

Finding the Upside in the Economic Downturn

By Theresa Rose

Yep, it's really bad out there. It seems like not a day goes by without another story of doom and gloom hitting the airwaves or whispered around the water cooler. We are living in the most challenging time in recent memory: people across the country are losing their health insurance, jobs, homes, and retirement savings. The negative effect of the current circumstances in which we live – both on a financial and an emotional level – cannot be underestimated. Unfortunately, there is not a lot we as individuals can do to change the global financial system. However, constantly reminding ourselves of how uncertain our future is does a great disservice to our professional lives as well as wreaks havoc on our attitudes, relationships and health.

Despite the bleak forecasts, all is not lost. In fact, contrary to conventional wisdom, the financial crisis may actually contain several profound benefits buried beneath the bad news. If you want to survive the economic maelstrom with your job, relationships and health intact, consider acknowledging the potential gifts the downturn has provided:

- 1. Clarifying priorities.** There's no doubt about it; the wake-up call has been made. We have been forced to reevaluate what truly matters. What is really important to you right now? Is it the big house filled with big stuff or the precious people in your life? Is it the numbers on the 401(k) account statement or your blood pressure numbers? Is the Monthly TPS Report really worth fretting over? By realizing that our health and family are far more important than anything else, we are able to separate distractions from necessity. What good is obsessing over our jobs if the price we are paying is our well-being and relationships?
- 2. Making better choices.** Our tighter wallets are forcing us to consume less and conserve more. Recycling and reusing are becoming more than popular catchphrases; they have become an integral part of our everyday lives. We are driving less in order to save on gas, eating last night's leftovers for lunch instead of going out to eat, and being more conscious of what we throw away. Whether it is an overhaul of all business expenditures or simply refilling the printer toner instead of buying a new one, this unintended shift of consciousness is not only benefiting our financial future but also the health and sustainability of the Earth.
- 3. Staying put.** Many people are enjoying "staycations" as opposed to vacations, opting to spend quality recreational time at home or nearby. Investigate the local attractions you and your family can check out on the cheap. Is there a state park you have heard about but haven't yet visited? Maybe the local high school or college is putting on a theatre production that you and your spouse would enjoy. Embracing the pearls found within our local communities is giving our pocketbooks a much-needed rest and reminds us that we don't have to escape our current environment to have fun.
- 4. Feeling more interconnected.** Everyone is feeling the pain of our national crisis; there is no longer a nameless, faceless "other" who is affected. Not unlike the unheralded unity created after 9/11, the national rocky road we are all traveling upon is helping to create a deeper camaraderie. We have moved away from the

- “me, me, me” mentality toward a “me too” one. By experiencing this journey together, we are more compassionate toward our fellow Americans than ever before.
5. **Getting better.** This is the perfect time to build upon your skill set. What technical skills can you brush up on to solidify your organizational value or make yourself more marketable? How about dusting off your favorite hobby and turning it into an additional income source? There is a multitude of hidden opportunities for growth and prosperity if we open ourselves to it.
 6. **Expressing gratitude.** No matter how bad the situation, we can always find things to appreciate in our lives. Ask yourself the following questions: Do you have a job? Do you have a home? Do you have people who love you? Are you healthy? Sometimes we need major difficulties to remind us of how rich we truly are. It doesn't take very much effort to find someone who has it worse than you. Now is the ideal time to be grateful for the countless blessings.

This moment offers us a chance to move into uncharted territory instead of shrinking into the collective fear. Now is the time to discover the best of who we are, not allow the worst of ourselves to appear. When we shift our inner focus from depression to appreciation, everything around us begins to change as well. We no longer get trapped in our own misery. Our family and friends become our strongest allies. Our employers see us as part of the solution instead of another problem to manage. Our outlook becomes hopeful instead of hopeless. We position ourselves at the forefront of the recovery effort. Most importantly, we realize that we are responsible for our own happiness, not the latest economic report or a sound byte from a cable news show. *Remember: this too shall pass.* How do you want to experience this critical juncture? Do you want to be full of fear or full of joy?

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Theresa Rose is an inspirational speaker and award-winning author of the new book, "Opening the Kimono." As the founder of Serious Mojo Publications, Theresa specializes in fresh approaches to energy management, productivity and creative development. Her experience includes owning a healing center, senior manager of a Fortune 100 firm, and vice president of a consulting firm. For more information, visit www.TheresaRose.net.