

On My Bookshelf: The Algebra of Happiness

 westwoodgroup.com/insight/on-my-bookshelf-the-algebra-of-happiness/

In his refreshingly honest book, “The Algebra of Happiness: Notes on the Pursuit of Success, Love, and Meaning,” Scott Galloway breaks down his keys to happiness using simple equations and diagrams.

Galloway, a professor at NYU’s Stern Business School and a serial entrepreneur, uses his personal stories to help urge readers to make personal investments in their lives that will lead to a higher level of happiness. This book is a quick read with a commencement speech vibe. It is occasionally sporadic. It is often controversial. But it is consistently thought-provoking.

The book itself is not primarily about monetary investments, but investments that help reach “a place, economically, emotionally and spiritually, where you can love someone completely, without expecting anything in return.”

SUCCESS and WEALTH

Galloway states that young people need to get credentialed and move to a city where the opportunity and knowledge density is the highest. He says if you want to be successful, work hard in your early professional years to steepen the slope of your trajectory, which is relatively set in the first five years post-graduation. Just know that there is a tradeoff here — although a lack of balance early on will lead to more balance later in life, it can come at a real cost in other aspects of your life.

As far as investments go, Galloway thinks “boring is sexy,” and you should always be in the stock market because you are not smart enough to predict when to get out and back in (yet later he admits that he is 80% cash). He tries to avoid investing in anything that sounds remotely cool and instead will invest if it bores him to death.

“Money can buy happiness, to a point. But once you reach a certain level of economic security, the correlation flattens. More money won’t make you less happy, either (also a myth).” In a podcast interview discussing the book, Galloway related wealth to ink in a pen. It is not your story, but it can help you write it.

RELATIONSHIPS

One of the main themes present throughout the book is the belief that personal relationships are the most significant factor in determining one's future level of happiness.

The most important decision you will make is the person you choose to partner with for the rest of your life. Your significant other needs to have a similar approach to life as you. "Misalignment of what's important and a lack of appreciation for the other person makes everything... harder."

One of the unique things about this book is that Galloway, despite being extremely successful in his professional career, puts his failures and flaws on display for all to read and learn from. He speaks openly about his emotional state through various highs and lows in his life from his relationship with his children to his precarious lifestyle as a young adult.

The joys of nurturing children are well known and discussed in the book as well. However, the joys of nurturing someone at the end of their life can also be deeply satisfying. Take care of your parents and invest in that relationship. Start now!

Galloway's underlying message is clear: Invest in people. Invest in your spouse, children, parents, siblings, friends and coworkers. Take a mentorship or caregiver role. Give someone a "good death." Because "love and relationships are the ends — everything else is just the means."

Bonus advice: Find a Cy Cordner and never ever let your partner get too hungry.



Chase Reid, CFA®, CPWA®
Private Wealth Advisor

The information contained herein represents the views of Westwood Holdings Group, Inc. at a specific point in time and is based on information believed to be reliable. No representation or warranty is made concerning the accuracy or completeness of any data compiled herein. Any statements non-factual in nature constitute only current opinion, which is subject to change. Any statements concerning financial market trends are based on current market conditions, which will fluctuate. Past performance is not indicative of future results. All information provided herein is for informational purposes

only and is not intended to be, and should not be interpreted as, an offer, solicitation, or recommendation to buy or sell or otherwise invest in any of the securities/sectors/countries that may be mentioned.