

## **Empowerment in recession: get the message and thrive**

by Olga Sheean

Does your spine tingle with dread when the post arrives? Is your credit card red-hot from constant use? Do you have nightmares about queuing for the dole? If the current economic crisis has fanned your financial fears into full-blown panic, then it's time to take a look at what's really going on.

In a crisis like this, we blame the banks, bad investments and dodgy government. We feel powerless, angry and resentful about what's been done to us, beyond our control. But what we don't realise is that the real culprit lies much closer to home. It's buried deep inside each one of us and it's causing us to attract very specific challenges, with a very particular purpose in mind. It determines how much money, success and fulfillment we have in life and it operates completely under cover, without our knowledge or permission. If you want to resolve your money issues, once and for all, you must go and find this part of yourself and have a serious talk with it.

Your subconscious is the part of you that you're least likely to meet, without a formal introduction, and yet most *need* to meet because it's running your life. While it's the last place you'd think of looking for a solution to your financial problems, it's the source of every conflict, challenge and crisis you've ever faced. Confronting it and understanding how it works could be the most lucrative, life-changing thing you ever do.

### **The power of your programming**

While you were still in nappies, your subconscious was busy absorbing the negative beliefs, fears and insecurities of your parents, teachers and whatever religion you happened to be born into. This negative programming creates a deep-seated unworthiness that prevents us from being fully ourselves or from believing we can have what we want in life. Just how worthy or acceptable we subconsciously believe ourselves to be

determines our quality of life. It's not just in our heads; our subconscious literally causes us to attract very specific circumstances, in accordance with how it's been programmed.

Take Martin, for example. Married with three children, he recently lost his job as a software salesman. His wife, Terrie, has a part-time job but doesn't earn enough to support them all. Martin was angry and frustrated. "What did I do to deserve this?" he said. "I've been a dedicated employee for that company for 15 years and they'd no right to do this to me." Martin did nothing to deserve this—consciously, at least. Subconsciously, however, this crisis has been brewing inside him for years.

The dynamics in Martin's life provide the clues to what's been going on beneath the surface. He's overweight, with high cholesterol and high blood pressure. He spends all his time catering to his family or doing his boss's bidding, working long hours and often making last-minute trips across the country to make a sale. He never takes time for himself, rarely exercises, eats on the run and is constantly stressed.

Martin grew up in an abusive environment. His father was an alcoholic and his mother never had the backbone or self-esteem to stand up to the abuse. Martin learned that life was risky, you had to watch your back, and you had to work hard to stay out of harm's way. He was never praised at school and he never learned healthy self-acceptance or -respect. He was never taught to put himself first or to go for what he wanted. As a result, Martin never felt worthy of ease or success, and he acted accordingly—putting everyone's needs before his own, working too hard, juggling crises, etc. What he failed to realise was that his early negative programming was generating challenges designed to trigger his low self-worth so that, ideally, he could change his negative programming and, consequently, change his circumstances.

For Martin, this meant finding practical ways of building strong self-acceptance—the key to lasting prosperity and fulfillment. It meant putting himself first in healthy ways; taking time out to eat well and go to the gym; saying no to compromises, demands or anything that didn't feel good; having healthy boundaries with his wife and children and allowing

them to take more responsibility for themselves; expressing his opinions, sharing his feelings and generally starting to live life on his terms. By demonstrating greater self-acceptance and self-respect, Martin started to attract much more positive dynamics into his life. He's just had a promising job offer and his relationship with his wife and children has improved dramatically. Six months ago, he'd have scoffed at the idea that he could have caused his redundancy. Now, he sees the positive impact of changing his negative programming and he's beginning to understand that a part of him has been in charge all along; he just didn't know how it operated or what it was trying to tell him.

Money is a measure of how well we're operating as human beings. Whatever financial problems you have reflect the parts of your negative programming that are asking to be addressed. The economic crisis may look as if it's someone else's fault, but if you're personally affected by it, there's something you're being called upon to do—and no one else can do it for you.

Whether you've lost your job or lost money you'd invested, your circumstances reflect your particular 'missing pieces'. These are the essential formative qualities—such as acceptance, trust, respect, validation and support—that we need to experience as children in order to be whole, but often fail to learn because our parents had these same missing pieces themselves.

Our 'missing pieces' determine how we act, the choices we make, how successful we become, and how fulfilled and happy we are. They also cause us to hide certain parts of ourselves for fear of rejection, to suppress our individuality, to deny our value, to diminish our creativity and, most frustrating of all, to attract problems and crises that ultimately leave us feeling defeated and hopeless.

### **Finding the missing pieces of the puzzle ...and filling them in**

Identifying and decoding your subconscious programming can be a slippery process, since it's beyond your awareness. Transforming it can be daunting, too, because it means

challenging some of the beliefs that have shaped your life. But disregarding it generates dysfunctional relationships, struggle, conflict, debt, depression, ill-health, compromise and diminished potential, without you ever knowing why. At the very least, you will fail to be personally fulfilled in your life.

We all have three or four main ‘missing pieces’ and our circumstances are usually the only way that we discover what they are, or that we are incomplete in some way. When we identify and fill in our missing pieces, we can break out of self-defeating cycles and turn our lives around.

Identifying and filling in your missing pieces is the key to having the financial abundance and security that you want. The more you fill them in, the more complete you’ll be and the more you’ll experience these same qualities in your life.

To identify your missing pieces, ask yourself these questions:

**1. What qualities have been missing for you in your relationships?** Your answer might be acceptance, support, trust, honesty, communication, commitment, intimacy or any other form of human interaction that’s an expression of love. When you identify what’s been missing (even if it looks as if it’s your partner’s ‘fault’), you will have identified your own missing pieces.

**2. How have you been perpetuating these missing pieces yourself?** If acceptance is a missing piece, for example, ask yourself if you’ve been putting others’ needs first, making compromises that don’t feel good, holding back a part of yourself from your partner or friends, or putting yourself down, deflecting compliments, not allowing others to give to you or rejecting yourself in some way. All these behaviours demonstrate a lack of self-acceptance, perpetuating a pattern of self-rejection that’s guaranteed to bring you precisely what you don’t want.

Filling in your missing pieces means doing the opposite of what you've been doing all along. It means putting yourself first in healthy ways, making choices that feel right to you, saying no to whatever doesn't work for you, daring to express yourself even if others might not approve, and generally being you as much as you can so that you become more complete as a person. When you do that, you attract the fullness of life you've been wanting all along.

So don't wait for the government to fix things. Take charge where it counts—in you, for you. Only when you transform the negative parts of your programming can you fully master your finances and your life.

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