

## *Coping with Job Loss and Uncertainty (Part 1: Gathering strength)*

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April 2009

In these economic times uncertainty and loss of jobs can create anxiety and /or depression in many of us who normally cope well with the stressors of life. While you may not have had a choice in leaving your job or taking a reduction in pay, there are some areas that you can control. It is important to gather strength, reassess your situation, make a plan to move forward, and sustain the enthusiasm to implement your plan.

This article (part 1 of 4) reviews strategies for reassessment and gathering strength through relaxation/meditation. Recognize that strategies may work differently for every person and each time for the same person. Try the different strategies, adapt them to fit your style and interests, and use them even when you feel calm to train yourself in relaxation.

### **Benefits of relaxation include:**

- ◆ accessing feelings of relaxation easier during times of stress
- ◆ responding to events with decreased stress and anxiety
- ◆ thinking clearer
- ◆ accessing insights
- ◆ reassessing your situation
- ◆ increasing productivity.

**Strategies for relaxation/meditation include:**

*Use deep breathing ( natural breathing/ bellows breathing):* This allows the diaphragm to drop (creating a vacuum in the lungs) and pushes the belly area out during inhalation. It may help to learn this lying down with your hands on your abdomen. Imagine filling your lungs from the bottom up and the abdomen expanding. On exhalation, the abdomen relaxes. Try this for 10 breaths, try it for 10 minutes. Daily practice is most effective.

*Use a word/breath meditation:* Choose any two words that have special meaning for you (example: love and peace). As you breathe in, mentally repeat the first word, exhale and mentally repeat the second word.

*Practice meditative movement:* Yoga, tai chi, chi gong are all excellent methods of becoming more focused, self-aware, and instill a sense of well-being. Look for classes, books, or DVD's to help learn these practices.

These strategies can be effective even when used only a few minutes a day. It is always better to do a little than not at all. Happy relaxing.

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