

# The Great Simplification

---

**PLEASE NOTE: This transcript has been auto-generated and has not been fully proofed by ISEOF. If you have any questions please reach out to us at [info@thegreatsimplification.com](mailto:info@thegreatsimplification.com).**

[00:00:00] **Nate Hagens:** What is more valuable than a pound of gold? You are you more valuable than a pound of gold? gold, is in the news. it made an all time high, last week, and this shiny metal has always held a special place. In our minds, in human history, it doesn't rust, it doesn't corrode and it shines the same way it has for thousands of years.

[00:00:32] And humans in the past and today, have considered it variously wealth, security, even beauty itself. but what if there are things more valuable, even far more valuable than gold? things we sometimes overlook because they can't be locked in a vault or measured on a scale. what is more valuable than a pound of gold?

[00:01:10] Okay, so number 10. \$50,000 in cash. That is a little bit worth more than gold today at \$3,500 an ounce, it's worth more than a pound of gold. Cash feels powerful. you can walk into almost any store, any airport, any casino, any marketplace and trade cash. For something physical, for something real.

[00:01:41] But money as history shows and as we are repeating, history now boils down to trust in a system, numbers on screen paper or linen, backed by. Confidence and backed by energy surplus and the complexity of our civilization. But history shows that currencies rise and fall sometimes fast. inflation, debt, energy decline, canero the power of cash.

[00:02:15] Overnight. Okay. Next. What is more valuable than a pound of gold? Well, a hundred pounds of silver would be, right now silver and gold are both precious metals. but silver has always been tied to money. but today it's also tied

# The Great Simplification

---

to technology and to survival. it's in solar panels and electronics and medicine and energy systems.

[00:02:43] And unlike gold, silver gets used up, or unlike most of gold, it's melted, soldered, scattered into tiny fragments. and that scarcity over time could make silver, because of its use and its small denomination more valuable, in the future, but it's a paradox. The more we need it, like silver, the less of it there will be.

[00:03:12] Okay. next in my little list of what is more valuable than a pound of gold, Bitcoin or, in today's, early September, 2025 markets, about a half of a Bitcoin is worth more than a pound of gold. Bitcoin is, Like gold, a representation of scarcity. It's digital scarcity. It's a mathematical bet on code and belief.

[00:03:42] it's also portable and divisible and instantly exchangeable and defended, by a global network. But. As followers of limits to growth and energy depletion and all the things we discuss on this site. It also depends on massive electricity, complex software, and constant connectivity. So if the grid fails or trust breaks, Bitcoin value could vanish.

[00:04:09] Instantly. It's worth more now, than gold. Sure. But stability is the real test of value. And if there is one day intermittent electricity, gold probably worth more than Bitcoin. But let's move beyond these financial metrics. the next thing that's more valuable than gold is land. And land is more than real estate.

[00:04:38] you can grow food and hold water and give shelter, and have the Web of Life and, land roots us in place. It is more life support than property on a ledger. markets rise and fall, but land remains. They're not making any more of it. and you can't import land from Mars. So owning land is owning a piece of the future no matter what happens to gold or money.

# The Great Simplification

---

[00:05:11] But now let's move into things that you might not think are worth more than gold, but they are, friends and social networks. Wealth without friends is poverty of the worst kind. friends bring resilience, laughter, meaning support, all kinds of things that can't be measured in financial. Pecuniary metrics.

[00:05:38] Friends are the people who show up in crisis, who share our burdens, who remind us, in these times, in all times, that we're, not alone. And when systems break down. As they are in many places of the world now, it's not gonna be gold. that saves you, it will be someone who knows your name. you can't buy loyalty and social capital and trust.

[00:06:03] You can only build it. And as such, as followers of this platform know, building social capital now has been the single biggest piece of advice I've advocated for on this site. Find multiple groups of people, of friends, of colleagues to ride the dining car, of the runaway train of the economic Superorganism.

[00:06:25] Next on the list of what is more valuable than gold freedom. Freedom is choice. If I had a lot of gold and no freedom, that would be pretty crappy. the ability to direct my time and my energy and my voice, my ideas, my creativity. Yes, money and gold can buy some freedoms, but real freedom is autonomy.

[00:06:54] Living on your own terms, not someone else's. You can be wealthy. And in my life I've known wealthy people like this and still imprisoned, by their job, their debts, their fears. true freedom is a kind of wealth that can't be stolen. And in some situations, an ounce or a pound of gold might buy you temporary freedom, but in most situations, freedom is worth way more than gold.

[00:07:23] Next is sanity. Which is going to increasingly be incredibly scarce and valuable the way that I see things. A broken mind makes everything else worthless, really, sanity, shapes how we experience the world, whether life feels

# The Great Simplification

---

like a gift or a burden. And in our noisy, anxious, overstimulated technology, smorgasbord age, mental wellbeing is becoming as scarce as a clean air or a stable ecosystems, and protecting it is worth more than chasing another.

[00:08:07] Dollar. I see this happening around us. in my presentations I often close and conclude by talking about islands of coherence, but I think islands of sanity may be equally important. because without clarity, without grounding, without balance, without equanimity and spaciousness, gold may feel quite heavy.

[00:08:37] Next on the list of, the things according to Nate that are more valuable than a pound of gold is integrity. When I was in junior high school, I was talking to one of my friends and I told a lie, and I remember it to this day because my dad, after my friend left, he overheard it and he took me aside and he explained.

[00:09:04] Your word is your bond. And we had a conversation about the importance of integrity and truth. And at 14 I was like, yeah, dad, whatever you say. And it sounded, silly. But 40 years later, I understand the wisdom of that conversation. Integrity is living in alignment. What you say, what you believe, what you do.

[00:09:29] And unlike money, it cannot be traded, borrowed, or faked. For long. and in unstable times, trust is the ultimate currency and integrity. is the printing press that creates it. if I lose my integrity, I would lose everything that matters to me. so maintain integrity for a lifetime and even simple life, shines like wealth.

[00:10:03] Number two, what is more valuable than gold? The web of life. Naturally, you knew that's where I was heading. Forest, oceans, wild animals, pollinators, soil, all these things, they're not resources, that are sitting outside of the economy. They ultimately are the economy and provide us meaning. We've just taken them for granted and don't include them in our values or our prices or our markets, but they're here every day.

# The Great Simplification

---

[00:10:37] They produce oxygen, food, water, beauty, and balance in our lives. And without them, money and gold are meaningless. Tokens. We all kind of know this, but we're currently in some sort of a consensus trance, collective action, grand, disconnect. Last week, the s and p 500 hit an all time high in monetary terms, not at gold terms, but the real stock market is crashing.

[00:11:15] we've now pierced six of the nine planetary boundaries, and I'm hearing the seventh Ocean acidification is, close. The web of life is the real treasure and every day we live inside its generosity. The web of life is far more valuable to us, than gold, but to a single individual, gold may shout louder.

[00:11:41] Last but not least, life itself. At the center of it all is life. Your life, my life. The miracle of existence and being alive. Now, life is the foundation of all value. the canvas upon which all the things, that we find meaningful are painted and without life, gold is just a shiny rock. Even with life, gold is just a shiny rock.

[00:12:14] and with life, every breath is priceless, which is also something we take for granted. How freaking amazing is it that I am speaking on the internet to you other creatures on this planet right now, being alive, thinking, processing, acting, loving, crying, preparing, strategizing, living our lives. Is freaking amazing.

[00:12:42] The ultimate treasure is not locked in a vault somewhere. It's alive and it's fleeting. We're a long-lived species relative to some, but 80 years plus or minus, that's life. We pay for things with money or gold or Bitcoin. We're really paying with the wages of our lives on this beautiful blue-green spinning planet in space, with finite lifespans.

[00:13:16] So, with this short list of my speculation on things that are worth more than gold, I've mostly been talking about value, but of course, value is only one lens. Another is liquidity. the ease with which something could be exchanged or

# The Great Simplification

---

converted. Cash is liquid. Gold is fairly liquid. Friends and sanity and integrity are not in the, near term.

[00:13:42] and then there's resilience. How something holds up over time, especially under stress and the things we really need, like land integrity, the web of life may not be the liquid in the financial sense. But they are resilient. And in the end it is resilience, not liquidity. That's gonna determine what carries us through the storms ahead.

[00:14:06] So yes, gold bullion, gold coins are rare and durable and shiny, and have had held their value, over centuries. And given energy depletion and San Central Bank printing and, refusal to tighten our belts. and as Lynn Alden would say, there's no stopping this train. Gold's value in our society is probably going a lot higher, but compared to life, compared to friends, freedom, integrity, and the living world around us, gold remains a medal.

[00:14:48] Precious, yes, but still metal. Our culture has taught us to measure wealth in ounces, in dollars, in digits, in our checking accounts and our stock portfolios. But real wealth is measured in things that can't be mined or. Minted or manufactured. And in many ways, our culture has become a microcosm of a monetary king.

[00:15:16] Midas turning the natural world into shiny representations of status. and headed into The Great Simplification. The question that we should be asking isn't how much gold we have or Bitcoins or dollars, but whether we recognize and protect what already is more valuable than gold. There's quite a lot.

[00:15:42] Thank you. I'll talk to you next week.