

# Investing in yourself

This week, we're making a call to invest.

We've all been hearing the calls to invest recently -- they are talking about investing in the stock market, investing in the banks, investing in the process, investing in the recovery, some sadistic people are talking about investing in the futures market.

But what you really need to invest in (not that all those other things are good) is investing in yourself.

When we invest in something, we are spending capital in order to gain a **return** on our investment. We expect that our investment will increase, recent events notwithstanding, and that in the end, we will be left with more capital than we had in the beginning.

In other words, we choose to take a risk, in order to come up with a potential better result.

Investing is like that -- it has an element of risk, always, and it requires that we take a chance with our capital -- but always with the hope of an increased return.

Investing in yourself is also like that -- it has an element of risk, certainly -- you may fall flat on your face, after all -- but the risks are minimal compared with the possibility of return.

In contrast with investments you may make in the real estate business or in the stock market, investing in yourself brings with it something you cannot achieve in any other sort of investment -- an element of control.

Ultimately, you are the person who has the most to say with whether your investment will flourish, or be forgotten -- and you are the wild card in making your investment pay off and grow.

What kind of self-investment do we need to make?

To start off with, how about investing a little bit of time?

Most of us shortchange ourselves where time is concerned. We give time to the little league, or the Rotary, or the Ladies' Literary League -- but when it comes

time for ourselves, we tend to be stingy.

What will we use this all-important time on? How will we maximize our investment?

We'll use the time for what we need -- and most importantly, we will use it to study, train, and grow -- we will make our investment grow and produce, just like we would do in a business, by investing that capital to make the business stronger and better.

Let's take a moment to look at ourselves as a business. Like we discussed a couple of weeks ago, I think it's important to consider ourselves "Me, Inc." -- as a person with products to offer and customers to please. Just as any other business, we need to occasionally add capital or spend proceeds in order to freshen up the product line.

So here we are -- most of us have an outdated product line -- we haven't really changed ourselves much for years. We never invest in our own selves.

We invest in our families, sometimes -- and we invest a lot of time, effort, and money in our companies.

But in ourselves?

How about investing a little effort? Perhaps reading, training, learning? Maybe you ought to go back to school and get a better degree. Perhaps you ought to get a degree to begin with! You aren't too old to learn -- and no matter how long it's been since you last darkened the door of a classroom, you can still learn, can still grow, and still gain the economic benefits of your degree.

Perhaps you need to invest a bit of money in making yourself look better. A new haircut, some new clothes, whiter teeth. Not as much of a payback, but still might make you feel better about yourself.

Maybe you need a different sort of investment -- you need to spend some time actually figuring out who you are. A lot of people go through life wondering -- but with a bit of time invested, they could really figure out what they have to offer the world.

Maybe you should invest in finding a better place to work -- more customers, if you will. Sure, right now it's an economic downturn, but just because you wound up at this company, it doesn't mean that's the best place for you to be. Invest a little effort there.

What other types of investments? How about your personal futures market? Futures markets make bets -- they call them investments, but they're still bets --

on the future value of a commodity, from gasoline to pork bellies to precious metals. In your personal futures market, you can make bets on your future net worth -- and the best thing about such a bet is that unlike the commodities market, you are able to bring that bet to fruition, through a bit of work and a lot of time.

Investing is serious business, and that's especially true when we're looking at investing in ourselves -- it's an investment that we need to make, and it's something that most of us have always ignored.

As I write this, financial markets around the world are recovering a bit -- perhaps there's still time to get in on the ground floor of some investment opportunities in the stock market -- but it is always time for us to invest in ourselves -- we always have the potential to be a great investment, no matter what the future may hold.

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