

## The politics of fear

One of the unique features of the recession is the role played by confidence or rather the lack of it. In a society that is more interconnected than ever before, fear has sent consumers, businesses, and the stock market into retreat mode. Fear mongers are fueling our paranoia and have a hidden agenda which is all about them. It is not just politicians who are pushing the fear button. Advertisers, businessmen, and even



broadcasters are resorting to fear to sell products, promote a cause, or tell a story. Fear limits our thinking, undermines our self confidence, and even worse, instills fear in our children! Restoring confidence in the economy is about restoring confidence in the democratic process and our ability to affect change. We can't just muddle through this crisis; we need to have the courage to deal with the real issues. So, what will reduce our fears about the current economic situation?

1. Signs that the recession has bottomed and recovery is underway (i.e. the stock market rebounding, houses and cars beginning to sell).
2. Knowledge that despite a few bumps in the road, in 6-8 months after the stock market rebounds, employment will rebound as recovery kicks into high gear.
3. Government cleaning up the mortgage, auto, and banking industries.
4. Seeing consequences for individuals or organizations who hamper economic recovery or abuse taxpayer bailouts (i.e. AIG and the million \$ bonuses).
5. Being more analytical about information, its source, motivation, and goals.
6. Speaking out positively about the recovery and our ability to refocus the library back onto the community we serve.

More importantly, what will restore our personal confidence?

1. Moving ahead with positive actions like running in the Race for the Cure; making that family scrapbook or fostering a puppy mill dog.
2. Reaching out and helping the community you live in. Helping others will help you rebuild your personal confidence (i.e. work on a library referendum).
3. Modeling what you believe and standing up for libraries at every opportunity whether at church, in the grocery store, and of course with your friends and family. I am always amused when I hear my husband explain to friends exactly why interlibrary loan is such a great bang for the taxpayers' buck!!
4. Feeding your inquisitive nature. Listen, read, and ask questions. The more informed you are, the more confident you will be about leading your library and your family through this recovery.

Don't let the politics of fear govern your life or that of your library. Turn off the negative voice in your head and "accentuate the positive, eliminate the negative, latch on to the affirmative." You know the rest of the song!!!

Happy National Library Week, It's all up hill from here!

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