

October 21, 2009

'It's all bad' (No, it isn't)

Yesterday evening, I sat in a **Jiffy Lube** waiting room while my car was undergoing an emissions test—a requirement for tag renewal. A small, very old-school, rabbit-eared TV tuned to a local news station stood in the corner. As I attempted to wile away the time reading the latest but already well-worn issue of *People* magazine and catch up with the David Letterman situation, a fellow waiting room occupant began to talk to me about what was happening on TV. She laughed and said, "My husband keeps telling me to stop watching the news. It's all bad."

Throughout the years, I've heard this advice from several people, most memorably, an individual who taught courses at **Rock Valley College, Rockford, Ill.**, in the early 90s about the mind-body connection. Myrna (not her real name, but close) said we should never watch the news, or read the newspaper; it isn't healthy.

Myrna based her classes on the work of **Joan Borysenko**, who wrote *Minding the Body, Mending the Mind*. I don't recall Borysenko saying we should avoid the news, but I do remember Myrna's admonition and how I felt about it. How could *wenot* watch the news and stay informed? Knowledge is power. If you aren't aware of problems, how can you change them?

Looking back, I may have been somewhat naïve and a tad bit idealistic, thinking that I could really change anything—other than my own behavior, which can be a lifelong struggle in itself. Somewhere along the way, I've become less idealistic. I've seen too much bad history repeat itself; too little really positive action by our leaders and too many Band-Aids placed on gaping wounds; too much greed and not enough humanity; too much CYA and not enough supporting others' ... I think you get the picture, although you may not see it in the same light.

At this particular time in our nation's history, we are struggling with some very tough issues. I hope with every ounce of my being that *the powers that be* know what they are doing and are able to take the steps necessary, not only to get us out of this mess, but to keep it from happening again.

Coming down from the soapbox, I wish I had said to my Jiffy Lube companion what my husband said to me when I told him about our conversation: "The good news is there; you just don't hear about it." He's reminded me of this on more than one occasion, and he's right. Accordingly, I believe every news cast should follow the format of this article from the Atlanta Journal-Constitution: **Georgia economy could be slower to recover**.

You know right from the get-go that this news story can't be great news. What follows the headline is an accounting of where Georgia stands based on various economic markers, including the facts that manufacturing is down 13.7 percent in the past year, down 17.5 percent since Dec. 2007, and 74,500 manufacturing jobs have been lost.

Wages dropped 2.8 percent in the past year. The state's foreclosure rate was the 6th highest in the nation for the first half of this year.

What I like about the article and what I think should become common news practice is that it left the reader with good news: **NCR Corp.** will have added 2,210 jobs in the state by December 2009. **Mitsubishi** will add 500 jobs in March 2010, and **Kia Motors** will have added 1,200 by next December. The **College Football Hall of Fame** is moving to Atlanta and adding 100 jobs by September 2012.

These are only a few of the good-news items, and individually, they might seem like drops in the bucket toward replacing the many jobs that have been lost and improving the state's overall economy, *but*—and that's a but bigger than Bertha Butt's, as **Marty Rice** would say—they are positive, much-welcomed news.

And guess what, I haven't gone completely over to the dark side. I still believe that as individuals, we can make positive differences, beginning in our own homes, backyards, and communities—differences that can snowball and lead to positive change. Our country was founded on grassroots initiatives that gathered steam.

I think I'll skip the news this weekend and watch my **John Adams** and **Pay It Forward** DVDs—very inspiring.

If you want to inspire a blog post, **talk to me**.

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Posted At : 10:39 AM. | Posted By : Vicki Bell