

Taking The Control Back & Staying Positive During 2009

So here we go. The start of a New Year has come and gone and 2009 is well underway. After all the festivities, partying and resolutions what has 2009 got in store for us?

If you listen to the news, national TV and the newspapers, the world seems to be in a complete melt down: from financial credit crunch and recession, to wars raging in various parts of the world.

What does the next year have in store for me? What can I do to make sure that amongst all the negative messages that I am being bombarded with, I find the

positives and also the solution to make sure I get through this negativity and stick to my resolutions and plans for 2009.

EN Magazine asked Life Coach Charlotta Hughes for advice on staying positive in 2009.

The important thing to remember is that we have much greater ability to control our own thoughts and resulting emotions than we often give ourselves credit for. Undoubtedly bad things are happening; there is little point in denying this. Some of us are affected personally. Equally, many of us are not. Even if we are personally

affected by redundancy or reduced interest rates, does this really negate all the good things we have in our lives? Acknowledging what is tough, and how we need to change our lives accordingly, does not have to equal the end of our happiness, aspirations or enjoyment in life.

We all have a tendency to fill in the gaps and over dramatise in ambiguous situations. Certainly there is a lot of unknown around us today, encouraging negative and destructive thinking. When we feel fear and anger, our fight or flight response is triggered in our brains by the amygdala. This reduces our ability for rational thinking and to keep a healthy perspective on things. Quite helpful if you're chased by a lion, however when the perceived threat is created by headlines in the news, it's not necessarily so helpful. After all, propaganda is created with one purpose in mind – to sell more papers, gain more viewers.... This does not necessarily equal the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth.

The unknown is uncomfortable because we have no control over it. So how do we take the feeling of control back? The trick is to shift our attention to the things that are in our control. Research has shown that the biggest happiness predictor in our lives is the quality of our relationships. In a material world this can get lost in the pursuit of success measured in terms of money and career. Is this our opportunity to shift the focus back to the things that really make us happy and is in our control? By measuring success less by materialism and more by the quality of our relationships, we're taking the control back and give ourselves the power to stay happy and proud of ourselves and our lives.

Remember that you have choices – both in terms of what you listen to - does it help you watching the news before going to bed?; your thoughts - we control our self talk, not the other way around as often assumed; how we interpret situations - does the fact that M&S are making redundancies really mean the whole retail market will go under? And what we focus on - placing our spotlight on the positives in our lives doesn't mean we have to forget the negative events. We simply pay more attention to what makes us feel good rather than sad. If we're not kind to ourselves, who will be?

For more information on staying positive in 2009 visit Charlotta's website www.bemelife coaching.com

So once you have dealt with the negativity and are feeling positive how do we make sure that we stick with the plans and resolutions that we made for 2009. From finding a new job, reducing the credit card bills to losing weight and getting fit.

Charlotta Hughes is a professional qualified Life Coach has an MA in Human Resources Management and is a Member of the Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development.

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