

Ride the wave of hope

I am not writing about the newest U.S. President's campaign rhetoric, nor about the town in Arkansas where a former U.S. President was born.

This is all about **hope** -- the real kind.

I'm fed up with all the doom and gloom that emanates from the media and these people who call themselves "economists." As far as I'm concerned, many of the current economists could take a lesson in accuracy from the weather forecasters.

I'm sick of the doom and gloom. I want a little hope.

I guess it's up to us to make our own hope -- the morons who run the world don't seem to have any.

So, how can you be hopeful? Concentrate on the positive.

For those of you who are in difficult economic circumstances (which pretty much takes in a good percentage of the world,) let me point you to a partial quote from "Winnie The Pooh:" *"If ever there is a tomorrow when we're not together, there's something you must always remember: You are braver than you believe, stronger than you seem, and smarter than you think."*

That's the truth. You have more capacity than you ever realized -- and a greater ability to bring it all about than you ever knew.

Yes, it's a downturn. I ranted and raved about the downturn in last week's edition, and I'm not going to go into it deeper here. But here's the great truth that people don't know: There's a lot of opportunity in a downturn.

I'm not just talking about the people who are making bundles by shorting the stock of financial companies -- I'm talking about the people who look at the changes in their lives as an opportunity, and as a result, start a new business, create a new life, find a new opportunity, change their focus on life, or find something different (and more satisfying) to do with their life.

Most of us rent our lives to a conglomerate or a small business. We choose to give up a little bit of ourselves, and become a cog in a wheel -- but when times get tough, we start looking for other ways to supplement our weekly earnings --

or we are involuntarily forced to change, often by a manager who is cutting staff in order to save his bonus.

One way or the other, a downturn is a chance to make a change in your life -- either because you're looking somewhere else, or because you're looking to expand your opportunities.

When you do that, you've got to have hope.

Face it -- unless you have hope for the future, you're not going to even bother to try -- hope is the center linchpin that makes it so you can continue on. Hope is the fuel that keeps you putting one foot in front of the other. Hope is the glue that hold your dreams and beliefs together. It's the energy that helps recharge you when times get tough.

Hope, in other words, is the fuel of our souls.

So much of today's news seems "hopeless," and yet, there is hope in each person's soul.

Sooner or later, the world economy will turn around. It will turn around, in large part, because the people gain more hope -- and lose more gloom.

So, where do you start?

At least for a day or two, turn off the TV news. Ignore the business section. Watch a screwball comedy. Go for a walk. Take a break. Find your inner hope.

Make some decisions. Change your path, or your viewpoint. Change your job, or find a way to make it more meaningful. Companies are cutting back -- there's more chance for those who are left behind to find added value -- and more chance for those who are laid off to reform their life anew, without all the added baggage of an existing position.

You know, sometimes these "crisis" environments are perpetrated by TV News -- and after a while of watching it, following it, and worrying about it, you start to feel like you're in a pressure cooker. It's just too easy to get caught up to where you start to get as shook up as they are.

But here's the rub -- media outlets are paid to be shook up. They are paid to hype the "crisis of the day" -- and as a result, like last week's "Meet the Press" suggested, the whole thing spins out of control.

Media outlets make their living on people watching the TV, or reading the paper, or buying their magazines. They've learned that if there's a crisis afoot, their ratings go up. Combine that with a general frame of mind in most media to hype

up the current crisis and then use it for all its worth, and pretty soon things get out of hand. Consumers watch the news, hunker down, and stop buying.
Companies

The key to this problem is to depressurize yourself for a few days. Most of us are inherently positive, and unmistakably hopeful. We don't want to see things through black-colored glasses -- rose-colored ones will do nicely, thank you very much.

Pessimism never helped a thing -- and it's not going to solve any problems this time around, either. The world's economy is more resilient than you might believe -- and people are more hopeful than anyone believes.

Even if times have gotten tough for you, remember the words of Pooh -- "You are braver than you believe, stronger than you seem, and smarter than you think."

Yes, things are tough -- but tough times call for tough people -- and you're tough. You can do it.

For some people, it takes determination to find hopeful circumstances in a sea of apparent crisis -- but each circumstance brings with it its own opportunities. When great waves arise in the ocean, surfers take to the waves. They ride the waves, and enjoy the energy of the ocean. Those who would circumnavigate the world in the age of tall ships and sails depended on strong wind -- and yet that kind of energy, if applied to our lives, would be something many people would avoid.

Great people have always done well in times of challenge and crisis -- it defines them, it exhilarates them, it brings opportunity and a chance to change.

Are you great? Of course you are. Now is the time for hope. It's a time of renewal and growth.

It's a time to ride the wave of hope -- and use the winds of change.

And hope is not something that can be co-opted by any political candidate, nor is it something that is particular to religion.

Hope is something that is deep inside of us -- and the strength of the world depends on the hope within each of us.

Let's ride the wave of hope.

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