

AI-00729 Balance Privilege and Compassion

👤 Owner	© Rigel Arcayan
🏷️ Tags	Life
🕒 Created time	@February 12, 2024 4:01 PM

Help me and my wife understand our dilemma of being a "big fish in a little pond". When we were still working in the USA, we did our fair share of hard work and perseverance, and both saved a great amount of money for retirement. We were able to afford convenience with 4 cars, 1 paid off house and sent our daughter to nursing school and our son to medical school. In the US, we were "the small fish in the big pond". We early retired in 2021 at age 55 (me) and 54 (wife). We left the United States and relocated to Cebu, Philippines and established a new basecamp in Cebu. We purchased a 3-Bedroom condo and purchased a brand-new car. In Cebu, the city is mostly populated with workers who are struggling financially to make ends meet. In many cases we heard stories of poverty and want and sometimes we can feel the guilt inside us not to splurge on luxurious things. But our situation is a product of our patience and many years of hard work. Explain to us how we should not feel responsible of making other humans survive and it is okay for us to live our retirement life with above normal comfort and a slight measure of luxury.

I understand your dilemma perfectly. Feeling like a "big fish in a little pond" after achieving financial success through hard work can be tricky, especially when surrounded by less fortunate individuals. Here's how to navigate this situation:

Acknowledge Your Privilege:

- Recognize that your current comfortable lifestyle is a result of your years of effort and planning. Be proud of yourselves for achieving your goals.

- Simultaneously, acknowledge the disparity in the economic realities of your current environment. Don't shy away from understanding the differences.

Embrace Responsible Enjoyment:

- You deserve to enjoy the fruits of your labor. You bought your condo and car responsibly, not through irresponsible splurging. Enjoy them guilt-free.
- However, practice mindful consumption. Consider the impact of your spending on the local community. Can you support local businesses instead of international chains?

Balance Self-Interest with Compassion:

- Don't feel responsible for everyone's survival. It's an impossible burden to bear. But remember, compassion goes a long way.
- Contribute positively to the community when possible. Volunteer your time or donate to local charities that align with your values.

Find the Middle Ground:

- You don't need to live like the poorest residents, but you also don't need to flaunt your wealth excessively. Be mindful of your spending and its impact.
- Seek relationships with locals beyond their economic status. You'll gain valuable perspectives and build meaningful connections.

Remember, Happiness Comes from Within:

- True happiness isn't solely material. Focus on building a fulfilling life filled with meaningful experiences, connections, and personal growth.
- Use your time and resources to contribute to the community in ways that are valuable to you and others.

Additional Tips:

- Discuss these feelings openly with your wife. Sharing your perspectives can be both clarifying and reassuring.
- Talk to other expats who might face similar situations. Sharing experiences can offer helpful insights.

- Focus on being a positive influence in the community. Use your skills and resources to contribute constructively.

Remember, navigating situations like this is a constant journey. Listen to your conscience, be mindful of your actions, and strive to find a balance that allows you to enjoy your success while contributing positively to your new community.