

Mindful Adventures

A Vision of Hope

by Donna Mantone-Adinolfi

After a week of working long hours and only leaving my home office for a few hours to attend a committee meeting for Party in Paradise, a local American Diabetes Association event, I was experiencing a case of cabin fever! So, this afternoon I set out to visit my local Starbucks for a change of scenery, and more specifically, to surround myself with human contact (and a soy latte). And, here I am and this is what I find so interesting and what I continue to find uplifting despite our current economic atmosphere: There are people, a lot of people and as one walks out with their favorite drink in hand, another one or two walk in with cash in hand for their favorite hot potion. And, ironically enough, I'm sitting here reading a New York Times article (*Outsourced Chores Come Back Home*) discussing how consumers are taking on some of the tasks that they used to pay for, such as brewing an espresso at home. It goes on to report that many of us are cooking more at home, coloring or cutting our own hair, grooming our own pets and working on our own cars. Well, the question that comes to mind is this: is this out of fear, guilt or because we really want to take on more tasks despite an already hectic work/life schedule?

From the experience I'm having at my local Starbucks (Chesapeake, VA by the way), this isn't unique as I escape to this location when I get cabin fever and it's busy like this most of the time; so the other question is: who is making their own lattes and is it a few or the masses?

We can agree that small businesses, namely service-oriented, are affected by our current economy as we cut back, however we're Americans and we're resilient and although it's wise to make cuts to sustain ourselves, it's also vital to employ the services of those that have been available to our needs and not turn our heads on them now. After all, 'they' could be us and yes, that is the case here and amongst some of the small businesses that I continue to support. For instance, consider that coloring your own hair may be harsh to your scalp/hair and not last as long if not done correctly. Perhaps grooming your own pet leads to hurting a paw or not taking care of all of their needs for good pet health. What did the latte machine cost to make those special drinks at home and isn't one of the reasons for going out for a cup of coffee for the experience and time away to perhaps reconnect with a friend or co-worker or for a little alone time to reflect and unwind, even if only for a short amount of time? Cooking more at home is great and something to consider even in the best of times as it's good for your health (since you control what goes in the meal) and it supports bringing families together, however making the right choices while out to dinner with family and friends fulfills that very same need and can be just as cost-effective. Travel is another area that has been affected by our current economic atmosphere and while travel buying habits have changed, people are traveling. Travel and tourism is one of our nation's greatest resources for jobs and economic growth and support is vital as we encourage more overseas visitors to the United States.

*...to restore prosperity
and promote the cause
of peace...*

- Barack Obama

Now is the time to re-connect and stand by each other. After all, we are Americans and small business leaders helped create our country and we must never, ever give up. Now is the time to sow our seeds and have faith that what we are planting and creating now will flourish and we will once again be prosperous. The sooner we live from purpose and focus on what we can do today to create a better tomorrow, the better off all of us will be.

This is an exciting time, it's a 'do over' for many of us and when we can find our way to embrace that - imagine the possibilities. This isn't about politics. It is about believing in the power of people and the belief that we can rise above, just as a phoenix rises from the ashes.

As Barack Obama said in his speech on November 4th, "This is our time, to put our people back to work and open doors of opportunity for our kids; to restore prosperity and promote the cause of peace; to reclaim the American dream and reaffirm that fundamental truth, that, out of many, we are one; that while we breathe, we hope. And where we are met with cynicism and doubts and those who tell us that we can't, we will respond with that timeless creed that sums up the spirit of a people: Yes, we can."

"The future belongs to those who believe in the beauty of their dreams."

- Eleanor Roosevelt

This is not to be confused with a 'Pollyanna' viewpoint as it is written with the intention of standing together and realizing that there is positive news out there. There are stories of business growth and successes despite the daily news of company closings and low profit margins and when we choose to read more of the positive news we can all be inspired to get up in the morning and face the day with purpose and a knowing that it is getting a little better each day.

As Eleanor Roosevelt said so many years ago, "The future belongs to those who believe in the beauty of their dreams." What is your dream and do you believe in it and yourself?

Bio: Donna M. Mantone-Adinolfi is a freelance writer, photographer and the travel editor for Balance Magazine. She also writes a column called Dear Donna, focused on travel, spa and healthy living and publishes an online resource for travel and healthy living at www.mindfuladventures.com. She can be reached at donna@mindfuladventures.com.