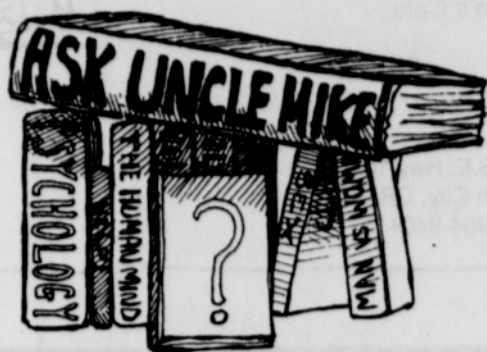


# THE THERAPY PAGE



Dear Uncle Mike,  
A good friend just inherited close to two million dollars. He's just an average guy in his forties, has a job and a life he likes. I love the guy like a brother but he has no business sense. He plans to just put the money in the bank. I hooked him up with a

stockbroker I know, but my friend seems unable to make a decision. He reads your column and maybe if you said something he'd listen. I hate to see him miss out on building a nest egg for retirement. Can you help?  
Vince R., Eugene

Dear Vince,

Uncle Mike would love to help. He's that sort of person. He does however shy away from fixing things that aren't broken. So your friend fell into a couple mil. Good for him. So he likes his job and his life. Gangbusters. Uncle Mike loves to hear happy stories and is sad to hear this one is causing you distress. For every silver lining there's a cloud.

Money is the root of many possibilities. One of them is to not let its presence, or absence, warp your perspective. Like any drug, money can become an end rather than a means. Someone once asked J. Paul Getty why he was the richest man on the planet. He answered that money had always been the most important thing in his life. To Uncle Mike, this makes you a junkie. When someone mailed J. Paul's grandson's ear to him along with a request for an amount of cash J. Paul could have blown on lunch, the old jackal didn't budge. Uncle Mike sees this as false grit.

So your friend is resisting the entreaties of a stockbroker. Uncle Mike likes him more by the minute. Yes, there are socially conscious investment opportunities, ventures that don't involve some form of rape and pillage (third world economies, hundred dollar sneakers, toxic moneyfills). And yes, there are socially conscious stockbrokers. Sadly, they make their daily bread on commissions. As sharks must swim to breathe, brokers must buy and sell to eat. To say a broker will encourage you to keep turning your money like compost is to understate the case. Maybe your friend doesn't want to do that. Maybe he doesn't want to think about money.

And, by Uncle Mike's figures, he doesn't have to. So the hopeless idiot wants to just put his two million in the bank. Even passbook interest on it would be... put down the zero, carry the one... ninety thousand dollars. Unless his retirement plans include marrying Imelda Marcos, this should keep him in shoes.

Your friend seems to have mastered one of life's greatest challenges: being content with what you have. You, on the other hand, seem to be wrestling unsuccessfully with another: learning to mind your own business.

Dear Uncle Mike,

I'm 32, attractive, intelligent, and single. I think I love you. Are you married? Are you cute? Do you ever date your fans?  
Alicia M., Portland

Dear Alicia,

Forget to take our medicine, did we? Listen carefully, Alicia. You don't know Uncle Mike. It follows that you cannot be both intelligent and in love with him. Uncle Mike is flattered you find his disembodied presence worthy of daydreams. For him, it's Sinead O'Connor and Lena Olin. Uncle Mike can obsess with the best of them. The only difference between him and you is that he'd open a vein before humiliating himself by writing to them.

Is Uncle Mike married? Only to his bad habits, his daydreams, and his reluctance to inflict them on someone he loves. Is Uncle Mike cute? Kittens and bunnies are cute. On a good day Uncle Mike looks like the old dog he is. Does Uncle Mike ever date his fans? Uncle Mike never dates anyone. Neither his nurse nor his poker support group feel it's time yet.

Dear Uncle Mike,

I read in the papers Elaine Franklin, Packwood's executive assistant, makes \$136,000 a year. Can this be right?  
Jeff S., Salem

Dear Jeff,


Interesting word, 'right'. If you mean right in the context of childcare workers making five dollars an hour and waitresses being taxed on their tips, no. If your question is, how much would it take to persuade a normal human being to shill for a lecherous scumbag with the political ethics of a diseased weasel, \$136,000 isn't a whole lot of money. Having met Elaine Franklin, Uncle Mike thinks she's worth every penny. He only wishes she weren't allowed to play with the other children.



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When I can no longer bear to think of the victims of broken homes, I begin to think of the victims of intact ones. Peter De Vries

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If you want to sacrifice the admiration of many men for the criticism of one, go ahead, get married.  
Katherine Hepburn

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