "funded" part of the wealth equation in our work together, I wanted to share a few thoughts and questions that may help you pursue a "meaningful life," however you define that.

Thankfully, positive psychology researchers like Martin Seligman have offered insight into how we might increase our fulfillment and well-being. In his work, Seligman identified **five key areas of life**^[2] that can contribute to feelings of well-being: **positive emotion, engagement, relationships, meaning, and accomplishment.**

Graphic/Visual Below →

KEYS TO LIVING A FULFILLING LIFE



Let's review each one, and I'll leave you with a question to ponder that will, hopefully, point you toward more contentment and fulfillment regardless of your net worth or stage of life.

Positive Emotion: The best way to generate positive emotions is to participate in activities that encourage feelings of happiness. It could be spending time with people you love and/or doing things you enjoy, such as traveling, participating in book clubs or adult sports leagues, and having regularly scheduled date nights with your spouse. While they say spontaneity is the spice of life, "scheduled experiences" can generate longer-lasting positive emotions because they give you something to look forward to and many memories to look back on.

- Question: What positive experiences can you schedule for the coming six months that would give you a few things to be excited about?

Engagement: Think of engagement as any activity that requires your total presence where there's a chance that you lose track of time. This could be enjoying a new or old hobby, gardening, reading a novel, or being out in nature.

- Question: What hobbies or activities could you pursue that you enjoy to the point that you could lose track of time that you can include on your weekly calendar?

Relationships: As important as we know relationships are to our well-being, recent studies on loneliness^[3] show how neglected close relationships have become in recent years. So, finding ways to maintain and enhance your most important relationships is one of the most reliable ways to increase your life satisfaction.

- Question: What activities can you include each week to encourage deeper relationships with your family and friends?

Meaning: Most of us have experienced the positive effects of contributing to causes greater than ourselves. That may be volunteering within your local community or church, or simply helping your neighbors. We all have different skills and personalities, so finding a way to contribute to the lives of others in a way that resonates with you can dramatically increase feelings of fulfillment.

- Question: How can you contribute time on a regular basis to helping others?

Accomplishment: One thing that sets humans apart from all other species is our innate desire for progress and mastery. It's so critical to our well-being that Michael Easter recently noted that "...mastering something new and difficult—no matter your age—is likely to improve your health and happiness. It can even add years to your life."^[4] Mastery can be pursued in your work, by writing a book or undertaking a tough physical challenge, taking golf or piano lessons, learning to paint, or any other activity in which you can observe progress.

- Question: What activity can you pursue in a way that you might see noticeable improvement and progress?

Bonus(+): Seligman also included a few other factors that can improve our well-being, with a focus on health being one of them—at least as much as is in our control. Beyond having fewer health complications, getting and/or staying fit has numerous other benefits, such as fewer symptoms of depression and anxiety. And, given the relationships piece above, pursuing your physical health with friends can enhance the experience even further.

- Question: How can you make fitness and your general health an enjoyable part of your weekly routine? Can you recruit a friend to join you on your fitness journey?

While pursuing a meaningful life is outside the realm of my typical investing and planning commentary, the primary purpose behind our work together is to help you live your best life, so I wanted to share these thoughts and questions with you to encourage more joy and happiness in your life.

If you'd like to share your ideas for how you might answer the questions above, please be encouraged to respond!

[1] [The Geometry of Wealth](#)

[2] [Martin Seligman's PERMA Model for Well Being](#)

[3] [Health & Human Services Study on Loneliness](#)

[4] [Quote from Michael Easter](#)