

## Filled or Spilled

How Are You Pouring Your Energy

— by Teresa Romain

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Every time I sit down to write about abundance (or stand up to speak about it), I ask myself the question, "What actually is abundance?"

According to Webster's New World Dictionary, "abundance" is the state of being "great, plenty, more than enough." That's the definition I used for many years--but now I have a new definition. For me, abundance is: a state of being or an experience of life in which we are fully filled.

For me, the essence of abundance is literally fulfillment.

Fulfillment implies satisfaction, completeness, happiness and achievement that is long-lasting in nature. Imagine your life being fully filled with all the money, time, energy, relationships, productivity, health and other resources and conditions you truly value.

Imagine what your life would be like if you used your time, your money, and your energy only in ways that are fulfilling for you!

Doesn't that sound pretty abundant?

### Paying Attention

I was first introduced to this idea of "fulfillment" in terms of how I spend my money, time and energy in the book *Your Money or Your Life*, by Joe Dominguez and Vicki Robin. Reading this book, I learned that the first step is to pay attention to the fulfillment you do (or do not!) receive from the ways in which you currently spend your money, time and energy.

One way to do this is to use a question I've paraphrased from Dominguez and Robin's book. Each time you make a choice about how you're going to spend your energy, time or money, ask yourself:

*Given my particular values, goals and dreams, will I (or did I) receive fulfillment in proportion to the energy, time and money I am spending (or spent)?*

Here is another way of asking this question:

*Will spending my money, time, and energy in this way leave me fully filled (i.e., fulfilled) with energy, confidence, peace and hope--with abundance?*

I've come to realize that the process of accessing greater levels of abundance, including monetary abundance, requires that you use your money, time and energy in

ways that maximize your fulfillment, both today and in the future. Thus, the more frequently you answer "Yes" to this question, the greater level of abundance you will experience--today and in the future.

At the same time, whenever your answer to this question is "No," that awareness now gives you an opportunity to make a different and more fulfilling choice. Again, the more frequently your choices maximize your fulfillment, the more abundance you will experience.

### **A Kitchen-Sink Experiment**

Consider once again Webster's definition: "great, plenty, more than enough." Hmm. Does abundance really mean more than enough? Does the pursuit of more than enough lead to abundance?

Let's do an experiment that may help illustrate the physics of abundance. You can imagine this as you read it, but it's far more vivid if you actually conduct the experiment yourself.

You'll need three things:

1. a teacup or coffee cup;
2. a pitcher filled with water;
3. and your kitchen sink, so you won't make a mess.

Fill the cup to the brim with water (not hot water) until it is fully filled, that is, until you cannot pour any more in without it overflowing. This fully-filled cup represents a state of maximum abundance.

Now hold your cup (careful not to spill!) over the kitchen sink and carefully pour the entire contents of the pitcher into it. This will, of course, cause the contents in the cup to overflow.

Once the pitcher is empty, notice the water level in the cup. Where is it, in comparison to where it was when you started?

Interestingly enough, your attempt to fill the cup with more than enough water actually ended up displacing water, leaving you with less in the cup than when you began!

Could the same be true when it comes to abundance in our businesses and our lives?

Could it be that our attempts to pour more and more into our lives, to have "more than enough," often leave us less fully filled than before? Could such attempts, in fact, actually lead to greater scarcity instead of greater abundance?!

Could it be that for many networkers, the pursuit of more money, time and freedom, of a bigger house, nicer car, may actually lead to less time, energy,

freedom and money--and more debt, stress, anxiety? And can you see why that might be?

### **Picture-Perfect Abundance**

It's not a question of simply pursuing more. It's a question of pursuing that which genuinely fills you full--in other words, of that which is fulfilling for you.

So: What is fulfilling for you?

To answer that question, you must be aware of your own dreams and values, of your own picture of abundance. This picture is one that embraces all aspects of your life: fun, time, energy, freedom, health, relationships, contribution and love. That picture will also (and must also) include some level of financial fullness: a certain amount of money. It is the right combination of these resources and conditions, blended together by your values and dreams, that will leave you fully filled and genuinely abundant.

Start asking yourself the fulfillment questions I introduced above. Begin to recognize when your choices are driven by the thoughts of "not enough" or "more is the answer." When this occurs, pause for a moment and remember the abundance that is already around you and within you. Remember your dreams, goals and values. Then, from this picture of abundance, make a choice about your next action.

Will it fill or spill your abundance?