Optimistic Opportunities

Moving into 2010 - the Beginning of the Next Decade

By Vesta Copestakes

Not long ago I wrote an essay about **Economic Optimism** *(May 2009 issue)*…mostly about business owners who didn't hunker into tunnels of darkness by retreating, but people who burst forth into the light with hope under their feet. I'd like to report back that each and every one of them is doing just fine.

What makes these people succeed is an innate personality that leans toward the positive – cup half-full, etc. There's little an optimist can say to a pessimist that will change the way they view the world. I believe this is because we are basically hard-wired to be one or the other. Optimists are lucky to see sun where others see clouds.

This positive versus negative perspective on life defines people who are grateful versus people who complain. Grateful people get up in the morning, see sun *or* rain and marvel at the beauty of another day. Complainers get up and think about all the reasons why life is lousy, then go on to define details on the list of what's wrong.

The Economy

A common topic of discussion is "Are things really getting better or are we just talking ourselves into it?" Probably both. When I'm out delivering newspapers, I see crowded restaurants, people laughing, clearly spending money on a good meal. I also talk with shop owners saying that the Holiday season was never so grim.

Perhaps it's a shift in how people spend money. Most people have plenty of things, what they seek are experiences – time with people they enjoy, learning a new skill, trying a new hobby, etc. Objects will never give you joy the way companionship does. Eating nourishes the heart as well as the body. Out in Duncans Mills, Gloria Tamagni is transforming her business from selling gifts to food because she can see how this shift in spending priorities may be permanent. An Old-world Italian Deli has a much better chance of surviving then a store filled with toys and pretty things of aesthetic pleasure.

But a quick visit to shopping center parking lots will tell you that people have not stopped spending money. Look at the carts rolling out to cars and take a peek at what's in them. People carry on with life, one way or another. That's something we can count on and that means that what goes down must come up. It's just a matter of time. Yes, if we think that the economy is improving, it probably will.

The Environment

Pessimists will tell you that the Copenhagen Summit on the Environment was a disappointment and didn't accomplish what so many hoped for. The optimist will tell you that just *having* an environmental summit is impressive. It gave people opportunities to meet and exchange ideas and express their concern. It's a step forward in the right direction.

Recycling is another part of life we have adapted into our lives. We take it for granted that we sort our trash, recycle what can be turned into new objects and think about what we purchase and how we'll deal with it when we no longer need it.

Guess what? There are places, even in this country, where there are no recycling programs. People literally throw every disposable item into the same receptacle and it all goes to landfill. Oh the horrors! How can they do this? Well, they do.

Consciousness on all levels takes time to rise. Just comfort yourself with the knowledge that people are slowly becoming aware that they have a responsibility to the planet on which they live – for now and into the future. It's coming. It's come a long way from rivers on fire – remember that one? How about dead rivers? Forgot that, too? It wasn't so long ago. We've come a very long way in a very short period of time. Have faith.

Politics

This one can challenge even the most avid optimist. How can people think it's rational to hate each other, throw barbs of words as well as bombs at innocent people, etc? All because we don't agree about how to run our country or someone else's country… or even how to run our lives! Politics plays a huge part in laws. Then we mix religion into politics and it gets testy! This is where trying to stay calm and positive hits a wall.

The pessimist will fire off angry words, angry opinions and try to inspire incredulous emotions to foment action. Whether it's Conservatives getting excited about the Right to Bear Arms and kill people all mixed in with the Right to Life for people who aren't born yet – or on the other side - Liberals promoting Human Rights for everyone, environmental consciousness for our planet, and a Live and Let Live political agenda, this is where the proverbial s--- hits the fan. "I'm right – you're wrong" is a conflict of wills with no comfortable exit.

How do optimists talk our way out of this conundrum? I'll pass on my technique since it's the one I fall back on all the time when my heart races at the injustices of the world (clearly I'm a liberal!).

The Universe Works. Over time truth wins over lies, love wins over hate (at least on an individual basis), consciousness rises as communication increases and we all become more connected. In my lifetime I have watched as racism has diminished (not disappeared yet), prejudice has softened through knowledge, and compassion has increased. I believe all these improvements have come about because of increased exposure to other people, other opinions, other lives, and other values systems.

If all else fails…wait. Look back to see how far we have come and it starts looking better as you look forward.

The Bottom Line

This is coming straight from my optimists heart…***you can do something.***

The first step is to have a goal. Thinking you are helpless insures that you are. Thinking you have power to change what you see as wrong means that you do. It may be something in your own life that needs more attention, or something in your community, or on the planet itself.

The old phrase that you can't change someone else, you can only change yourself is 100% true. So if you want change, make it happen in your life and it will spill over to those with whom you share life. Call it influence or cosmic osmosis, whatever you want. Just by making positive changes in your own life, you will feel better, then every person you come into contact with will feel your joy. That joy spreads just as powerfully as hate or anger. Which feeling do you want in your heart? Make the choice, then take the action to make it happen.

Happy 2010!

Experience!
BUYING or SELLING
Your REALTOR is your KEY to SUCCESS

MICHELLE KOENIGSHOFER
REALTOR®
(707) 540-9220
CELL 235-0135
sonomahomestoday.com
SENIOR REAL ESTATE SPECIALIST®
ACCREDITED BUYER'S REPRESENTATIVE
CPS

VESTA Marketing Services
Ads ▪ Brochures
Catalogs ▪ Maps
Signage ▪ Posters
Mailers ▪ Rack Cards
Most of the ads in this newspaper - and the newspaper iteself - are examples of my work.
I'm looking for projects I can create between issues of the newspaper.
I'm creative and know production from idea to print.
My passion is to serve my clients with promotion that works.
Vesta Copestakes
707.887.0253
vesta@sonic.net