

How to Expand in a Time of Contraction

Jon Burras

We hear media reports every day about the worsening economy. The stock market continues to remain unstable, jobs are being eliminated by the thousands, people are losing their homes and there is uncertainty in every corner. Many people remain frozen in fear. They are afraid to let go and afraid to move forward. All they can think about is doom and gloom.

Times of change are often uncertain times. When we are accustomed to a certain way of life and our lifestyle begins to unravel before our eyes we often do not know how to adapt to the new rules that are governing the game. We become stuck in our **Fight or Flight Response** to fear. We feel paralyzed and at odds with whatever might come next.

Chaos is a time of reorganization. Through chaos we have the opportunity to rearrange all the parts of the puzzle. We can start over if we wish or throw out what no longer works and try something new. Chaos can be a remarkable time to expand even though everything around you might seem like it is contracting.

How you adapt to change will determine how you come out on the other side. When you remain gripping at what is familiar you hold on tightly and wait for things to normalize. This may take a while and you might have to pay a big price for such holding on. However, when you can let go of the paddles and begin to flow downstream with the upheaval, there is a greater chance you will come out the other side in a much better place. Nothing is forever.

The following are some suggestions on ways to weather stormy times.

1. Keep Spending Money

Do not hold on tightly to every last cent. This will only create more fear around money. However, you might wish to reevaluate how you spend money. Instead of buying yourself a new pair of \$100 shoes that you might not even need, buy that \$7 ball point pen that you have had your eye on for awhile. You will still feel free for having purchased something without the fear and guilt of having over-spent.

2. Nurture Yourself.

Times of chaos are often times of holding on. Practice letting go by giving yourself some of your favorite treats. Instead of spending thousands of dollars on a three day escape, spend \$100 on a massage. You will still feel like you took care of yourself without having to break the bank.

3. Build Communities

Nobody likes to be alone, especially in a time of crisis. Come out of your shell and build friendships and communities. Call an old friend whom you haven't heard from in awhile and meet for lunch. Correspond with others and build a network of hope and optimism.

4. Send Money

We all like to receive money. What better way to feel abundant in a time of financial instability than to send someone a small token of money, perhaps \$20, \$10, or even \$5. Bestow on others what you would like to receive yourself. Become a model of inspiration and not one of despair.

5. Start a Mastermind Group

Start a group that is dedicated to transformation and hope. You will find it more inspirational to surround yourself with others who are willing to let go of the oars and float downstream than to be around those who are fighting change. You might be surprised by who is willing to become a member of your group.

6. Take a Yoga Class or Buy a Yoga Cd.

Find an outlet that you enjoy participating in. What better way to continue to expand than to enjoy a yoga class or practice at home with your own DVD or CD. Stress will contract the body. Expansive practices like yoga will keep your body and spirit open as you move through times of transition.

7. Watch a Sunset

Being out in nature is very cost-effective and one of the greatest shows on earth. Learn to appreciate some of nature's natural wonders rather than relying on high-priced technology for your entertainment. Before electricity and consumer goods people enjoyed the magnificent show that nature could provide—and it is still free.

8. Stop Blaming

When you remain in a place of finger pointing you solve nothing. Blame is a game that wishes to dump your feeling onto others. Change this reference point by focusing on going forward and remove yourself from blaming others. Blame is about going backwards.

9. Help Someone in Crisis

There are many people who have come upon hard times right now. Because of pride and perhaps embarrassment, many people often have a difficult time asking for help. Pay attention to someone you might know who seems to be faced with some difficult choices. Offer to help out where you can. Show them that they are not alone in this time of change and that people do care about what is happening.

10. Practice Gratitude

We have so much to be grateful for. We are living in the most amazing of times where anything is possible. Instead of focusing on how bad things are begin to focus on something that is going well. Begin to see your glass as half-full rather than half-empty. That will make all the difference.

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