

“Staying *Pumped...in a Deflated Economy*”



We may never know the effects that the terrorist attacks in America have had on the economies of countries throughout the world. What we do know is that following the 11th September 2001 major companies and institutions took steps, and in some cases unprecedented steps, to rationalise and/or downsize.

Almost overnight redundant employees faced uncertain futures and the prospect of a bleak Christmas and New Year. And for those who kept their jobs?? Surely there has been a sense of insecurity and the feeling “will I be the next”?

As we approach the end of what has therefore been a traumatic year, I would have thought, that this is an excellent time, not only to revisit the real meaning of Christmas, but to re-evaluate our approach and perspectives in coping with, what for many of us will be, difficult economic and related conditions during the early months of 2002

If there ever was a time to get ‘*pumped up*’ I feel that this is it. So I hope that the following thoughts will help you reflect on what has happened to you and help you develop more positive attitudes as you face the New Year with all its uncertainties.

1. **Be realistic about your priorities & perspectives!** Tom Peters advocates searching for excellence but remember that the difference between expecting excellence and striving for it can be... ulcers. I am sure you know someone, maybe not that old either, who is suffering or has suffered from ulcers, stress or maybe even a heart attack. Did they get a chance, or think it necessary, to sort out their priorities or perspectives? Maybe or maybe not but why should you chance it? Why not try to choose your battles (life challenges, potholes and problems) and by doing so maintain your energy level. Then you will be better able to retain a healthier, essential personal energy “bank account” (as Stephen Covey put it) to equip you for any transition and beyond.
2. **Stay healthy - stay strong!** Being well is much more than being not ill. Perfectly healthy people who find themselves going through traumatic times such as redundancy, or enforced career change, can very easily become run down which in turn can lower their resistance. The outcome of this often is that they become susceptible to illnesses. Depression can soon follow, or friends and families no longer find them fun and good company. Therefore a positive mental attitude is easier to develop as you go through traumatic change if you are well and stay well. Regular exercise really can contribute positively to your state of mind while reducing any health problems you may have.
3. **Stay connected!** There are two ways to handle uncertainty or traumatic experiences. One is to withdraw into yourself in the hope that the situation will improve over time. While time can be

a healer I have found in consulting people that few things in life cure themselves without some intervention on their part. The other way is that, as soon as you get over the initial trauma of change, you force yourself to join the human race again and get on with living. Experience shows that this is hard to do, but it does mean that you will have maintained your social contacts whether they are religious, sporting, professional etc. All of these connections can be very important to you in times of need or trouble and are important sources for networking very often with important benefits.

4. **Stay balanced!** There is an increasing emphasis being placed on having a work/life balance. Indeed many in their forties and older are leaving the rat race (particularly following redundancy) and opting for less pressure and more time with their family, hobbies and social interests. So why not begin the process now by gradually developing and maintaining a more healthy balance between work and life? Those who have done so have found it has helped their work performance not to mention the use they can make from the new contacts they have established. Often business decisions are made outside of work through contacts made on the golf course, at conferences or following other interests. Staying balanced will better enable you to connect with others in this adventure we call “life”
5. **Do something for someone not expecting it!** A great way to feel better about yourself and with life in general, especially in difficult times, is to help someone who is not expecting it. You would be amazed how good you feel after helping somebody else. I recently heard of an interesting way one major organisation was training their managers. Instead of sending them on training courses they seconded them to work with a Charity undergoing some trauma of change. This organisation found that not only did the charity and the seconded Managers benefit but so did they. This was a win, win situation as the Managers had to report back on the problems identified, the action taken, the results achieved and the lessons learned both personally and for application back in the work place. What a great way to give, receive and feel good about it.
6. **Make yourself a priority!** It is important therefore that you reserve time, energy and money for yourself. You deserve it. Many of us are so overwhelmed by responsibilities for and with others, that we often forget and disregard our own needs and desires. Therefore to maintain the balance strive to develop a healthy sense of your priorities and your self-worth. This is a good time to take stock, whether enforced or otherwise, to recharge your energies, take an objective look at the somewhat deflated economy and see what you need to do to be pumped up to maximise your potential in 2002