



– by Woody Tasch

[Woody Tasch is president of the newly formed NGO Slow Money and Chairman Emeritus of Investors' Circle, a nonprofit network of angel investors, venture capitalists, foundations, and family offices that, since 1992, has facilitated the flow of \$130 million to 200 early-stage companies and venture funds dedicated to sustainability. He lives in northern New Mexico.]

Start with this 4-minute YouTube video, where Woody Tasch explains the concept of Slow Money

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WJuUcaVtifg>



Woody says: “Slow Money’s first steps into public life – our campaign to get one million signatories for the [Slow Money Principles](#), on our way to a million members who contribute more than \$25 million per year of seed funding for the nurture capital industry – were marked by something more than robust dialogue and shared sense of purpose. They were marked by something that can only be called *culture*.”

- As in, putting the culture back into agriculture.
- As in, putting the seed back into seed capital.
- As in, local is the distance the heart can travel.
- As in, Robert Mirabal's ceremonial passing of the blue corn.
- As in, a day spent exploring Food, Money and Soil with leading practitioners from across the country, and framing, together, the vision of a non-extractive, nonviolent economy.
- As in, the inspiration of 26 small food entrepreneurs who presented everything from local burgers to local milk processing to inner city food stores to rural coops to organic milk, and, in so doing, pointed in the direction of healthy local food systems.

I cannot tell you how many times in the last several months, folks have said, "Slow Money is on to something. You are really on to something."

Slow Money calls for action in designing capital markets built around not extraction and consumption but preservation and restoration.

Is it a movement or is it an investment strategy? Yes.

The Measure of Money

– By John Lipman

[John Lipman is President of LIPMAN DEVELOPMENT STRATEGIES, LLC. Prior to starting this consulting business, John was the Chief Planner and Deputy Director of the Cape Cod Commission, a department of Barnstable County government created by special state legislation to protect the ecology, economy, and community character of Cape Cod. He works closely with Wood Tasch at Slow Money.]



Money, in its most beneficial light, is a practical standard of our individual, professional, and social success. It is a financial imprimatur, a measurable account that bounds, on opposing ends of our

social scale, both personal reward and community need, exchangeable for all goods and services that we could not possibly produce individually. Money is a shared system that vastly increases our productivity, comfort and well-being far beyond our singular capacity to do so. Liquidible, fungible, tradable, money provides security, predictability and durability. It is a social contract.

The amount of money we earn is certainly a measure – but a measure of what? Power? Influence? Success? Even the question – what does money measure? – assumes that it is a “measure” for something else, a higher and more noble purpose, a proxy for what we do to get money, and what we do with that money once we get it. Yet this idea of “capitalism” is only the beginning of our personal, political and social economies. How we apply capitalism, and treat our fellow human beings in the process, is a discussion beyond any economic calculus. It is a moral question.

We live in a world on the edge of unprecedented physical catastrophe – and also fantastic wonder. At nearly seven billion people and counting, we have polluted our drinking water, converted vast swaths of forest and farm land to desert through reckless plunder, depleted essential natural resources, created human poverty on an unprecedented scale, and driven 25% of the world’s species to brink of extinction. We have also created unimaginable technological marvels, connected vast numbers of people through iPhones and computers, advanced gender and race relations in a mere



generation, catapulted health care to its highest pinnacle, and converted depletive factory farming to restorative sustainable agriculture. The essential question is this: Does our economic advancement necessarily depend upon appalling inequalities in human life and the destruction of our natural world? Or are resolving these issues the truest and most moral “economic” test we face?

“Money” is not our problem. It is ourselves. As a society, we have dislocated our moral imperative from our financial one. We have extracted economics from philosophy, isolating its purpose with such purity as to have almost no relevant purpose at all. Yet that purpose now more than ever needs our attention, our nurturing care. The very salvation of our economy, our philosophy – ourselves – lies in how we raise and distribute our food. Its health and quality, and the protection and restoration of the very resource from which it is grown, affirms our dependence upon the health of the earth. For all the complexity of our modern lives, the fact is that three times a day we can sit down at a table and revel in the food that comes before us – an evolution in human thinking in which concepts such as purity, sustainability, fairness and justice are borne out in organic broccoli, free-range meats, and fair-trade coffee.

We have returned to the bottom of the pyramid. If we can re-establish the rules of humanity at this most fundamental economic level, we will redefine our entire system of trade in its largest and most inclusive sense. Food is the great equalizer, the common precept of human kind, and its shared purpose is the most naturally humane thing we can accomplish. It is life itself.

What is the measure of money? It is food – sustainable, healthy, nurturing food.

In establishing food's economic primacy, we tap into the deepest and most profound aspects of what true wealth reflects – the beautiful, essential, and fragile elements upon which this most precious thing we call “life” exists. It is not enough simply to fix the economy and all its wayward externalities, although doing so would be a grand and noble start. We must go beyond that, and see our lives, our well-being, our very existence as inextricably connected to the resources upon which we depend. In saving the earth, we save far more than simply the bounty upon which we depend. We preserve the very essence of our humanity.

For more information about Slow Money and an opportunity to sign the Slow Money Principles, the please visit <http://www.SlowMoneyAlliance.org>.