

## Becoming

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*This post follows naturally [from a previous one on potential](#). It may be useful to read that post first.*

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But what is potential?

It isn't unlimited.

None of us is born with infinite possibilities.

We each have one lifetime.

One body.

One mind.

One set of relationships.

One place in the world.

One chance to become the person we might be.

Our potential is finite.

It is also unique.

No two people have exactly the same talents, opportunities, interests or aspirations. My potential is not yours. Yours is not mine.

That matters because it changes what we mean by a successful economy.

A successful economy is not one in which one person realises extraordinary potential

while millions never have the chance to discover their own.

Nor is it one in which everyone is forced to become the same thing.

The goal is not to maximise one person's achievement.

Or one company's profits.

Or one country's GDP.

The goal is to maximise the realised potential of all.

That is something quite different.

It means ensuring that every person has the food, shelter, healthcare, education, security, freedom and opportunity they need to become as fully themselves as they are capable of being.

The basics are essential: then people can grow.

Some people will become artists.

Some engineers.

Some parents.

Some carers.

Some teachers.

Some gardeners.

Some entrepreneurs.

Some scientists.

Some thinkers.

Some will quietly transform the lives of the people around them in ways no statistic will ever record.

None of those lives is more valuable than another.

What matters is that each person has the opportunity to realise the potential that is uniquely theirs.

That, surely, is what well-being means.

It is not about giving everyone everything.

Nor is it about making anyone everything.

It is about creating the conditions in which each of us can become as much as we are capable of becoming.

Perhaps that is what economics has forgotten.

Its purpose is not to maximise output.

It is not to maximise consumption.

It is not even to maximise wealth.

Its purpose is to help every one of us realise as much of our finite human potential as we can, while ensuring that we leave future generations with the same opportunity.

It is to that task that energy and money must be put.