

# What matters

Business



In his essay “ On Dumpster Diving,” Lars Eighner narrates about surviving solely from Dumpster diving and gives practical advice, should anyone ever find him- or herself in a situation similar to Eighner’s. He polemicizes about the property of the items found in Dumpsters – whether they are public or private – and how much could be learned about a person from the things they throw away. Eighner concludes the essay by verbalizing his opinions on wealth and materialism. He feels that, besides himself, only the very wealthy know that there is a lot more of everything where it came from. However, they think so because they can afford more of anything, not because they understand the “ transience of material being,” like Eighner does (para. 78). Being put in a situation where he was left with only his sentiments, Eighner has learned that any value of material things is relative; what is valuable to some might be valueless to others. Therefore, to achieve “ a healthy state of mind,” one should not greedily hold on to their material possessions, for they will eventually lose their value, and focus more on the abstract values, such as emotions, memories, and feelings (para. 78.) People are faced with great losses every day – that is just a part of life.

Nonetheless, these losses are not all equal. Some of the most recent tragedies that have struck mankind are the earthquake in Haiti and the floods in Australia. Many people lost everything they own; more important, however, is the number of people that lost their lives when these natural disasters struck. While some wept over a new television set that was destroyed, others mourned a loved one that was taken away without a last laugh, a last hug, a last word – ‘ goodbye’. Even though our world is selfish and materialistic, one must remember that “ what is essential is invisible to

the eye,” as Antoine de Saint-Exupery so deftly put it. Those little things that remind one of someone special or of a magical moment, those memories are the things that truly matter.

Because, in the end, memories are the only things they have left. Everyone values things differently. That is because everyone has different priorities; some yearn for recognition, others wish for independence. Education, for instance, and its value are a frequent topic of discussion. Numerous children in the poorest parts of the world do not even have the opportunity to get any kind of education. They would gladly exchange places with some of the high school students who choose to drop out for various reasons each day.

Additionally, while many college students rely on their parents for allowance of every kind, some have to work several jobs and get loans just to cover the cost of tuition. These two groups of people have fairly different priorities.

Therefore, they value things differently. And it cannot be judged solely from one group’s opinions of how valuable something is – it is all relative.

Furthermore, even personal opinions change; thus, something that was once incredibly worthy may be worth nothing today for one same person. To realize the truths about materialism, selfishness, and wealth, one must really stop and think about the world surrounding them.

Nevertheless, one should not be shocked or forced to such thinking by a specific event. These should be topics for everybody to ponder on on a regular basis. Only then could “ a healthy state of mind” be achieved (para. 78).