

THE SAVING GRACE OF OPPORTUNITY

by Kimberlie Dykeman, featuring excerpts from
Pure Soapbox ...a cleansing jolt of perspective, motivation, and humor

"In the middle of difficulty, lies opportunity." - Albert Einstein

Change and her relentless rhythm unashamedly convicts and connects us as we stand in awe of the bombardment of negative events and controversial situations that the past year has delivered, from the failing markets, school systems, and health care initiatives to the additional violence throughout America and the unresolved war in Iraq. You name it and it's more than just front page worthy. And as the media cumulatively frightens the bejeezus out of us, many of us find ourselves still fearing that the worst has yet to come down on us.

Needless to say, you know what *difficulty* looks like. You've survived it, swallowed it, sweated it out, and stared it down, no doubt with knees knocking. In the grayness of a stagnant middle management of your own life, you might stand over-stuffed with ideas you can't propose without consent, over-shadowed by issues you can't solve without support. Physically and financially, socially and psychologically, your personal balance sheet may appear already nuked.

That said, how do you then define *opportunity*? And how will you recognize it when it comes knocking? Some folks may meekly fixate on the four surrounding walls of their existence, so that opportunity couldn't present itself even if it could scale their fortresses. Truthfully, I find it absolutely amusing how, as creatures of habit, these nervous Nellie's spin intricately protective webs around their worlds. They find pseudo-sanctuary within their little palaces, purposefully avoiding upset within their shielded strategy and toiling their butts off without a real *why*. The old adage, *if it ain't broke, don't fix it*, surely comes to mind. Those same folks who blindly believe their ample supplies of "everything-I-need-to-survive snack packs" will last forever... are certain to fall hardest when life pitches another curve ball or two. Case in point: look around.

On the other hand, those players who are prepared to tread these unruly waters, dig in and discipline themselves, tap their brains, and ask for help... will attain resolution through adaptation, inevitable enlightenment, and life-saving achievements in survival. Success in the face of diversity becomes a metaphoric picture of hanging on while others simply let go. These folks are pouring Gloria Gaynor lyrics on their Wheaties, humming "I will survive", pinching pennies 'til they scream, strategizing change, and studying up on anything and everything that's alternative...to going down with the ship!

"Necessity is the mother of invention." - some brilliant fool

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Regardless of which hat you are admittedly wearing, **you will indeed** change or be changed when sufficiently disturbed. So WHAT IF necessity and opportunity were one and the very same, right here, right now? Just analyzing that question might shift your worried thoughts into productive ones. Consider what needs you might fill when jumping on the chance to *jump ship* and leave for another career path? How's that dull dependency been serving you anyway? Love the company but hate your position? What about entertaining a shift to a whole different division within your employer? You never know if you don't ask, and an expression of valuing your collective interdependence will display your confidence and rare loyalty. Then there's the whole other world of independence! Is it time to start your own gig and divorce Corporate America altogether? What can you provide that seamlessly links people and encourages interactivity? Got something you can produce that rids folks of the problems spawned from our break-neck speed society? Perhaps addressing others' needs is your very own saving grace.

Net-net: Take it from a man who never threw in the towel. General Douglas MacArthur affirmed, "There is no security on this earth; there is only opportunity." And so, my friends, ponder the thought that you may very well sit better off, having stood at attention during this time of difficulty. With an enlivened perspective of the here and now and an appreciation of a gamut of clearer choices to re-boot a once-collapsed tower of achievements, you need only put one foot in front of the other. Build a trust in both yourself and the world that surrounds, acknowledging that the media fat pipe can only report in the past tense. Choose to create your own headlines and fill the pages with the glorious future only you can believe into being.

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