

ISSUE 18

Do You Want to Be a Millionaire?

Why would anyone want to be a millionaire? I want to be a billionaire! Having a million dollars is relatively common these days. There are well over a million millionaires just in the United States alone. To be really rich, one needs at least a cool billion. That seems like a lot of money, I know; and some people would say that no one needs that much, that this kind of wealth just perpetuates poverty in general. But from my perspective, poor people will always be poor no matter how much money I have, so I might as well make as much as I can and let them worry about themselves.

What is your own approach to getting rich?

- (1) Continue to save up
- (2) Start my own business
- (3) Inherit a fortune
- (4) Win a lottery
- (5) Marry a rich person
- (6) Get a good education that will lead to a good job



+cool : not exaggerated

+perpetuate : cause a situation to continue

+perspective : way of thinking about or seeing (sth)

Sample Answers

(A) I want to *run* my own business. I'm sure that I could do very well developing software solutions for the general public. I already know a lot about the subject, and the *start-up* costs are pretty low. And I think that earning money through one's own talent and hard work provides much more satisfaction in life than just having someone else give you a salary or having a rich parent or spouse.

(B) Saving money is simply a matter of habit, just like spending it. Years ago, I decided to set aside five per cent of my salary every time, no matter how little that was. I would spend the rest of it, wisely or foolishly, as I *saw fit*, but that five per cent would always be my payment to myself, to *squirrel away* for future use. In a short while, I never even thought about the five per cent, and I never missed it; to all practical purposes, from week to week it just never existed: if I didn't have it, I certainly couldn't spend it. But now this small figure has grown into quite a fortune, and I know that I never have to worry about my *finances* again, even if I lose my job.

Speak Your Mind

1. Is it important for you to get rich? Why or why not?
2. Are you saving money in the bank? Why or why not?
3. Do you buy lottery tickets regularly? Why or why not?
4. How much money is enough?
5. What do you think about the rich?
6. What do you think about the poor?
7. What's the difference between the rich and the poor?
8. Do you think the rich have a responsibility to help the poor? Why or why not?
9. Is society responsible for taking care of the poor?
10. What is your idea on how to narrow the gap between wealth and poverty?
11. Which do you think is more difficult, making money or spending it? Why?

+run : control and organize (sth) such as a business, organization, or event

+start-up : relating to beginning and developing a new business

+see fit : determine; decide

+squirrel away : keep (sth) in a safe place for later use

+finances : monetary resources

Speak Your Mind

Speak Your Mind Helpers

11. Which do you think is more difficult, making money or spending it? Why?

M : Bills, bills, bills! Why don't people send me checks in the mail instead of bills?

F : You *exaggerate*. Your salary is far more than these bills. But in return, we live in this nice home, our kids go to good schools, and we can take pride in our appearance and status. A small *price* for these advantages!

M : But don't you realize how huge our debt is? If something happened at work, or if I had a medical emergency, we'd quickly lose everything we've worked so hard for. We really need to start saving *substantial* amounts in order to *put aside for a rainy day*. I'm not going to work forever, you know!

F : But it's just *temporary*. Aren't you expecting a promotion soon? I think we should just maintain our current level of *expenditure* for the time being and save the *surplus* from your next raise. That way we don't have to give up anything, and we'll still be able to put something ahead for later.

M : We've had this discussion before. Every time I get a raise, we say that we'll continue our old level of spending and save the rest, but it never works out that way, does it? Within a few months, we're spending more than we ever did and falling even further into debt.

F : But it's not as though we're spendthrifts! We don't waste money on things we don't need. If we can't have nice things, why *bother* to have money at all?

M : Look, I don't want to live like a monk, either. But I do think we could be a little more careful. Do we really need to entertain guests so often? Can't we stay home for once instead of taking an expensive vacation? Do you really need another pair of shoes right now? Can't I get by with the car we have, or do I have to get a new one right away?

→ **exaggerate** : make (sth) seem better, larger, worse etc. than it really is

→ **price** : cost of getting (sth) → **substantial** : large in amount or degree

→ **put (sth) aside for a rainy day** : save (sth), esp. money, for a time when it will be needed → **temporary** : not permanent

→ **expenditure** : amount of money spent → **surplus** : amount that remains → **bother** : make the effort to do (sth)

F : Oh, we're fine. But, if we cut back too much, our friends will think something is wrong. They'll be worried that things are not going well at your company. They won't want to burden us financially, so they will see us socially less often. This could affect our kids' status at school, and our daughter would no longer be considered such a desirable *catch*. Is that what you want?

M : Well, when you put it that way, I guess we'll just have to keep things the way they are, won't we?

