

WELCOME TO QUIET COURAGE – February 2009

The online newsletter for navigating life's changes and transitions from Bailey Coaching and Mary Ann Bailey, MC.

FEATURE ARTICLE

Pick Yourself Up, Dust Yourself Off and Start All Over Again

In his inaugural address to the nation, President Obama borrowed some lyrics from an old Jerome Kern/Dorothy Fields song saying, "... we must pick ourselves up, dust ourselves off, and begin again the work of remaking America".

Although the words to this song were written over 70 years ago, their message still rings true, particularly today when life seems to be knocking all of us down in one way or another.

Jobs are being cut, the economy is depressed and people are very concerned about their future. There is not a lot of encouraging news out there; and as one client so succinctly put it, "I don't really want to pick myself up because I'm just going to get knocked down again."

And she is probably right, because that's what life does; it sometimes knocks us down. But in more optimistic times it seems easier to find the strength to get up and jump back in the game, probably because life feels good and we can see opportunities out there waiting for us.

So, the question becomes: "How do we tap into that reservoir of resiliency during these less optimistic times?"

One thing to do is to think about a success. Try to recall a time when life knocked you down and you bounced right back. Can you remember what it took to get you back on your feet and moving forward?

Was it the support of a friend, colleague or coach? Was it the lure of trying something new? Was it your competitive nature? Was it the fear of missing out on life or was it just sheer grit and determination?

Each of us relies on different things to re-energize us. And knowing what specific motivators work for you will provide you with both the resources and the impetus you need to get back on track.

Next, look at what doesn't work when you get stuck. Think about a time when you got knocked down and it took a long time to get back on your feet. Maybe you are stuck right now in a situation that feels overwhelming.

Where do you focus your time and energy? Do you spend your time blaming, being angry and wishing things were different? What are the voices in your head saying? Are they critical and judgmental? Are you hanging out with people who are also down?

Although it is easy to get caught up in the drama of the situation, the longer we remain stuck in the morass of blame, anger and pity, the harder it is to get moving again.

Negative energy begets negative energy; and if we immerse ourselves in negativity for too long it becomes integrated as part of our life. When this happens, it is extremely difficult to extricate ourselves from its downward spiral. So, how can we avoid getting caught in this negative whirlpool?

When you do find yourself stuck, there are some steps you can take to regain your focus and power.

1. Notice where you get your support. Is your support system needier than you? If they seem fixated on keeping you down or they can't/won't offer any positive encouragement, information, or resources, then create a new support system.
2. Take some time to figure out what you actually need in the way of support and then make a list of people who can offer that to you. Talk with each person on your list about what you need from them and ask if they would be willing to help you.

One person might have great contacts, one person might have a specific skill set and one person might be perfect for a relaxing evening of fun and laughter.

3. Make a commitment to yourself to take one action step a day that has the potential to get your life moving. You may not get immediate results, but if you throw out enough lines you eventually will see results.
4. Don't hesitate to use the professional services of a coach or counselor. These people are trained to help you overcome the obstacles and barriers that are keeping you down.
5. Most importantly, realize that this is a process that might take a little time and that the key to achieving your goals is to make sure you keep moving forward, even if it's just one little step a day. It's a lot like driving a car up an icy hill; if you stop, chances are very good that you will get stuck.

There is no doubt that the economic climate in our country will improve. However, that does not alter the fact that life will continue to knock us down. That's just what happens.

But if we can recognize what's happening and have a process in place to deal with these emotional down times, we won't stay down for very long.

Until next time,
Mary Ann Bailey, MC

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