

Money does not buy happiness

By *Helene Stoller*
CONTRIBUTOR

In these tumultuous economic times, it's easy and perhaps natural to think, "I'd be so much happier if I won the lottery and didn't have to worry about money."



Helene Stoller

Many of us believe that more money equates to greater happiness, because we think that having the material things that money can buy will bring us more pleasure and a more fulfilling life.

In most cases, this belief is a fallacy of major proportions.

The late comic and philosopher George Carlin said it best: "The paradox of our time in history is that ... we spend more, but have less; we buy more, but enjoy less... We have multiplied our pos-

sessions, but reduced our values... We've learned how to make a living, but not a life."

According to Abraham Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs, once people meet their basic physiological and safety needs (i.e., food, water, shelter, sex, and freedom from immediate danger), they are free to pursue higher-order needs for belongingness, esteem, contribution of knowledge, self-actualization, and even self-transcendence.

Maslow reasoned that because physiological and safety needs are more immediate and urgent, they come into play as the main goal until they are satisfied.

Only the two lowest needs – physiological and safety – involve money.

The higher-level needs that lead to "self-actualization" and "self-transcendence" are all about connections between people, the quality of relationships, sharing knowledge, beauty, and finding peace, both inside and within

the universe.

According to a recent *The New York Times* article country music star Wynonna Judd, after amassing a fortune, squandered much of it on material things for her children and herself, trying to make up for her poor Appalachian beginnings and lack of time spent with her children.

She found herself with "everything and nothing at all," she said.

Using Maslow's model of human needs, we can see that more money can bring increased happiness only to those whose life is spent seeking food, water, shelter, and safety.

Once these basic needs are met, more money doesn't factor into needs at all. Instead, the sense of belonging, of giving and receiving love, of contributing knowledge or something of value to society, of knowing who we are and where we are going in our lives, and of inner and transcendent peace equate to our well-being and happiness.

As George Carlin said: "Remember, spend some time with your loved ones, because they are not going to be around forever.

Remember, say a kind word to someone who looks up to you in awe, because that little person will grow up and leave your side."

Helene Stoller, Psy.D., L.P., Bluffton

After 5 Women's Connection meets

The HHI After 5 Women's Connection will meet on Nov. 12 from 6 - 8 p.m., at The Country Club of Hilton Head. Come and enjoy the evening with award-winning and talented Impressionist Candace Whittemore Lovely as she shares "Where Does The Inspiration Come From."

Dinner is served. Cost is \$20 inclusive and reservations are required. For more information, contact Bonnie Hallman at 341-3300.