

Facing Challenging Times – Worry is not a Requirement

The job loss count is rising; just about every week we read of another new batch of folks now out of work, a new batch of folks who are underemployed, a new batch of folks who have given up. The unemployment rate is rising.

Not surprisingly, 81 percent of Americans say they are worried about something related to their jobs, according to the 2008 Workplace Insights survey by Adecco USA. Among the top job-related worries were:

- High gas prices (25 percent)
- Stagnant pay checks (13 percent)
- Work-life balance (12 percent)
- Rising cost of health care (9 percent)
- Job market (7 percent)
- Opportunities for advancement (6 percent)
- Outsourcing of jobs (4 percent)
- Other worries (5 percent)

"It's clear that our current economic uncertainty presents real worries to American workers," said Bernadette Kenny, chief career officer for Adecco USA.

Can worrying help solve the problem?

A vast (and growing) number of folks are worried about job security. Its understandable. But, does it help to worry?

Worrying, in fact, can exacerbate one's experience. Worry and anxiety take a huge toll on one's mental, physical, emotional and spiritual energy. Anxiety leads to many psycho-somatic symptoms and potentially serious health issues. Stress in the form of headaches, high blood pressure, insomnia, exhaustion, fogginess and confusion, body aches and muscle tension are a major cause of disengagement from work, i.e., presenteeism, and in fact, disengagement from all of life.

When folks are worried and feeling anxious about work, they put in less effort, perform less efficiently and lose focus. The result is their feeling an even more intense fear.

In this debilitated, fear-based, state folks have a serious challenge in showing up. In their day-to-day life at work, these folks are often seen as distracted, disengaged, distant or not performing as a "team player".

Moreover, when folks live wrapped in worry and fear, the law of attraction says that's exactly what their worry and fear will get them - events, circumstances, and people who come into their experiences which they then interpret as causes for more worry and fear.

When we find that our mind is filled with notions of worry and fear-provoking thoughts, this is an opportunity to notice that I'm preferring to think about the opposite of what I really want to experience. (Note: this awareness is completely anathema to folks who live life from a place of victim consciousness place, who choose to spend much of their life blaming.)

In these tough times (all the time, really) its important to consistently ask one's self: "What am I thinking about?" Here is where change and transformation can begin to take place.

If not worry, then what?

Worrying is a self-perpetuating process. And more, that which we obsess about over and over in our mind, we begin to take on as the truth. Choose fear, and fear will appear.

By choosing (either consciously or unconsciously) to focus on losing one's job, for example, one is making that thought and that focus their affirmation, their mantra, their daily meditation. This programming then results in living a life that is devoid of happiness, success, well be-ing, and freedom. There is another way - if you choose.

How to stop worrying

First, to those who feel the need to worry, its important to understand the following: *Worry solves nothing*. Repeat, *Worry solves nothing*. Many folks believe that if they don't worry, nothing positive will ever happen. Many folks think the actual process of worrying in and off itself is action, is doing something. It's not. Being concerned and then taking action in some way, shape or form will lead to a different physical, emotional, mental or spiritual state. Worrying in and of itself only produces more worry, and fear. Action absorbs anxiety.

The process of eliminating worry and moving past one's fear is to not resist it. The process of eliminating one's fear is not simply to think one's way out of it. The way to move from a state of worry and fear is to allow the fear and then engage one's brain, body and heart simultaneously, a psycho-physiological state of coherence, a state where one moves from the mind alone to a place where one moves into a mind-heart-body state often referred to as "the zone" or "presence". From this place, one finds oneself acting with efficiency, confidence and positivity (not just thinking positive); one moves through challenges with a sense of clarity, ease and well be-ing.

Sensing the contrast between resistance and allowing can be an experience of awakening. All one has to do is pay attention! Am I feeling armored for battle, angry at the world, afraid, even in a very subtle way? Or am I feeling open, soft, comfortable, and at ease?.

The reason "positive thinking" or willpower alone is not a solution, is that if you think positive but still feel fear and anxiety, the fear and anxiety will always win out. Always. The mind on its own is not enough. It requires something more: the wisdom of your body and the power of your heart.

So, during these challenging times, make a conscious effort to engage in a centering and coherence practice: upon waking, during the morning and afternoon, in the evening and just before going to bed, take time to breathe deeply, long and quietly into your heart, focus on your feet on the floor, or on the support under you if you are sitting or lying and focus on your belly center. Slowly and with practice you'll begin to move into a state of coherence between your brain, your body and your heart - a state that results in a feeling of harmony and balance.

Coherence brings us to a place of relaxation, of groundedness and well be-ing an inner place from which one can access the qualities of strength, wisdom, courage, discipline, motivation, and will. From this place one can access one's heart-felt capacity not only to perform at one's best, but to access an inner understanding and knowing that can support one to take positive action towards doing what needs to be done to make challenges less challenging, that is, taking action and moving towards solutions which, in the space of being fearful, one never knew existed. In this place, you will find a greater alignment between what you think, feel, say and do - leading to more proactive, conscious and effective choices, decisions and actions.

Worrying and being fearful is a choice. Releasing fear and worry is also a choice. So, we can choose to hang on to our fear, or we can choose to release it.

Being worried, anxious and fearful are patterns which one can, over time, replace with patterns of being and acting in ways that are self-supporting, patterns which exude confidence, courage, and positive expectations, even in the face of overwhelming odds and challenges.

As soul beings we are free, happy and at peace. It's our birthright. None of these states depend upon external realities. They are part of our nature. Experiencing ourselves as such is a choice we can make every moment that we are conscious.

So, our \$10 food for thought questions are:

- Do worry and fear control much of your thinking and activity? What threatens you? What do you worry about?
- Are the stories you tell yourself about your future true? Really, really true? How do you know?
- What are your greatest fears?
- What actions are you, or have you been, taking to reduce or eliminate your fears?
- What place did worry and fear have in your family as you were growing up?
- Do you ever experience feelings of being alone or abandoned?
- Do you often find yourself telling others you are happy when you are not?
- How is your health - mental, physical, emotional and spiritual?
- Do you exhibit presenteeism at work - a state of preoccupation where you are there physically but not honestly and sincerely engaged or present?
- Where in your life do you feel you are losing control and what are you doing as a consequence to deal with this feeling?
- What one or two approaches can you take over the next week or two to reduce perceived threats and worries?

"Instead of frittering away your vibrancy with worry or distraction, realize your mind and body are inextricably united. What calms and tones up one, soothes and improves the other". - Marsha Sinetar

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