

Recession-proof Your Well-being

Everyday I witness indicators of global economic and political disarray. Images of empty storefronts, abandoned homes and war-torn families flash across my mind. Is this my imagination gone wild, or reality? Common sense tells me neither to dwell on the graphic details of collapse and misfortune, nor to resist the reality of what's going on.

Snippets of information register in my awareness – from the \$819 billion stimulus package under discussion in the US Legislature to a passing comment from a client that another neighbor lost their job and the local hardware store is closing. For a moment, I am present to concern for my future. My personal safety feels threatened, if only by intangible forces. Fear moves through my body and settles into an emptiness just beyond my reach.

How can we respond powerfully to this deluge of negative news? It is important to take conscious steps to reverse the impact of negative ideas and emotions on our health, especially in the midst of collapse and reorganization on such a large scale.

Physical and emotional health and healing is our birthright and it's up to us to cultivate that possibility. Like any meaningful endeavor, creating health and well-being requires focus, attention and conscious action.

Five Actions to Recession-proof Your Health

#1 Ask new questions.

Open up group discussions and inquiries that shed light on what works for all. What gives us comfort and good health as human beings? What inspires wellness, well-being, goodwill? What allows us to reconnect to the experience of comfort, well-being, and happiness when disappointed, sad or frightened?

Pay attention to what you do, say, think and feel when you create comfort, pleasure and happiness for yourself and others. In contrast, observe what has you contract, withhold or withdraw from others. Find out where are you attached to having things your way. Remember, the price you pay for an attachment to “being right” or “in control” impacts your health directly and the well-being of those around you.

#2 Move! Engage your bodymind in physical activity.

Daily exercise helps keep things moving – thoughts and feelings, as well as nutrients and waste material. Fresh air clears the mind and inspires new actions and behavior. The bodymind responds to gentle, rhythmic movement of the joints and muscles. Moving makes you feel better and brings attention to areas of hidden tension and unconscious stress.

Music serves many functions, not the least of which is a gentle reminder that our perceptions change, images shift and circumstances flow from one to another unless we get in the way and actively block the natural flow.

#3 Bookmark internal shifts.

Cultivate awareness and self-reflection. The moment you notice an internal shift, *bookmark it* for self-reflection. Ask yourself what happened just before you felt the shoulder pain, or became aware of that queasy feeling in your stomach. Notice what happens that allows you to relax, feel at ease, or get comfortable. Is it a thought, a feeling, a fleeting image? Notice how your thoughts and feelings show up in your body.

You may discover that you have more access to physical sensations than your emotions, or vice versa. Be curious about your inner world. The body doesn't lie. When given the opportunity, your body provides information that is uniquely appropriate for you and your process of self-discovery.

Well-being results when we bring non-judging awareness to our physical and emotional experience, such that we are open to receive and attend to the flow of underlying thoughts and feelings as needed.

#4 Practice the language of acknowledgement.

Shine a light on your conversations. What do you actually say? What are you creating with your words? Learn to inspire health and well-being with acknowledgement and appreciation. When you acknowledge and appreciate something in another, you are exercising the capacity in you that responds to acknowledgment and appreciation.

In contract, allow yourself to feel the impact of gossip, complaint or criticism whether you are the source or recipient of those negative conversations. How does it feel in your body? What happens when you disengage from conversations that elicit negative thoughts and feelings? Consider that you can redirect any conversation to create the possibility of well-being.

#5 Create a well-being challenge.

Take a few moments and consider how you would like to be – today, this week or this month. Create a personal well-being challenge. See how others are inspired to join with you when you share what you are up to. Keep a journal to see what happens out of your commitment to healthful inquiry, self-reflection, movement and acknowledgement?

Share your successes with a friend or stranger. Make every result a win. Rather than exercising frustration, disappointment or stress when you fall short of your own expectations, go back to #1, ask new questions and open to inquiry. Ask what you can learn from your experience. What you can learn in this moment that has you feel good. Know that you always have this choice.

*Pamela Seawell
Rosen Method Bodywork Practitioner
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