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KIDS  WEALTH  
 AND  CONSEQUENCES

Ensuring a Responsible  
Financial Future  
for the Next Generation

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RICHARD A. MORRIS  
AND JAYNE A. PEARL

FOREWORD BY JAMES E. HUGHES JR.

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RICHARD A. MORRIS  
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*To Ryan Hommel, whose wealth of love, humor,  
and music nourish the soul*

*and*

*To Linda Morris, the inspiration in Rich's life,  
who has provided valuable insights  
and support throughout the researching  
and writing of this book.*

# Foreword

Richard Morris and Jayne Pearl have taken on a large task. They start with some key questions. How can parents raise their children so that they can successfully integrate into their lives the financial wealth their parents, or an earlier generation, created? How can the children of these parents learn to bring their own dreams to life, rather than be drained of dreams by stewarding the dreams of others? How can these children become self-confident and balanced, with appropriate humility? How will these children learn to distinguish between inheritances that cause entropy and lack of wellness and those that can enhance their happiness?

Morris and Pearl offer us, as parents and grandparents of children and grandchildren who will inherit financial wealth, the questions we seek in the hope that our heirs' lives will be enhanced, not depreciated, by their inheritance. Their questions to us are frank, yet their meanings can be subtle. I found, as I pondered these questions, that the longer I thought about them, the more valuable my answers became. But I also found that in reviewing my answers hours later, after absorbing Morris and Pearl's wisdom and compassion about human behavior, my answers often were very different. Please know you are likely to be quite surprised by the courage you will need to answer these questions with the whole truth about your views and actions. As you uncover that second set of answers, you may also feel somewhat diminished by how you've handled some of these questions in the past.

As we know, the examined life—a life open to questions—is the life worth living. Living with answers too quickly

formed all too often leads to poor results. Morris and Pearl's iterative process, chapter by chapter, leads parents to deeper and deeper questions—and more profound answers—and they never leave us unaccompanied. Since so many of us find ourselves in Dante's "dark wood" as we try to help our children avoid lives of inutility, pain, Lethe, and anomie, it is comforting to have Morris and Pearl as our Virgil on this journey to enhancing our children's lives.

For us as parents, at the core of Morris and Pearl's work lies a rarely spoken reality hidden in a question so deep it cannot be plumbed. How can we integrate the materialization of another's dreams—the financial wealth of another—into the dreams of our children and grandchildren so that such wealth does not dampen their capacity to dream and bring their own dreams to life? Too much education on this subject gets its purpose wrong by teaching inheritors of financial wealth about stewarding someone else's dream instead of teaching them to nurture their own. Who among us, as a young spirit, wouldn't be at risk of drowning in the vast expanse of an extraordinary person's great dream—a John D. Rockefeller or a J. Paul Getty, for example—if asked to steward it? Could we have any hope of success if we had not been, with perseverance and a gentle touch, educated to bring our own small individual dreams to life first?

Sadly, this misdirected process is most often activated by a parent's or grandparent's great love and hope for this young spirit. Equally sadly, this love often comes without awareness of the deep questions and threats posed to a young spirit by another's dream. Many parents have no real awareness of the processes and practices needed to integrate another's dream into the young spirit's dream.

To better understand this concept, parents might consider how the process works systemically. Each of us has our own

blessed inner nature and healthy functioning. When some new life form, in this case another's dream, enters that complex system (physical, mental, emotional, intuitional, spiritual), the system doesn't know whether the integration will be healthy or not. So the system responds by seeking to integrate this foreign matter while keeping its T-cells ready to fight.

If the system can safely integrate this new form, then it has adapted to it. Adaptation is the critical action that helps a person change to new situations encountered during a lifetime. The capacity to adapt to a new challenge gives an individual one more quality to call on to survive and flourish. Is the individual—or system—resilient? Every time a system adapts, it changes. Only a resilient person—having courage, gratitude, humility, fortitude, prudence, joy, love, and compassion for self and others—will be strong enough to take in this foreign body—another's dream—adapt to it, and flourish.

A person seeking to steward another's dream, without his or her own having been born and emerged, will be weakened. The dream will certainly submerge and drown the individual. Parents and grandparents, whose love, wisdom, and compassion lead to the nurturance of the human, intellectual, and social capital of their children and grandchildren, reduce the odds of the child's drowning. Such nurturance vastly increases the odds that those they love will learn not only to swim but also to use the vast ocean as their laboratory for the evolution of their creative selves and their dreams.

Morris and Pearl's questions and discussions get to the heart of the process of parents' nurturance. Morris and Pearl offer education, starting with the root issues of how to help the people we love the most achieve happy and productive lives. They do this by helping us learn:

- How to bring to life the dreams of young spirits
- Which practices are most likely to achieve such lives
- How to integrate an earlier generation's dream, represented by its financial wealth, into the life of such a spirit so it enhances that spirit's journey

Thank you, Richard and Jayne, for the gift of your wisdom and compassion. Your questions will help many different families' dreams come true.

JAMES (JAY) E. HUGHES JR.  
ASPEN, COLORADO  
July 2009

# Acknowledgments

This book is the result of a powerful collaborative effort of colleagues, friends, and contacts who cheerfully provided information, referrals, support, encouragement, and constructive feedback.

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We would not have found each other to undertake this collaborative effort were it not for the wisdom and kindness of Howard Muson, former editor of *Family Business* magazine, who introduced us. Any book is only as good as the resources behind it, including the scores of parents, professionals (including lawyers, accountants, psychologists, and academics, investment advisors, investment managers, and family office executives) and individual high-net worth investors, who were generous with their time. These include Mary Jo Barrett, Charlotte Beyer, Thomas Bloch, Bruce Boyd, Jeffrey Brodsky, Ira Bryck, Mitch Cohen, Mike Cohn, Leslie Dashew, Francois de Visscher, Nancy Donovan, Susan Goldenberg, Fritzi Hallock, Sara Hamilton, Jeffrey Horvitz, James Hughes, Henry Hutcheson, Holly Isdale, Charles Jahn, Dr. Kenneth Kaye, Richard Levi, Charles Lowenhaupt, Teri Lowinger, Doug Macauley, Susan Remmer Ryzewic, Tom Rogerson, Claudia Sangster, Istar Schwager, Jill Shipley, Dr. Kenneth Sole, Michael Sonnenfeldt, and Dr. Kerry Sulkowicz. Our thanks to you all for your insights and candor.

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While immersed, engrossed, and perhaps at times obsessed with pulling together the material for and writing this book, we should not ignore the moral support and patience we received from family and friends, including Mortimer B. Pearl, Robin Pearl, Ellen Pollen, Ryan Hommel, Linda Morris, Aaron Morris, Allison Morris, and Charlie Morris. Thank you for not divorcing or disowning us!

# Introduction

CHILDREN WHO GROW UP in a wealthy household are bound to encounter mixed feelings, mixed messages, and mixed blessings. That's because parents who provide a charmed lifestyle and leave behind substantial money to their children do not guarantee their children's happiness. In many cases, riches have the opposite effect.

For wealthy families, the stakes are high—not just because there's more money to squander, but also because wealth can fuel dysfunction. Money can provide education, comfort, travel, and exposure to high culture, couture, and cuisine. But money can also paralyze people and strip them of ambition and meaning. Some children suffer feelings of guilt over not having earned their wealth; others find themselves mired in a toxic brew of entitlement and numbing ennui.

These problems affect a growing portion of our country. The estimated number of households with at least \$10 million in net worth doubled between 1995 and 2004, from more than 200,000 to more than 500,000, according to Federal Reserve surveys of consumer finance. Households with at least \$25 million jumped from 50,000 in 1995 to more than 100,000 in 2004.

Of course, a fair number of the country's and the world's wealthy are worth significantly less as of this writing as a result of the stock market meltdown that began in 2008. In fact, as of March 2009, the richest of the rich who made it to Forbes magazine's list of World's Billionaires found their average net worth had fallen 23 percent, to \$3 billion, from the preceding 12 months. Forbes reported that the world now has 793 billionaires, compared with 1,125 the previous

year. American billionaires fared a bit better than their global counterparts, snatching 44 percent of the slots, up 7 percentage points from the year before.

The financial crisis has created a new set of financial and emotional issues for wealthy families. Some who saw almost half their net worth disappear were arguably less experienced than middle- and lower-class folks in cutting spending. Families who have inherited their wealth and who have no current wealth creator among them may have an even tougher time weathering the current economic storm, both financially and emotionally.

Many wealthy parents worried even before the economic meltdown about how to raise children with a sense of groundedness and balance: how to impart a strong work ethic, how to counter their sense of entitlement, how to prevent them from remaining dependent, how to help them separate their identity from their wealth, how to help them develop confidence in themselves, how to instill a desire to give back to society, and how to be good stewards of wealth for future generations. Suddenly, there's a greater urgency about guiding and teaching children these financial values and lessons.

Moreover, those who count themselves among the elite slice of society found their sense of security shattered. Money had protected them from many of life's harsh realities. They were caught utterly off guard and unprepared to adjust their expectations and lifestyle.

When we began researching and writing our book in the fall of 2008, just as the stock market plunged, we, along with our editor and publisher, felt we might out-date this book if we gave more than a cursory mention of the market meltdown. But as the country and much of the rest of the world began to spiral into a deep and potentially prolonged recession, we all agreed that even if a miracle were to effect

a major turnaround, the shock waves wealthy families were experiencing were having a profound effect. These world events had the high—net worth community questioning their values, spending habits, and children’s future in a profound way. The economic downturn has brought these issues to the surface and made exploring them impossible to ignore. We have folded in facts, examples, and quotes that describe how these economic woes impact the many issues our book addresses.

Readers should also be aware that the authors of this book bring very different experiences, skills, and perspectives to this project. Richard Morris has a background in marketing and education. He worked his way up in his family’s auto parts manufacturing company, Fel-Pro, where he worked in marketing and later in acquisitions, until the family sold the eighty-year-old business in 1998. Morris’s “liquidity event” prompted him to rethink his life. He wanted a work life that provided a sense of belonging and a chance to give back to society, and he soon created ROI (Resources for Ownership Intelligence) University, which provides certificate courses for private owners in management, marketing, retail, sales, and human resources management. Even though he and his wife decided not to change their standard of living substantially, they found that the liquidity of their assets provided new challenges in bringing up their children as well as managing the families’ finances. Many questions needed answers, and they found no one resource to address those questions. Morris devoted substantial time to studying not only how to manage his financial assets but also the psychological and social challenges new and sudden wealth can bring.

Jayne Pearl has been a financial journalist since 1980, when she started as a reporter-researcher at *Forbes* magazine, where she helped research and fact-check the premiere *Forbes* 400 “Rich List” of the wealthiest

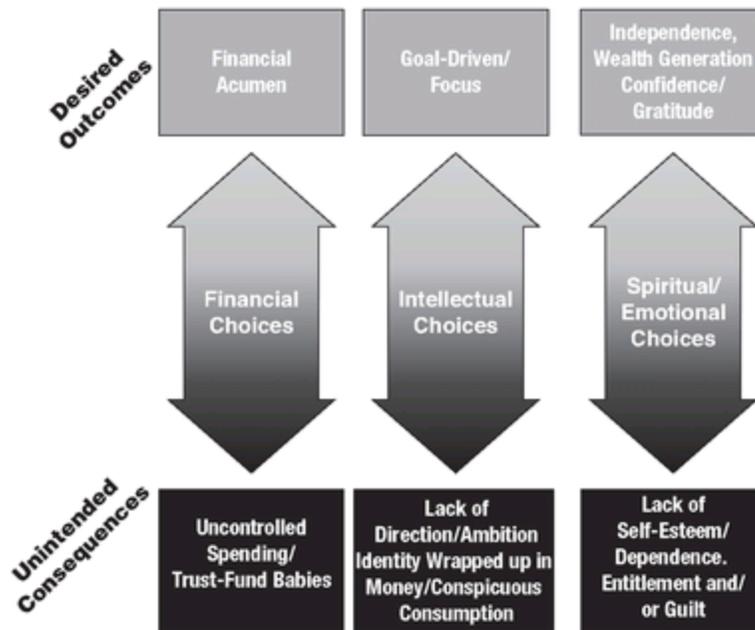
Americans. She later worked as editor of a syndicated daily financial public radio program, then launched a successful newsletter for management guru Tom (“In Search of Excellence”) Peters. In 1989 she helped launch *Family Business* magazine, to which she has contributed for twenty years. She wrote a highly acclaimed book, *Kids and Money: Giving Them the Savvy to Succeed Financially* (also published by Bloomberg Press), in 1999, and has been writing and speaking about financial parenting ever since.

The authors’ different professional and socio-economic backgrounds resulted in enlightening brainstorming, challenges, and some creative tension as they periodically wrestled over how to address many of the issues they have covered. Without either one receiving or delivering a single black eye (which would have been difficult not to avoid, as they live a couple thousand miles apart), each difference or hurdle led them to deeper insights and solutions that far exceeded either of their initial positions and preferences.

The authors hope that the resulting book will help readers increase the odds that their family wealth will enhance their children’s ability to succeed under any economic circumstances. We will describe the skills children need to obtain successful, happy lives. We will look at how we define success and explore the extent to which money might bring or hinder that success. We will evaluate how spending, financial management, and estate-planning choices today affect what we will leave behind. We will also consider an array of ways that parents can discuss money with and in front of children, to teach them how to spend, invest, and manage it responsibly.

There are many choices that determine how wealth will affect your children. This book arranges these choices into three categories: Financial Choices, Intellectual Choices, and Spiritua1/ Emotional Choices, as depicted in [\*\*Exhibit 0.1\*\*](#).

## **Exhibit 0.1 Kids, Wealth, and Consequences Model**

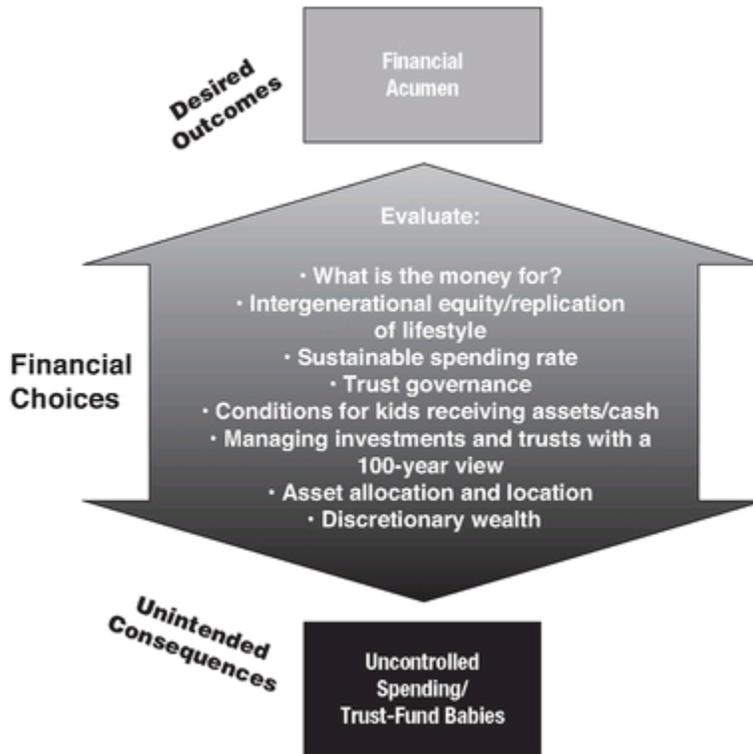


Each of these categories of choices comprises one section of the book, with a fourth section focusing on integrating the different types of choices into an action plan.

- Section I: Financial Choices. The three chapters in this section cover somewhat technical concepts, while Chapters 4 through 10 deal with the softer topics. If you are not a numbers person, you may prefer to skim the first chapters or even skip them, although optimally, you would benefit from at least familiarizing yourself with the technical concepts in this section ([Exhibit 0.2](#)).

Our decisions about spending, estate planning, and portfolio management dramatically affect our own future, as well as that of our children.

## **Exhibit 0.2 Financial Choices**



When wealthy parents neglect to think through these issues, making sure to structure trusts, spending, and investing to meet their goals and values, the unintended consequences for the children can include uncontrolled spending and dependence in the form of trust-fund babies. But when there is careful consideration and preparation, the family will develop the financial acumen, create estate plans that match their long-term values, and maintain their resources so that the children will live independently and responsibly.

In Chapter 1, “Calculating Your Family’s Future,” we describe the spending choices “Bob” faces, how various spending scenarios affect his net worth in future years, and the legacy he wants to leave behind to his children. How will these decisions affect his children? Will his financial decisions enable his children to enjoy future “intergenerational equity”—the ability to replicate his

lifestyle? If intergenerational equity is not available or desired, then at what rate should he spend?

Chapter 1 also includes a spreadsheet calculation about the variables (expected return, inflation, income taxes, number of children) few people consider when they decide the percentage of their net worth that they can spend each year. Many wealthy individuals believe that, as in the case of endowments, they can spend 5 percent of their net worth per year and still preserve their capital. Our calculations demonstrate that such an approach may not allow their children to maintain the same standard of living as the family presently enjoys. What are the unintended consequences when adult children cannot match the standard of living they enjoyed growing up?

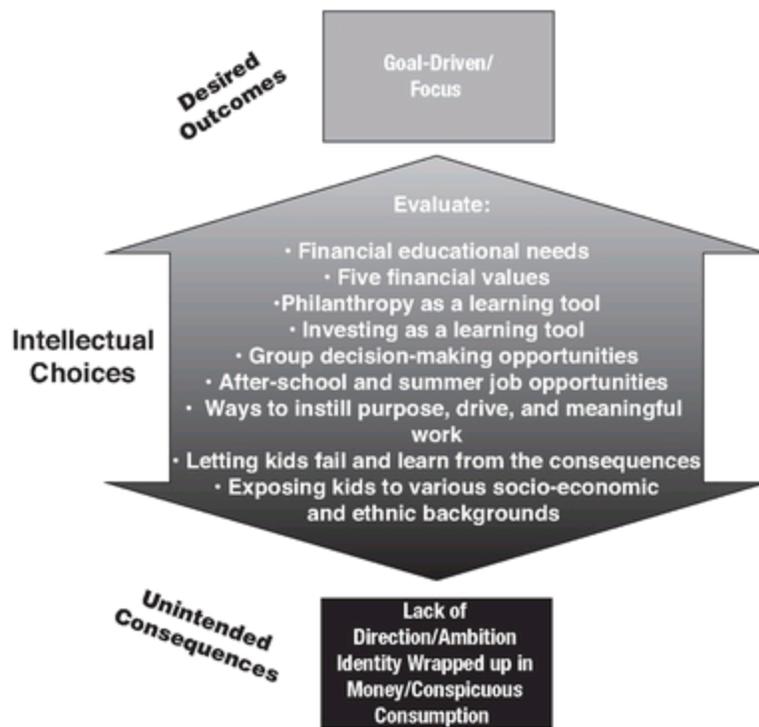
In Chapter 2, “To Trust and How to Trust,” we focus not only on how to select trustees and make sure they understand and honor the grantor’s wishes, but also how to structure the trust for the best financial and emotional benefit of the children—specifically, how to avoid creating a sense of entitlement and the “trust-fund baby” syndrome. In this chapter, we explore the best intentions of parents who work with their lawyers to create trust language that can actually lead kids to become dysfunctional and lack direction in their life. We also present alternative ideas about how to leave a legacy with legal language that will help kids to realize their potential before receiving the money. Chapter 2 illustrates that there is no one right approach, but each approach comes with its own set of unintended outcomes. We explore the pros, cons, and alternatives of incentive trusts, flexibility devices, handing over trust control, trustee selection, and oversight that can all help us to integrate the values and goals that we hope to pass down to our children along with our assets. It is not all about taxes and control.

Chapter 3, “Portfolio Management,” provides insights from many professionals and high-net worth investors as to how choices of asset allocation, asset location (which trust the asset should be put in), tax ramifications, and risk tolerance affect our ability to achieve intergenerational goals, or the ability to pass down the most value possible to our children. The interplay of these elements can affect our portfolio even more than our specific investment choices. The financial crisis that began in 2008 has brought to the surface some unexpected lessons about asset allocation, which we discuss along with the scams that have come to light during this economic downturn. They provide us with insights as to how important it is to stick to guidelines for choosing and firing managers and advisors.

- **Section II: Intellectual Choices.** The previous chapters dealt with how to prepare the wealth for family. In this section we delve into how to prepare the family for the wealth. Providing children with financial education is an important responsibility for any parent in today’s complex economic world. But for wealthy families, the stakes are much higher—not just because there’s more money to squander, but also because wealth can fuel dysfunction and at-risk behaviors such as substance abuse ([Exhibit 0.3](#)).

Chapter 4, “Financial Literacy,” explains that, regardless of how sophisticated (or not) they are about personal finance and investing, parents have a responsibility to prepare their children to live in our complex economic times. We guide parents through the process of instilling the five important financial values: tolerating delayed gratification, understanding the difference between wants and needs, practicing making tradeoffs, telling oneself “no,” and developing a healthy skepticism about ads, fads, and conspicuous consumption.

### Exhibit 0.3 Intellectual Choices



Chapter 4 also addresses specific issues that come up in wealthy families. For instance, will allowance work for high-net worth kids? Should wealthy teens get a summer or after-school job (especially if their parents do not choose to work)? In addition, how can parents prepare children to invest and develop healthy spending and saving patterns early?

Chapter 5, “Skills and Experience,” presents a framework to assess the current financial skills both parents and children possess. This chapter is filled with suggestions for preparing children to handle the money they may receive in the future. Experts share their findings about how having dinner with your children can dramatically reduce the chances of an array of at-risk behaviors, including abuse of drugs. For those parents whose kids are less than fascinated

with finance, we suggest games specifically for high—net worth families that will make learning more fun.

We will describe creative ways parents can present children the opportunity to practice investing and handling money early so that they can make and learn from their mistakes early, before they inherit significant wealth.

Dealing with advisors is another important skill children will need once they take possession of significant money. This chapter suggests various ways to involve children at different ages with the family's financial advisors and describes how to use a philanthropic family foundation to provide children real-world experience in investing. Often, the first exposure siblings have with financial planning is after the parents die, and they suddenly have to make big decisions with big consequences, without any experience working together. We explain how a foundation can help the family practice making financial decisions together. We also introduce family projects that will allow children to practice investing with real money and learn how to make financial decisions as a family.

Chapter 6, "Goals and Purpose," focuses on how money can bring pleasure as well as problems. While money can provide education, comfort, and travel, it can also paralyze people and rob them of ambition and meaning. In this chapter, we explore how some kids suffer feelings of guilt over not having earned any of what they have or will inherit, while others feel entitled to get everything they desire and yet find themselves bored by it all.

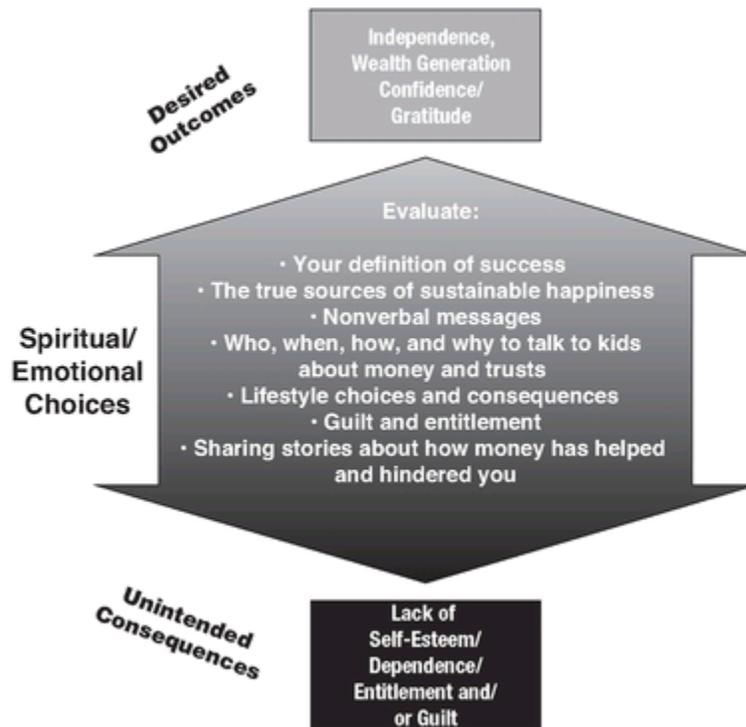
In Chapter 6 we also look at how parents can help guide their children to find their purpose and set meaningful goals that will make them productive. This chapter also illustrates how parents of means can motivate their children, using simple techniques, to find their own path. We also consider

ways to encourage children to take sensible risks and experience failure as an important part of their journey.

Many people build their identity around their work or professions. Many wealthy people who do not have to work find it difficult to find a purpose or sense of identity. Parents help their children develop a healthy sense of identity and purpose by exposing them to entrepreneurial and philanthropic activities, and by teaching them that wealth is a responsibility to pass down from generation to generation, not just to buy expensive things.

- **Section III: Spiritual/Emotional** Choices. Among the many concerns of wealthy parents are how to raise children with a sense of reality and balance, how to prevent them from being dependent, how to help them separate their identity from their wealth, how to help them develop self-confidence, how to instill in them a desire to give back to society, and how to teach them to be good stewards of their future wealth for later generations (**Exhibit 0.4**). Parents want their children to develop the capacity to engage in meaningful friendships, to love and to be open to others loving them—for who they are, not because of their family's balance sheet. In this section we see how parents can enhance the values they hold close and discourage values that may impede living a happy and productive life.

### **Exhibit 0.4 Spiritual/Emotional Choices**



Chapter 7, “Success and Happiness,” delves into the issue of entitlement and the insidious effects it can have on children of any age. Entitled people do not appreciate, or even enjoy on any deep level, the possessions and other advantages they receive, which can lead to anxiety and depression when too much is never enough. We look at studies and talk to experts about the age-old question of whether money can buy happiness.

The flip side of entitlement is guilt. Some children feel they do not deserve the advantages they have and will inherit. They are plagued with guilt, which can also lead to anxiety and depression. While money will not necessarily make us happy, we can be happy with money. And while wealthy people can’t buy immortality, they can leave a legacy built around healthy values and exposure to the many facets and faces of the outside world. We describe the traits of happy people and consider what “drives” drive.