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The wealth money can't buy

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There are a few things that can elevate your life dramatically—none of which cost much, if anything at all.

1 The Wisdom of Books

Consider Malala Yousafzai. Raised in the Swat Valley of Pakistan, she was a passionate young learner whose love for books would ultimately change the world. Even after being shot for standing up for girls' education, she became a global voice for learning and resilience, reminding us that "one child, one teacher, one pen, and one book can change the world."

The right book, at the right time, can fundamentally change the person who closes it. In a tech-saturated world, falling in love with reading again is an act of reclaiming your imagination and inner wisdom. Spend time with the thoughts of legendary minds—Nelson Mandela for heroism, Marcus Aurelius for daily discipline, Mother Teresa for servant leadership, Ben Franklin for character, and Isaac Asimov (who wrote over 500 books!) for productivity.

Great leaders read. A lot. Bill Gates reads 50 books a year. Warren Buffet spends 80% of his time reading. Why? Because few investments yield higher returns than a well-chosen book.

Here are five reasons to read every day:

1. It helps you think independently, beyond algorithms and bias.
2. It strengthens focus and deep thinking.
3. It expands your knowledge and reduces costly mistakes.
4. It trains you to solve problems with calm, deliberate insight.
5. It keeps you inspired and energised.

2 The Insights from Solitude

Growth begins where comfort ends. Bravery is built in moments of quiet courage—like sitting alone at a restaurant, resisting the urge to scroll, and being okay with silence. When you dare to look "odd" for choosing solitude, you build strength. You practise bravery. And you reclaim your inner power. Doing hard things—leaving a toxic relationship, caring for an elderly parent, standing up to injustice—requires inner resilience. And you only grow that by spending time with yourself.

Many of the world's great writers sought silence to do their deepest work—Roald Dahl, Virginia Woolf, George Orwell, C.S. Lewis. Solitude sharpens self-awareness. It teaches you to be comfortable in your own company, which improves every other relationship in your life.

As poet May Sarton wrote, *“Loneliness is the poverty of self; solitude is the richness of self.”*

In the stillness, you’ll find the truest part of yourself—the one that’s brave, honest, excellent and kind. Go to quiet places often. Reflect on your values, and then live them.

3 The Peace from Purpose

Tolstoy said, “Nothing can make life more beautiful than perpetual kindness.” He was right. Why has power become associated with dominance, instead of decency? True strength lifts others.

Take the story of Ivan Fernandez, a young Spanish runner who could’ve taken the win when Olympic medalist Abel Mutai mistakenly stopped short of the finish line. But instead, Fernandez helped Mutai cross first. “It was his race,” he said. That’s the kind of character the world needs more of.

Alexander the Great, on his deathbed, made three requests: that the best doctors carry his coffin, that his wealth be scattered along the way, and that his hands hang out of the coffin—empty. His message was simple: even the most powerful among us leave with nothing but the lives we’ve touched.

The deepest human hunger is to live for something beyond ourselves. Whether it’s helping someone in need, encouraging a colleague, or being kind to a stranger—you’ll find meaning not in what you own, but in what you give.

We tend to idolise billionaires and celebrities, but what about the single mother working two jobs to care for her children. The librarian, the teacher, the caregiver who makes life better quietly? Their impact is real, even if it’s uncelebrated.

Wherever you are on your journey—at a summit or in a valley—remember: you have magic in you. Your story matters. Your small acts of kindness create ripples far beyond what you see.

As Mother Teresa said, *“I alone cannot change the world, but I can cast a stone across the waters to create many ripples.”*

This article was inspired by themes and insights from Robin Sharma’s book, “The Wealth Money Can’t Buy” — a powerful reminder of the value of inner richness in a world obsessed with outward success.

