

LifeMapSM



"LifeMap is a navigational tool to help you on your path towards personal and professional success. Our belief is that you can achieve a more rewarding career, a more productive organization and a more enjoyable and abundant life."

April 8, 2008

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Stay Positive.

To inject a little humor into this edition of LifeMap I was going to entitle it "Say No To Negativity" but I feared some might think it was a merely a joke (and a fairly subtle one at that) and not take the 5 minutes to read it.

Current popular culture (and here I use the word 'culture' quite loosely) contributes in a powerful way to an overall climate of negativity. It is almost impossible to avoid depressing predictions about the economy, fearful news concerning world affairs, shameful reports of corporate corruption, lurid revelations about the personal lives of celebrities and puerile political debate that borders on school yard name calling. One might say that if you weren't pessimistic about things then you weren't really paying attention.

In the face of this onslaught of negativity it takes a conscious and determined effort to attain and keep a positive attitude. Even the most optimistic person can be gradually worn down. Like most folks I have my down moments but, generally, I can see the balance between good and bad, I try to put a positive spin on things, and even when it's an effort I reach deep for a smile or an upbeat comment or response. Thus, others see me as a

positive person, as an optimist and they reflect this positive energy back at me. This is but one reward of working to stay positive in a culture of negativity. Rather than dwell on negativity itself I'm going to turn this discussion around to focus on the kinds of attitudes and actions that can defeat negativity.

Paths Forward

• **Create Your Own Reality.** I know, I know, this sounds like some kind of 1960's bumper sticker. What I mean by it is that you cannot let the negativity of others dictate your worldview or general perception of life. It is up to you - and only you - to determine what the world around you could look like, what the world should look like, how you choose to see the world and how you decide to act in order to achieve that end. You can choose to only see the devastation of the storm or you can choose to also see the tenacious bravery of the survivors and the heroic labors of the rescuers.

• **Follow Your Passion.** Positive thoughts and attitudes can flow from one area of your life to another. I would be tremendously pleased if you reported to me that you had challenge, excitement, reward, fun and passion in every part of your life. Though achieving a balance of all these great things in every element of your livespace is a wonderful goal, its realization usually only comes in rare moments of reflection and insight. At any one moment in time we are usually struggling with some particular aspect of life. If, however, you are experiencing and enjoying true passion in another part of your life that positive energy can help you endure to overcome obstacles, can help you achieve incremental successes, and will give you the optimism, hope and courage to move forward towards your goals where you most need the boost. This is why a healthy relationship can help your career, why an active volunteer or civic life can help your family life and why an engaging avocation or personal interest can help your overall physical and emotional health.

• **Thought Stopping.** Given the culture in which we live it is no small surprise that many of us have automatic negative responses to events around us. These negative thoughts are unpleasant, unhelpful and unattractive. If, according to the law of attraction, you attract what you think about, it may well be that you are further attracting negative energy. Fortunately there are a couple of ways that you can significantly decrease this type of self-sabotage. Sometimes just realizing that you are being negative is enough to call it off. Perhaps you need to take a more active step. When you perceive your thoughts moving in a negative direction say aloud *Stop It!* (depending on your surroundings, of course). Another thought stopping trick is to wear a rubber band around your wrist and when you want to interrupt a negative thought just snap the rubber band. Don't think it will work? Just try it and see for yourself. It is possible to replace your automatic negative programming with positive, optimistic, solution-based thinking but it will not happen without your attention and effort.

• **Achieve Acceptance.** There is a popular prayer that asks God to "grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change". I always had a bit of a hard time with that line but

I have come to realize that accepting things as they are does not mean either liking them or agreeing that they will never change. It's just that, for right now, this is the reality I have to come to terms with. It is no coincidence that acceptance is the commonly acknowledged final stage of loss and grief. The negative energy that we expend and attract by whining and complaining about things we can't change tends to bind us more closely to the object of our discomfort. Thus, the rest of that prayer concludes by requesting " . . . the courage to change the things I can and wisdom to know the difference". To combat the negativity that sometimes seems to surround us all I wish you courage, acceptance, serenity, and wisdom.

LifeMap is about making the most of the opportunities we are given, creating new opportunities where we can and overturning the internal and external obstacles to an abundant life.

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