

Everybody Tells Me So

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I remember when I was in fourth grade, while we were eating our snack (graham crackers and milk) in the kitchen, my classmates began discussing the effects of wealth. “Money doesn’t make you happy,” I insisted. I tried to argue the point, but no one else believed me. (The same class was later adamant that Clinton should be impeached, although they did spontaneously throw an anti-fur-coat demonstration.) “Of course money makes you happy,” they insisted. “Just wait, when you’re rich, you’ll change your mind.”

I haven’t.

On TV, whenever a kid is given a to-him-large sum of money, the fatherly adult handing it out says “Don’t spend it all in one place.” Don’t want the kid blowing it on a single movie and then feeling bad that he spent it all. Someone emailed me the same thing the other day, and I had to laugh. I don’t really know how to spend the money period. How could I possibly spend it all in one place? [Donate it to the UN?](#)

A friend told me to be sure not to let the money change me. “How could it possibly do that?” I asked. “Well, first you’d buy a fancy new car.” “I don’t know how to drive.” “Then you’d buy a big house in the suburbs.” “I like living in small apartments.” “And you’d start wearing expensive clothes.” “I’ve worn a t-shirt and jeans practically every day of my life.” “And you’d start hanging out with different people.” “I’m so shy I don’t even hang out with the people I know now!”

For months, every time we thought we’d really gotten somewhere on the Condé Nast deal, we’d get a call from Paul Graham. “Don’t get your hopes up,” he’d say. “Deals fall through.” Whenever we passed him on the street, “Deals fall through.” In emails, “Deals fall through.” It got to the point that Alexis put up a photo of Paul Graham and captioned it “Deals fall through.”

I got an email from Paul Graham the other day. “Ok,” he wrote. “Now you can get your hopes up.”