



The Full Spectrum Of True Wealth, by Wayne Muller

For the past thirty years, I have been privileged to work with all kinds of people -- ordinary people, not just professionals. Each in their own way is trying to build a better world. And, while large amounts of money are necessary for certain things -- like discovering a cure for cancer or AIDS -- in more cases than we imagine, giving small amounts of money at the local level honors the fact that people are essentially strong and whole and wise and creative. They can be creators of good things in their community.

We always start with a strength assessment. We look first for the hidden wholeness, the spark of passion and creativity, the deep yearning to make the community a better place. Then we fan the spark of that wholeness into a flame. People who live in the community not only know what's wrong with the community; they also know where the strength is. They know who can get things done, and who's the person who knows the person who can make sure it happens.

This is not really about money. We are so trained to think of money as our wealth, or 'our capital'. But there are so many kinds of 'capital' besides money, and some are more available and even more valuable. For

example, whenever we gather to make something happen, we need someone who has wisdom capital, and another who has compassion capital; some bring 'knowledge-of-the-community' capital, some have time capital, and finally, some contribute financial capital.

But it's only when you combine all that capital that you create true wealth. Then all of a sudden there's no giver and no receiver, it's just everybody bringing what they have to the table, and somehow taking away exactly what they need.

I have never met someone so broken they had nothing to offer. All of us are broken from time to time, and feel we can't give back very much. But then, in another season, we find we can once again come to the table, bring whatever we have to offer, and it is more than enough. This is true regardless of how much money we have. Our real capital is the fundamental wholeness of the human spirit.

--Wayne Muller