

Dollars and Daffodils

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What does it take to grow wealthy over time? Here is an interesting story from a wise author, Brent Esplin, CPA:

What does it take to grow a successful financial garden? I found my answer in a delightful story called *The Daffodil Principle* by Jaroldeen Asplund Edwards. The author was visiting her daughter, Carolyn, in the mountains of Southern California. Carolyn was excited to take her mother to see “the daffodils.” However, the weather was cold, rainy and foggy, and Jaroldeen didn’t want to drive on the winding mountain roads.

Jaroldeen couldn’t understand her daughter’s excitement about the flowers, but she reluctantly agreed to accompany her. When they arrived, they exited the car and walked down a mountain path. As they turned a corner, the sun broke through the clouds and Jaroldeen “looked up and gasped.”

“Before me lay the most glorious sight. It looked as though someone had taken a great vat of gold and poured it over the mountain peak and slopes. The flowers were planted in majestic swirling patterns — 5 acres of great ribbons and swaths of deep orange, white, lemon yellow, salmon pink, saffron, and butter yellow.”

Jaroldeen asked her daughter who had created all that beauty. Carolyn responded that the garden was the creation of a single woman who lived in a small A-frame house nearby.

As they approached the modest house, they saw a sign on the porch that read: “Answers to the Questions I Know You Are Going to Ask.

- 1 50,000 bulbs
- 2 One bulb at a time, two hands, two feet and very little brain
- 3 Began in 1958”

Jaroldeen describes seeing the daffodil garden and reading the sign as “a life-changing experience.” Through this experience, Jaroldeen came up with The Daffodil Principle, which is that we can accomplish great things by “learning to move towards our goals and desires one step at a time — often just one baby step — and learning to love the doing, learning to use the accumulation of time.”

So how do you grow a prosperous money garden? The same way you grow a beautiful flower garden or a productive vegetable garden. You start with a prudent plan and you patiently implement that plan over time, making adjustments when necessary. Indeed, upon reaching financial independence the sign near your money garden might read:

- 1 Sufficient to meet my ongoing needs
- 2 One dollar, one decision and one day at a time — a solid plan and very little brain
- 3 Began many years ago

Most people overestimate what they can do in a year, and they massively underestimate what they can accomplish in a decade or two.

Growing your money garden will be hard work at first and progress will be slow, but if you are patient, your money garden will one day become more prosperous and productive than you can currently imagine.

Seeing the daffodil garden was inspiring to Jaroldeen Asplund Edwards, but it also made her a little sad. Turning to her daughter she said, “What might I have accomplished if I had thought of a wonderful goal 35 or 40 years ago and had worked away at it ‘one bulb at a time’ through all those years? Just think what I might have been able to achieve!”

Carolyn, having been taught many important lessons by her mother, returned the favor by responding, “Start tomorrow.”

Wealth and long-term financial security is usually not created suddenly, through great financial brilliance, from great stock purchases or from constant investment trading. It comes from patient and prudent saving and investing over time. You may feel like you are way behind in saving for retirement or that you are too young to worry about such things. If you do, do yourself a favor: Start today.

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