



Good Will Report

Will Chen's Monthly Newsletter
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A Wind of Change

Since September rolled around, the weather in the Northwest has changed quite drastically. The rain began, which is generally an indication of the start of autumn, and then the temperature dropped -- although we have had a very sunny September so far.

With the new month and new weather, I have subscribed myself to a fitness program which involves three gym visits a week with the trainer, as well as access to a nutritionist and psychologist to help me reach my health goals. This was also the perfect opportunity for me to recommit to a healthier daily routine, so I committed to seeing the trainer at 7 in the morning.

The number one reason for me to choose to exercise in the morning is actually because I cannot put it off! There are very few things that can come up before I get into work that will throw me off the exercise schedule, so I have, in effect, eliminated most of the excuses not to go to the gym. Having a trainer waiting for me there also reinforces the commitment, since it is not only me, and also the trainer who expects me to show up. Thirdly, working out in the morning gets the metabolism going, so I am energetic throughout the day. All I need to do, is make sure I eat something before I go!

Do you have commitments that you often come up with stories to avoid? How can you take responsibility and create an environment so you are accountable for your results? How can you eliminate the stories?

Economic Downturn

It seems like everyone has been talking about the economy of late. The fourth largest investment bank of the world, Lehman Brothers Holding Inc, announced that it would file for chapter 11 bankruptcy protection on the weekend of September 13, 2008, and this seemed to have set off a chain of events which sent many into a panic: on September 15, it was announced that Bank of America will buy Merrill Lynch for \$50 billion as Lehman Brothers failed to find a buyer and filed for bankruptcy; on the next day, the US Federal Reserve announced an \$85 billion package to save insurance giant American International Group (AIG) from collapse. Closer to home on September 25, Washington Mutual Inc., the nation's largest savings and loans, collapsed and was purchased by JPMorgan Chase & Co.

With all that is going on, the stock market has become extremely volatile, and many people are either making or losing money very quickly. It is natural for us to wonder about what's happening, maybe even go into a panic. Now I am no expert in the stock market, so I will refrain from commenting on that; instead, I want to take the events out of context for a moment and focus on ourselves: how do you feel in situations like this? What is your reaction?

Whenever emotions are high, it is not easy to make a decision objectively. Most of the time, fear takes over and we either become paralyzed or make very rash decisions. This is exactly why it is important, when investing, to have an exit strategy *before* we buy, that way when things get tough, we can simply go back to look at and follow the plan amid the emotional biases.

Sometimes we get into investments without a plan, it is probably best to get out as quickly as possible -- since an investment without a plan is really just a gamble. Rather than hanging onto it for emotional reasons, letting it go will be a great relief.

During these low economic times, it is most important to stay collected and objective with regards to investments. I remember Don Campbell of Real Estate Investment Network in Canada who speaks about the real estate four seasons: winter, spring, summer, and fall. In winter, it is the time to study up, learn about the fundamentals, and take the time to prepare for the springtime ahead to seed and purchase investments. Since I am planning to make purchases in the US, I am taking the time to learn about the markets I am interested in, creating a plan and eventually getting the team set up. At that point, I will have a solid system in place which will be ready for some great investments!

Happiness: Living in Abundance

In the last little while I have been working on a very difficult assignment. There is only one question in the assignment, and it is, "What makes me happy?"

Perhaps the question sounds very simple, yet I have not found it easy to answer. I have purchased many toys and things which I thought would bring me happiness. I have many friends in my life with whom I have shared many happy moments. I have enjoyed many successes which I thought would fulfill my life. Yet, with all those, there is an emptiness that is growing larger inside.

I received a great story in my email inbox about the key to happiness. We often hear people say things like these:

- "I am very unhappy because my husband is often traveling for business and not home."
- "My kids won't listen to me, and it makes me very angry!"
- "The service at the restaurant was awful, it makes me so mad!"

In all the instances, they are giving away their key to happiness to someone else. When we allow others to take control of our emotions, we become a victim and lose control in ourselves. The symptom of that is complaint and frustration.

If I were to hold on to my key to happiness, I do not expect others to make me happy, and in that instant, I actually bring happiness to people around me! Emotionally I am taking responsibility for myself, and spending time with me would be an enjoyment and not stressful.

I had a great chat with my psychologist about happiness as a state of being. When we take full responsibility for ourselves, we have a choice to be happy, rather than allowing external elements to dictate our mood. Are there places in your life where you are not happy because you are giving your power away? Are you willing to take responsibility for them?

I want to leave with an affirmation that my psychologist gifted to me:

I am open to receive all that is good and beautiful."