

STYLUS

Scratching Beneath the Surface

stylus *n.* an instrument of metal, bone, or the like,
used by the ancients for writing

AS THE ECONOMY TURNS: What Direction Do You Choose?

by Nina Durfee

What stories do you listen to? Have you had enough of doomsayers? Are you tired of hearing the phrase "economic downturn"? Are you willing to shift perspective?

In the past week, two news topics have caught my attention, not for the problems they present, but for the positive outcomes that are in progress.

1. **Massive Layoffs:** This "problem" is directing and energizing more people to start up their own business. Two years ago LifeScience.com posted an article entitled "Americans Hate Their Jobs More Than Ever." Quoting the article, "The trend is strongest among workers under the age of 25, less than 39 percent of whom are satisfied with their jobs. Workers age 45 to 54 have the second lowest level of satisfaction (less than 45 percent), according a survey conducted by The Conference Board, a market information company that also puts out the Consumer Confidence Index and the Leading Economic Indicators."

Granted, it's no fun to suddenly find yourself in the ranks of the unemployed, but what better opportunity to focus consciously and creatively on something that tickles your passion, to finally engage in something that brings greater personal fulfillment while filling a valuable need or demand?

2. **Decrease in Disposable Income:** This "problem" is directing a shift from eating out and fast-food consumption to basic whole-food nutrition. In January of 2009, Salad Bowl Branding (www.saladbowlbranding.com) posted an article entitled "Economy Changes Eating Habits," in which they reported, "People don't stop eating during a recession. Instead, they adjust what they eat and where they have their meals. . . . Home-based dining and food preparation is on an upswing, which can bode well for supermarkets and other food retailers. It also has encouraging implications for makers of specialty foods, as people look to substitute the dining variety they would get from eating at ethnic restaurants with experimenting with new foods at home." Some

consumers are finding that conscious attention to grocery costs results in healthier eating.

Shifting Perspective. Being blind-sided with pink slips or declining income creates an initial shock. Continuing to focus on the problem and to apply negative buzzwords drives the shock into depression. A simple change of expression from "downturn" to "turnaround" sparks a perceptual shift. The new-perspective responses outlined above demonstrate creativity in action. Rather than focusing on the problem, people are turning to solutions. Rather than staying stuck in self-defeating mindsets, people are stretching mental, physical and emotional muscles that previously lay dormant.

Necessity is the mother of invention. James Redfield, Michael Murphy and Sylvia Timbers authored a book called *God and the Evolving Universe*. In that book they wrote, "While persistence is necessary for success in any discipline, improvisation is important as well. Be creative."

Be at Choice. We may have no choice about our circumstances, but we are at choice whether to react or respond, whether to feel victimized or empowered, whether to suffer it or learn from it and move toward something more desirable.

When basic elements of well-being are threatened, it calls into awareness our values, our vision, our purpose, our priorities. Debbie Ford, author of *The Right Questions*, says, "Mastery is choosing to use the situations we find ourselves in rather than letting them use us."

How will you use your new circumstances? What direction will you turn?

6 Questions to Help You Turn

1. Am I reacting in fear or responding with purpose?
2. What point of view will serve me better?
3. What opportunity is presenting itself?
4. What are my top 5 strengths?
5. How can I use my strengths to turn in the direction I want to go?
6. What step will I take today?

4 Ways to Consciously Turn Your Economic Focus

1. **Use Appreciation as a Turning Point.** Appreciate what you have now. Make a list of what pleases you about your business, personal, and family relationships,

your living space, what you're wearing, what you're eating, who you're being, your strengths, your knowledge, your options. Throughout the day be conscious of what you appreciate – humor, convenience, beauty, opportunity, connection, what else?

2. **1-on-1 coaching.** Partner with a coach to clarify your intentions, identify your stuck points, enliven your passion, and create an action plan that moves you forward. Hourly rate or package discount. Call for a FREE consultation to see if coaching is for you: 425-495-6967.
3. Focused Retreat: **Full Bloom: 7 Practical Steps to Get What you Want +1 to Grow On.** Indulge in luxury, and learn specific steps to clear mental clutter, identify what you want, enliven passion, make it concrete, recognize opportunity, and choose action to manifest your desire. Call for details: 425-495-6967.
4. **Peaceful Energy Meditation.** Enjoy peace of mind by experiencing deep physical and mental relaxation, releasing stress, and enhancing mental clarity and physical energy. For information go to www.LifeSculpt.net and click on Meditation.

What action will move you forward today?