

March 2009

***“If we had no winter, the spring would not be so pleasant; if we did not sometimes taste of adversity, prosperity would not be so welcome.”***

❖ **Anne Bradstreet, American poet (1612-1672)**

### Are You Wasting the Recession?



In their latest newsletter, Bill Catlette and Richard Hadden, [the guys](#) who brought us *Contented Cows Give Better Milk*, advised not to waste the recession. They cite ComPsych Corporation’s latest survey about how Americans are losing sleep, becoming grumpier and less productive because of the recession and financial woes.

“While this may sound a little counter-intuitive, one really good way to mitigate the stress in your own life is to find something new to put your energy into,” writes Catlette. “Sometimes, that something new can take the form of a person or cause that is greater than yourself, or just a new habit or activity.” Some of the pair’s suggestions include:

- Teach fiscal responsibility to children.
- Reacquaint yourself with your stove by cooking up healthy and fun food.
- Reach out to a struggling neighbor, a friend who has lost their job, and an elderly person who may need help. “That’s what neighbors are for,” writes Catlette.
- Spend time getting in better shape instead of letting financial worries drag you down. They point out exercise improves sleep and could reduce those sleepless nights.
- Spend time focusing on similar efforts at work. Catlette points out, “it is good for business because people who are consumed by worry aren’t moving very fast, generating many ideas, or serving customers well.”

There are other things we can do to ease our stress during this time.

- Eat lunch – even if it’s for 15 minutes. No matter how busy you are, you should take the time to eat lunch. Do nothing but eat lunch and focus on your food. You need to have a break during the day. Skipping meals is not healthy and conducive to a happy person. Personally, I don’t like to work with people who don’t eat. They’re too grouchy.
- Limit how much news you watch or read particularly before going to bed. Watch something funny or read a book before retiring.
- Clear out the clutter. You can sell your unwanted items on e-Bay, Amazon.com, Craig’s List, and etsy.com. Make some dough and clear out the stuff. If selling doesn’t interest you, make a detailed list of your items and donate them to a worthy charity. You can deduct your donations on next year’s taxes using the It’s Deductible feature on Turbo Tax.
- Do something nice for yourself. Doing yourself a kindness doesn’t have to cost anything – take a walk, read a book, take a long bubble bath. During times of high stress, it’s important to take care of yourself.

**Need more inspiration?** Leo Babuta of [ZenHabits.net](http://ZenHabits.net) has a free *Handbook for Life: 52 Tips for Happiness and Productivity* among his many articles and posts. This gem is a great pick-me-up and offers suggestions, such as rising early, doing less, simplifying your life and finances, savoring the little things, and practicing patience and compassion. One of the great things about Leo is that he's been there. He's paid off credit card debt, lost weight, and been disorganized. As a father of six living in Guam, he blogs freely about how he and his wife purposely simplified their lives to follow their passions. The handbook is worth a read.

### **Saving Money**

Right now, you can't turn on the TV or open a magazine without someone giving you some tips to save or manage money. Okay, so I'm no exception. Here are a few sites to check out.

- [Mint.com](http://Mint.com) offers a service to sync your banking and credit card accounts, and you will have a current snapshot to better manage your finances. The site also features a blog with tips and information, will help you shop for a new credit card, and tell you how you're spending your money. If you have trouble figuring out a budget, this is the site for you.
- Visit [my blog](#) for an entry on spending less on grocery shopping. We all want to save some green on our greens.
- One of my favorite websites on money is [Money Central at MSN](#). They have calculators and articles filled with great advice. Financial gurus Dave Ramsey and Suze Orman have self-named websites as well.

### **Cool Product**

This bamboo magnetic file [storage box](#) can be placed on your refrigerator to hold all those take-out menus, coupons, or school calendars. Or you can use it on the side of a file cabinet for extra storage. The box can hold up to 50 pounds so you could use it for small telephone books or file folders.

**Got Clutter?** I have developed 15 minute, 30 minute and 45 minute presentations on organizing, time management, and productivity. Moving to a new building? I also have a 30-minute presentation on preparing for a move for your department. I also do one-on-one sessions in your office and help you come up with a solution to your organizing problems. To schedule a presentation or a one-on-one appointment, call 713-792-8061 or email [jsimon@mdanderson.org](mailto:jsimon@mdanderson.org). **For past newsletters, click [here](#).** *Follow me on Twitter! Look up JaniceSimon. For Facebook, look for Janice M. Simon.*

***Happy Organizing!***

***Janice***