Pat Morley: Don’t Trust the ‘Moral System’

As an investment banker, Rogers Kirven got tired of watching other men take his advice and get rich. So nine years after he began his career, Kirven started his own company and plunged into the world of accomplishment, accumulation and recognition.

By the age of 44, Kirven had met his goal—a net worth in the top one percent of the United States. “I’m a counter,” he confessed.

Then Kirven received an unsolicited offer to sell. “My first impulse,” said Kirven, “was to take the money and run. Instead, I called up three friends who had sold their companies, told them I was getting ready to pull the trigger, and asked them to join me for dinner to give me their advice.

“These were good, moral men, some of the most successful men in the world of business,” said Kirven. “As the four of us sat at dinner, I only asked them two questions. First, what was your planned use of the time you would gain? They all had the same three answers:

- I want to spend more time with my soul and grow personally.
- I want to spend more time with my family.
- I want to do some things (basically toys and travel).

“Then I asked the second question: What is your actual use of time? All three had gone through a divorce since selling their companies. Each had bought a bigger toy. All were in a deep crisis of meaning.

“They stepped into a stream so strong. They had no idea. They wanted all of life as fast as they [could] get it in the shortest amount of time possible. As Mike Tyson said, ‘They all have a strategy until they get hit.’”

Fortunately for Kirven, when he sold his company he remained as the president and CEO. But the subject continued to fascinate him. Since that dinner meeting, Kirven has formally interviewed 39 men who have sold their companies. Here is a summary of what he found:

- None could robustly say their lives were better.
- Money and freedom had made life more fragile.
- Some who didn’t have a “keel below the water line” had breaches of character.
- 33 were divorced.
- Many took up golf, which lasted, on average, six months.
- Many bought exotic cars, which held their interest, on average, ten months.
- Many bought boats, which lasted, on average, eighteen months.
- All had a crisis of meaning.

In my book *Is Christianity For You?,* I use this illustration to show that even for all of its wonderful contributions toward making the world a better place, the moral system, in the end, has no power to deliver us from our darkest thoughts and deeds.

Give a copy of Pat Morley’s book, Is Christianity for You? *to visitors on Easter, Christmas or year round for less than $1 each. Download a free evaluation copy at .*

Pat Morley *is the Founder and CEO of Man in the Mirror. After building one of Florida’s 100 largest privately held companies, in 1991, he founded Man in the Mirror, a non-profit organization to help men find meaning and purpose in life. Dr. Morley is the bestselling author of* The Man in the Mirror, No Man Left Behind, Dad in the Mirror, *and* A Man’s Guide to the Spiritual Disciplines.