

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."

September 23, 2008

This Week's Message:

**Staying Positive in a
Negative Climate.**

Paths Forward

**Tired of boring
meetings??**

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Staying Positive in a Negative Climate.

I'm a bit of a news junkie. My day starts with coffee and the daily paper, in the car it's public radio or talk radio, the evening news on TV is a nightly ritual, and my reading pile

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always contains a weekly or monthly news magazine. I like staying abreast of current events and I seek (if not easily accept) opinions contrary to my own.

It used to surprise me that a good number of the folks with whom I frequently interact at work and in my social life seemed to have little interest in the issues of the day. Lately I have noticed a trend where people actually seem to avoid the newspapers or media news outlets and I've started asking why. What I am hearing is that many people do not want to absorb what they perceive as a constant bombardment of "bad news". One senior manager recently told me "I know things are tough out there. I don't need it drilled into my head when I'm trying to relax at the end of the day."

On occasion the news will particularly aggravate or incite me, sometimes it motivates me but generally I am able to take it all in stride. I guess that's because I have learned to make the distinction between what's going on in the "larger" world and what's going on in my world. In my role as a corporate consultant, management advisor and executive coach it is essential that I maintain a positive attitude and share that with my clients. But, and I admit this freely, this is something I have to work at because it does not always come naturally.

I have a distaste for "bubblegum psychology" and blandly optimistic truisms that have little value beyond those you can find in a fortune cookie. I don't want to hear "Have a positive attitude" or "See the glass as half full" or "Keep a stiff upper lip". I don't find these kinds of statements helpful and often find them downright frustrating. What I prefer to hear and try to learn is *how* to make these things happen - how to stay positive in an environment that is often drenched in negativity.

For the last few months I have been gathering data from individuals in a variety of situations that require them to work at staying positive in a negative climate. Some have suffered a recent personal loss, some are unemployed, some are living with chronic illness, and some are working under uncertain conditions due to the economic downturn. Not every idea or technique that these folks have found useful will work for you. Over the years I have found some of them helpful and I encourage you to try those that fit with your personality and individual situation.

Paths Forward

• **See Your Big Picture.** It is unlikely that every part of your life is going poorly at the same time. One man shared with me that for over a year he has been going through a terribly acrimonious divorce that will probably leave him without the home he largely built, close to bankrupt, and estranged from one of his children. And though he often gets down about this situation he maintains his perspective by remembering that his cancer continues to stay in remission and, as difficult as this divorce is, it opened the door to something he has not had in decades - a nurturing and supportive relationship. What element of your "big picture" can help you keep things in perspective?

• **Stuff Happens.** One sure way to be disappointed with life is to expect that it will always flow smoothly. You or I might fantasize about how great life would be if we were a movie star, famous athlete or billionaire tycoon. But those obnoxious celebrity tabloids provide us with evidence that the rich, famous and successful have many of the same problems as do the rest of us. One certain thing that we can predict about life is that it will contain both ups and downs - no matter who you are. Realizing that "stuff happens" in everybody's life can take some of the sting out of the unexpected potholes and roadblocks that pop up in life.

• **What Worked Before?** Negativity got you down? Ask yourself "What is causing me to feel this way right now?" Next, think back to when you were in a similar situation. How did you deal with it then; can that solution work for you this time?

• **Take A World View.** Without a doubt the evening news about natural disasters, political strife and war can get you down. But, in a way, it can help your mood if you consider that the worst day in your life would be, for others somewhere in the world, the equivalent of winning the lottery. While I whine about needing a new starter for my car there are millions who will never even have a car. While you complain about tonight's dinner there are millions who have no dinner. If these kinds of realizations don't help then take the next step and get involved with Oxfam America, Amnesty International or the Red Cross. Reaching out, however you can, to those in more need than you is a proven method of feeling a bit better because of the "helper's high" that such effort produces.

• **Have A Fun File.** Have you noticed how it often takes

someone visiting from out of town for you to do some of the fun things are right there in your community? Your fun file can contain lists of attractions, museums, historical homes and gardens or other places you'd like to visit with others. It should also contain a list of things you enjoy doing by yourself such as getting a massage, taking a long, hot bath, reading, going for a walk, reading or listening to music. In our hectic workaday world having a little fun is a mentally and physically healthful thing to do. Your fun file helps remind you of the things you enjoy and can motivate you to make some time to be good to yourself.

• **Get Support and Be A Supporter.** *You will benefit* from engaging with family and friends in your efforts to stay positive in a negative environment. *Your family and friends will benefit* from your ability to stay positive in a negative environment. Giving support to those close to you and getting support from those close to you creates a self-reinforcing structure of inclusion, comfort and encouragement that can be a wellspring of positive energy in any environment.

LifeMap is about recognizing the realities of today's world but also about generating strategies to create personal realities of engagement, support and abundance.

Tired of boring meetings??

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<http://www.drpaulpowers.com/speakingschedule.html>

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Sincerely,

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