

## The Oil Drum: Campfire

### Discussions about Energy and Our Future

#### Making the Best of Our Situation Now

Posted by [Gail the Actuary](#) on February 14, 2010 - 10:55am in [The Oil Drum: Campfire](#)

Topic: [Sociology/Psychology](#)

Most of us think our situation 10, 20 or 50 years from now will not be as good as today, in one or more ways--less oil, reduced wealth in general, and the possibility of many other negative changes as well--loss of electricity; rapid population decline; and perhaps climate change.

My question is, "**How can we keep ourselves from feeling discouraged, even though we strongly suspect our future situation will not be as good as today?**" Below the fold, I give a few ideas.

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#### **1. Count your blessings.**

No matter how badly things are going, there are always some things that are going well. I have heard that some Jewish people give thanks for each body part that is working in their prayers each day. We can be thankful for the sunshine, and fresh air, and the birds flying by. We can be thankful for our friends and family members. If we focus on the good, it leaves less room for our mind to dwell on the not-so-good.

#### **2. Spend time with family and friends.**

Anything seems worse, if you are going through it alone. Surround yourself with loved ones.

#### **3. Learn some cheerful, uplifting songs.**

If you sing regularly, you will often find songs running through your mind. Join a singing group, or attend church or temple and learn some hymns or other music. I am sure there is music you can download from the Internet too, and CDs you can buy. In some cultures, dancing is important, too.

#### **4. Keep yourself busy.**

Even if you don't have a job, find something worthwhile to do--studying something worthwhile, or helping someone in more need than yourself, or planting a garden, or attending a community planning meeting.

#### **5. Take care of your health.**

If you don't feel well, everything will seem much worse. To me, the big part of taking care of your health is proper diet, exercise, and avoiding substances which are harmful to your health. Getting proper dental care is probably helpful as well. Visiting health care providers may be necessary at times as well.

## **6. Focus as much as possible on the here and now.**

What happened yesterday, even if it is the loss of a family member, is past. We have less control over the future than we would like. But we do have at least some control over the here and now, and there are always likely to be at least a few things that are going right. Focus on those things. Leave worrying about what you should have done, or what might happen in the future, to someone else.

## **7. Join a church or other religious group.**

I am sure joining a religious group is not for everyone, but some may find it helpful. There are multiple benefits--a network of friends, some hope for help in facing current difficulties, and the possibility of hope for the future. Even if you don't believe in any possibility of an afterlife, you may find enough worthwhile in a church to justify joining. (I do recommend staying away from fundamentalist groups of any religion, however. Stick with more liberal groups that don't take their scriptures too literally.)

## **8. Get your priorities straight.**

If your first priority is amassing great wealth, you are likely to be disappointed. If your first priority is advancing in your company, there is a good chance this may not happen--you may get laid off instead. Try to find appropriate alternative priorities--for example, helping those less fortunate than yourself, or working on a way to make the future for yourself or your community better.



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