
How Much Is Enough?

We all want big paychecks, big cars & big houses. We want everything and we want it more, but have you ever thought what the limit is? Where it all stops? What is the end? How much is enough? Let me start answering this profound question through a story. Most of us know Pahom- the peasant, the protagonist of the story, "How Much Land Does a Man Need? ". This story is a masterpiece written by Leo Tolstoy in the year 1886. Pahom is a replica of most of us. We all want more and more, he also wanted more. We are never satisfied with what we have, he was also not satisfied with what he had. We never count our blessings, his nature was no different than this. He wanted more land, more wealth and everything more than what is enough.

Once given an opportunity to acquire as much land possible he got excited and overwhelmed. The opportunity came his way but with one condition. If he can make it back to the starting point before sunset, whatever land he covers will be his. Pahom started his journey like a maniac. He wanted to cover everything. He wanted to get the entire land, so he just started running to cover the distance to get more and more land. While running he even saw the Sun over his head, who was laughing at him and telling him to go back so that he can enjoy what he has, but his greed kept him eluding from this realization and he ran farther. Stop here! Just think. Are some of us not like Pahom? Have we ever stopped and taken a stack of what we have and what we are running for? If answered with utmost sincerity, I know the answer of this question is always No. We are too busy running like Pahom. We all are chasing water in desert which is nothing but a mirage. It just appears that we have found it, we have found that happiness, but the moment we reach that spot we find it to be farther ahead, or may be it was never there and appeared momentarily like an illusion, just like the mirage. I think, I just deviated from Pahom's story. Let's continue this tale. So Pahom kept running like no tomorrow. The moment when he realized he has come way far and he needs to go back to fulfill the condition of reaching back to the start point, he started running backwards, however it was too late. Sun was running towards the horizon faster than him. He tried to beat the speed of the Sun. As he started running faster, he got exhausted, but he kept on running. He gave a good competition to the Sun.

The Sun was running faster than ever to beat Pahom, but this guy was amazing, he beats the Sun and reaches the starting point before sunset. He gets the deal of his life time. He owned the entire land he covered. Now he has the fortune to live his life completely in happiness. Alas! Exhausted from the Sun, he was not able to breath and he drops dead. He died on the spot. His greed overpowered him and he was unable to enjoy what was enough for him to live a happy life. Further to the story, his well-wishers buried him in a grave which was only six feet long, and this answers the title of the book, "How much land does a man need? ". It also answers how much is enough? Now the profound question is why this happened and how much is enough? In this interesting & eloquent talk, Kevin Cavanaugh- a renowned building designer and developer in Portland, who has designed and developed cutting edge, award-winning buildings, by giving example of three topics mainly wealth, rent and equality, tried to answer this question. He himself lost all his property during recession and had to sell his big house and move into a house with minimal amenities for living like water, heat and electricity. He says it was not a house of his dreams but it was home enough and ever since he has been obsessed with the word "Enough".

He questions the status quo and brings examples from his life how he used the question, how much is enough. He says that if we all just use the word enough a little bit more and start utilizing power of the word enough, it will bring myriad change in our life, our community as a whole, and to humanity. He brought changes in lives of his employees by offering the same paycheck what he is drawing for himself, he offered people affordable housing which is enough to live a good life and he made sure that there is no gender wage gap in his own company. He gave reference of a Massachusetts couple who found out that someone making a million dollars a year is no happier than someone making \$70,000 a year. He says "below seventy it starts to tail off and depending on where you live in the nation that number might go up or down a little bit, so what they do is they give every dollar above seventy grand that they make every year away. " Isn't it amazing? Most of us are more concerned on what we do not have. We do not put our mind on what we have and that is the reason for all the suffering. We are never satisfied with what we have and in return we are not happy. Keeping your mind stuck at what you lack is a recipe for life disaster. I am not advocating not to desire for more, but what I am asking is to utilize the power of enough. You need to repeatedly ask the question how much is enough? I know for sure that enough is relative to each person and everyone has their own version of what 'enough' is and its prerogative of each person to figure out what is 'enough' for him or her. However we should not chase this mirage of having limitless things. There is no end to desire.

We need to stop and decide, for ourselves what enough is? In order to be happy, you need to draw a line for yourself. We need to kill the 'Pahom' inside us. Happiness will visit us only when we intrinsically know how much is enough for us. At the same time, what we can't have enough is the enough greed for humanity, the enough greed for equality and the enough greed for love as rightly said by Pieree "Where love is concerned, too much is not even enough". Love as much as you can but in materialistic things always ask the question how much is enough? This will keep you grounded, happy and contented. As someone rightly said "a contented mind is a golden medicinal elixir. " Be contented and use the power of enough to enjoy life.