



# What the Trillionaire Can't Do

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When Elon Musk took SpaceX public, last week, the value of his stock in the company was said to amount to about \$866 billion, which — added to other holdings — makes the “world’s richest man” now a trillionaire.

Capitalism’s first.

So of course nearly every left-of-center journalist, blogger, and social media warrior decried the enormity of the record.

While “it’s hard to even imagine a trillion dollars” is an honest reaction — it is difficult, just as it is to imagine the projected 2026 federal “budget” (\$7.4 trillion), deficit (\$1.9 trillion), and the [ever-increasing debt](#) — immediately moving from awe to anger is *less* than honest.

Mr. Musk, Metro UK’s Brooke Davies [mused](#), “could give every

single person in the United States a share of his cash, with everyone receiving \$2,917.32,” while, if he set his sites a little wider, he could “give every person on the planet a gift, they would receive \$121.80.”

What’s less than honest? Elon Musk *could not* do this.

Mr. Musk’s wealth is in the company that just took on new investors, driving up his shares. If he started selling his shares, the value of the stock would plummet before he found enough buyers. It is Mr. Musk’s managerial genius and technological vision that is responsible for the company’s success, so any step back from control — even by relinquishing stock — would almost certainly spell disaster.

And if he vanished off the face of the Earth, our global civilization would feel it.

What Elon Musk’s envious haters do not seem to understand is that Musk succeeds by developing products that people, businesses, and governments are willing to pay big bucks for.

He isn’t exploitative in the negative sense, either. “In total, more than 4,400 current and former SpaceX employees” — “from execs to even welders,” [says Fortune](#) — “are expected to become millionaires in the IPO.”

Were Elon’s critics a tiny bit consistent, they’d suggest that Space X’s *nouveaux riche* welders also cough up unearned wealth. Contribute, evil magnates!

This is Common Sense. I’m Paul Jacob.

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