

2009- The Year of Transformation September 2009

For many years we have been saying "there's got to be a better way". But most of us didn't think it out any further than that. We didn't realize that for this better way to take place, the old way had to disappear - or fall apart -or somehow dramatically change. And now that it appears to be happening, many of us are having second thoughts. It's like the conundrum of everyone wants to go to heaven, but no one wants to die. Everyone wants to see a better world, but no one wants to see the old one fall apart.

Deep down, we all know that the institutions that are faltering are doing so because they were cracked and broken. Yet, suddenly, there seems to be this desperate need to save them, find some kind of a band-aid that will hold them together, because the thought of losing what we have is scary. But what if, instead of going into fear, we begin visioning the world we really want to see!

None of us truly knows where this economy is going. Economists, historians, visionaries and prophets have all given us their thoughts and predictions, but the truth is: NO ONE KNOWS FOR SURE and that's what's making us uneasy! Yet, when you really think about it, there have never been a lot of 'for sures' in our lives. The future has always been a mystery. Tomorrow you could get in a serious car accident or you could win the lotto and each would produce a dramatically different day. I would like to suggest that our greatest security isn't money or institutions or 'knowing', but rather it's our ability to change and adapt.

In October when the stock market began to tumble, I received many emails referencing "The Dow" of course referring to the plummeting Dow Jones Average, and an interesting thought popped into my mind: How strange? Even though they are spelt differently 'The Dow' and 'The Tao' are pronounced the same. It was a lightbulb moment for me. It was the recognition that most of us have spent a lifetime putting most of our focus on 'The Dow', which represents the rich, material world, and now all we had to do was shift our focus to 'The Tao', which represents the rich, inner spiritual world. Sounds simple, but exactly how do we do that? Hmmm!

Think of all the time you spend on your body - feeding it, clothing it, entertaining it, grooming it, providing a comfortable environment, etc - then think of how much time you devote to your spirit. When you're connecting to your spirit, you feel inner peace or joy, and I'm guessing by the emotional state of our society that most of us are not connecting very often. Good time for a change!

Some of the ways to connect to your spirit and find inner peace is through nature, music, helping others or creating in any form whether it's cooking, gardening, wood-carving, etc., or connecting could be as simple as being aware that there is this wiser part of yourself and reaching out to it. Social reform begins with individual inner reform. If we expect our leaders to set their hearts right, we must first set our hearts right. Letting go of the old way of being and thinking is the beginning process of making room for the new. The old way of thinking is what got us to this place. In order to find our way out, we have to make a shift in how we look at things. We have to all become visionaries. I know that sometimes it's difficult to see any good coming out of what's happening to our economy, but I want to remind you that there is nothing in the caterpillar that even remotely suggests a butterfly. In fact the caterpillar literally becomes mush in the cocoon before the transformation takes place. Perhaps this economic mush is the beginning of our transformation. The thing I loved about our recent elections, was that everyone got involved. We actually turned off our televisions and made calls and knocked on doors. We talked about it in offices and on street corners. Well, that was just the beginning. Our work is not done. In order to keep this transformation going we have to stay connected. And that is the magical phrase: Staying Connected. We can't abdicate our power to politicians or institutions. We need to tell them what we want. They need to be our servants, not our masters. In order to do that we must become our own lobbyists and pay attention to what they're doing. At the same time we need to continue the process of transforming ourselves. There is a better way. Let's find it! Together, united, I believe we can turn this economic mush into an extraordinarily beautiful butterfly. Will it be easy, probably not, but we could make it joyful. As we grasp the hands of our fellow human beings and work together towards a common goal, we could find the true richness of this earthly experience.

Dare to believe that mankind has the capabilities for a greater purpose.

Please feel free to pass this message on and to visit Barbara's website at www.barbarapercival.com for information on her books.