

\$ucce\$\$ --that's not how it's spelled

Ken Olson

Money is a mathematical abstraction; it's worth depends upon its use. It can build housing and fund a mind-expanding education. It can put food on the table and pay for health care, prolonging and elevating life. Money does a lot of good but is also the motivating factor for most crimes.

Some even view it as did a character in a movie: "Money is magic. Money is king. Money is what life is all about." It's obvious that Donald Trump sides with that pathetic, impoverished outlook. He has sold one-on-one meetings with himself at Mar-a-Lago for \$5 million each --this as sitting President. Money is buying influence and entitlement for the already entitled. In just two tumultuous days, when executive orders were causing the savings of ordinary people to plummet, Charles Swab made \$2.4 billion. He was invited to the Oval Office, where Trump gloated, "I make the rich richer."

In dissing alternatives to Trump, one person wrote, "I would rather have someone who is successful in operating a business and balancing a checkbook" -- sounding a bit like Germans in the 1930s justifying support for the Fuhrer by saying, "He made the trains run on time." With Trump, the bothersome facts include his six bankruptcies, his fraudulent "Trump University," and a solid reputation for stiffing his contractors and lawyers, etc. etc. If The Art of the Steal is how an economy is "balanced" and if this is the definition of success, we're in deep trouble. (The Editorial Board of The Wall Street Journal, hardly a lefty-rag, wrote that his tariffs are "the biggest economic policy mistake in decades.")

The multitudes who praise Trump are blind to his utterly corrupt character. Consider his commencement speech at U. of Alabama, where he bragged, "Nations are lining up to kiss my ass." --Sorry, but those are the words of our President (!), giving new meaning to "embarrassing." Is there a more corrosive example to hold up to the next generation than this vile, money-fixated, self-absorbed so-called leader? He exemplifies the exact opposite of values that our country has honored for two and a half centuries.

Trump has lots of money. --Too bad he lacks the heart to go with it. Instead of the countless greater goods that money can enable, he uses his for self-aggrandizement, obsesses over his dollar-rank among billionaires, and peddles

bitcoins and merchandise –again, while President. To him, the fine sentiment of playwright Thornton Wilder would be incomprehensible, that, after making a decent living, “Money is like manure: it’s not worth a thing unless it’s spread around, encouraging young things to grow.”

In the early 20th century, Andrew Carnegie was one of the infamous “robber barons” of the so-called Gilded Age. This tycoon of the steel industry had few scruples about how he made his billions off underpaid and overworked laborers. However, later in life, Carnegie completely revised his idea of success. Perhaps he internalized qualities alluded to in the old song that “The Best Things in Life Are Free,” or read Scripture, for he wrote, “No idol is more debasing than the worship of money.” He even said, “It’s a sin to die thus rich” and acted in that spirit, giving away most of his fortune to causes that included building 2,509 free libraries, both abroad and in cities and small towns all across America. His money did a world of good --when he came to value more than money.

Trump has begun his own new building project. The entire East Wing of the White House (which he promised not to touch) has been completely demolished to be replaced by a Mar a Lago-type glitzy ballroom that will cost \$300 million and be twice the size of the entire White House. The People’s House is not his property, and this is an unspeakable disrespecting of our history and of historic architecture by a president whose promises have the lifespan of a nanosecond. There are no words....

We have always expected presidents to have a broad knowledge of history, but Trump knows almost nothing about it. Always on broadcast, he does not read. So, those of you who may be invited to the gold-splattered Oval Office, be sure to wear your sunglasses and look for the golden calf, but also please recommend to him that he spend a few bucks on the 21-volume set of primary sources of key events, speeches, debates, etc. entitled *The Annals of America*. Even if he is incapable of reading more than The Table of Contents, he still might learn something ...but likely not.

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