

For high-priced CEOs: How much is enough?

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I am ashamed to admit that I got very few offers as a result of my last article offering myself for sale. Actually I received only one — a local highly respected businessman who met me in a restaurant, opened his wallet and took out a dollar. The problem was I didn't have any change to give him.

Seriously, I think I may have offered myself too cheap. I only asked for \$2 million a year with a \$4 million severance package. It seems the real players in the world of big business would look on this as small potatoes. They are in the \$20 million and \$30 million bracket and some in the nine-figure range.

I began to wonder just how much is enough. Let's say someone offered to pay you or me \$1 million a year. Could we get by? To some like Bernie Maddox, or any of the CEOs from GM, Ford or Chrysler, that might be considered chump change. I guess with a million bucks a year I could buy whatever car I wanted and be able to afford gas at whatever the cost. I could buy a pretty nice house or two or three. I could send my wife to Sawgrass Mills every week to find bargains that save me even more money (or so she says).

What else could I do? Take some tennis lessons and eventually go on tour; buy one of those \$5,000 bicycles that I see advertised; spoil the heck out of my grandchildren with even more toys; hire someone to solve all my computer problems so that I don't end up banging my head against the wall while trying to make myself understood in New Delhi.

These are just a few of the things I could do.

Now what about \$20 million or \$50 million? You see my point. What do they actually need this much for? Are they really that much smarter than we are?

The stock market says nahhh! Do they work harder or longer hours than we do? I doubt it.

So what do they do with all that money? Some say that it will trickle down to us. So far all that I have seen trickle down is some gooey stuff all over my car. I am going to stop feeding those birds. Maybe I should stop feeding the "fat cats" as well, but I don't know how to do that.

What about those brothers that owned Pharmed, one of the most successful distributors of pharmaceuticals in the country? They had tons of money, enough to even give a lot of it away to charity, but apparently that was not enough for them. Even after all the bad news about them, dozens of high-ranking people in the community wrote letters of support to the judge in the case.

I will now promise that if I do receive these millions that I ask for I will have a cup full of change in my car to hand out to those guys with the sparkling white suits at all our intersections. I don't even know what they actually do, but I will still contribute. I may even toss a few coins to those guys in crisp military fatigues on the corner. I don't really know what they do either. You see, with a couple of million, I could afford be a real nice guy.

I guess I could buy a dozen homes and eight or nine cars and show the other millionaires that I have more than they do but then they might just go out and buy even more. I think that to some of those big-wheelers it becomes a game of who has the most stuff.

I remember once owning Boardwalk and Park Place with hotels. It was a great feeling until the game was over. It looks like the game may actually be over soon. We'll see. In the meantime, I am upping my offer to \$5 million per year and a \$20 million severance package. I have to start small you see and hopefully work my way up. Cash may be sent to me c/o this newspaper or handed to me should you see me at a local restaurant.