

## **Welcome to Quiet Courage – June 2009**

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

### **Feature Article: 3 Simple Strategies for Staying Positive**

Life, even at its best, can sometimes be a struggle. There are always things that arise that knock us off balance and remind us that we do not control life the way we think we do. Throw in the current situation of an uncertain economy, job losses, and home foreclosures and it can be very challenging to remain upbeat, even for the strongest of optimists.

Yet, having a positive outlook is one of the most effective tools we have for maintaining our physical and emotional health. Our outlook on life shapes our well-being; and science has proven that optimistic people, or people with a positive attitude, lead longer and healthier lives than those who live life expecting the worst. Optimists experience less stress, they have stronger immune systems and they are more successful than pessimists.

Optimism is not about denying reality - it's about how one chooses to respond to life. Even in the worst times or situations, human beings have the ability to choose how we interpret what is happening around us and how we want to respond to that event. Everything that we experience, whether it's good or bad, offers us a choice as to how we will respond to it.

But what if you are not a born optimist? What if keeping a positive attitude is difficult for you? Are you doomed? Absolutely not! Here are 3 simple things you do to help shift your outlook and focus on life.

#### **1. Connect with Positive People**

Who do you hang out with? Are your friends upbeat? Do they like to have fun? Do they talk about possibilities? Do they basically enjoy life? Or are your friends more pessimistic in their outlook? Do they worry about the future? Do they have more of a "something's wrong/not enough" philosophy of life?

Feelings are contagious. We pick up the energy of the people we are around. So, it's important to be aware of who you spend time with. If you notice you are not getting enough positive energy from your friends and co-workers, look for people who seem to be enjoying life and start building connections with them. You will be surprised at how hanging out with positive and fun-loving people can shift your perspective on life.

#### **2. Take a Break From Media**

It's difficult to escape the steady stream of disasters and calamities that the media heaps on us. Whether it's the internet, newspaper or television, the constant barrage of tragedy and sadness eventually gets to all of us. So, try this: For a week, take a break from this stream of bad news. Turn off your TV. Do not pick up a paper.

I know that some of you may feel it's irresponsible not to know what is happening in the world at all times. If that 's you, take some time and think about when you have gone camping, or have been on vacation some place where there was no newspaper or TV. Remember how relaxed you felt just enjoying what was happening in the moment.

And remind yourself that the world continued to go on even without the energy of your worrying. However, if you do have specific areas of concern, take a minute each day and send the people involved positive thoughts or prayers. This will have a much more positive effect on both you and the situation than sitting in front of your TV and worrying.

### 3. Give Back

One of the best ways to nurture a positive attitude is to find ways to give back. There are so many people who could use a little extra support these days, so find an organization that tugs at your heart and sign up to be a volunteer. If you don't have the time to volunteer on a regular basis, you can sign up for a special event. You can also make a financial donation. Many non-profits are also struggling right now and your time, expertise and/or money could make a big difference in the services they are able to provide.

Stepping outside ourselves and spending some time focusing on other people's needs is a great antidote for feeling low. It puts the world back into perspective and helps us see the bigger picture. It elicits gratitude and helps us see just how blessed we are and that opens the door for optimism. As author Larry Dossey says, "When you bring more generosity into your life, you also invite its cousins, compassion and love."

There will always be things happening in our life and in the world that could cause us to feel hopeless and depressed. The important thing to remember is we always have the choice as to whether we want to travel down the road to despair or whether we want to take the higher road - the road of gratitude, generosity and compassion.

Until next time,  
Mary Ann Bailey, MC

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Quiet Courage Blog:  
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### Bailey Coaching

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