



Greedy

In many places around the world these days (most?) the government has set up lottery systems. They have found that this is a very painless way to increase tax revenues, as many people are willing to 'invest' large sums of money in the hope that they will hit the jackpot one day.

Most of us, I suspect, have the idea that if we *did* hit such a jackpot and suddenly find ourselves to be wealthy, our lives would be better, but it seems that many people struggle to establish a stable life in the 'post-jackpot' period. And indeed, that is quite a common theme in the media - stories about big winners who 'blew it'. When we read such things, we of course all think the same thing, "That would never happen to me!"

In my own case, although I myself am absolutely and totally and perfectly confident that I could handle such a windfall with no ill effects, I do suspect that even though I would no longer 'need' for anything, I would still feel as though I wanted something 'more'. And I base this suspicion on something that is happening to me right now.

I am currently in the process of launching a new woodblock print project together with my business partner Jed, the illustrator who is creating the designs for the prints. The **Chibi Heroes** project we produced last year ran its planned course, and we have created a new series - **Ukiyoe Heroes Portraits** - to follow it. That will begin next January, and he and I and my staff are very busy creating new designs and getting the first ones carved and printed.

A few weeks ago we began to publicize the project, and also opened a web site to collect subscriptions. We received a very gratifying initial burst of signups - mostly from people who had collected the previous series - and this gave us confidence that our proposed project was sound, and that it would be successful.

Things then settled down. As word of our project gradually spreads across the internet, more subscriptions come in, usually a couple of new ones per day. We are basically on track to reach a level of subscriptions that will support the project through the course of the year.

Occasionally though, either through our own p/r efforts, or the actions of a blogger or journalist somewhere, there is a sudden burst of new subscription orders. This past week in particular has been wonderful for that; I posted a web page announcing a kind of joke 'signing bonus', and this brought in over a dozen subscriptions in just the first hour. Jed then followed up with the announcement of a new design for the series, which attracted even more, and an update message I sent yesterday brought yet another flurry. It's still going on; as I sat down at the computer this morning to prepare this weekly story, I first had to process another group of new subscription requests before I could do so.

I should be happy and completely content, right?

Well, happy ... yes, absolutely! It is very gratifying to have so many people so excited about our prints, and the pleasure of receiving these subscription requests lasts for us easily all the way through the entire process

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of making the prints, right up to the point where we drop them off at the post office ... and beyond. Happy ... check!

But 'content' is more difficult! Over the past few days, new subscriptions have been so common that on those occasions when I check my mail and find none in there I feel disappointment! I click the 'Get Mail' again ... surely there must be one in there ...

This is crazy! Are we humans - or at least this particular human - so adaptable to circumstances that we so easily create a 'new normal'? Some weeks ago, a new subscription was a big event; today it is not only routine, it is *expected*!

Now I hasten to add - for the benefit of my supporters who read this - that your support *is* of course appreciated. As I just mentioned, we take an intense pleasure in creating our prints and sending them off to the supporters. Happy is OK.

The other part I guess comes down to a kind of childish behaviour; no matter how much I get, I still want more!

Well, I guess there are worse character defects to have. And it works both ways. No matter how many beautiful prints I have made, I want to make more! It seems there is only one way that this will end ... and hopefully that event is still a long way off!

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