

## **Time to jump from your 'comfort zone'!**

Did you bathe yourself in doom and gloom about the budget, sitting glued to reports of despair and despondency about the economy and the decade of frugality that lies ahead? Have you since been made even more anxious by the fear of 'swine flu' or are you letting it all slide past you by switching off the news and consigning any newspaper that falls in your path to the litter bin?

Most of us watch from a 'safe distance' and think that the contagion of the credit crunch and the daily download of depression from the tabloids are far more severe than all but the most virulent does of flu, but it is difficult not to be infected with the despair of a government fast approaching extinction and individual ministers jostling for position in the scramble to survive.

I read this week, in the midst of the hype and hysteria about the approaching pandemic, that in Africa a child dies every 30 seconds from malaria. When was the last time that we heard about that on national news?

Whichever approach you take to the media hype around the current state of affairs, you will know that your response is solely yours. How you 'think', 'feel' and 'act' lies with you. Have you changed your spending habits, postponed your holidays, cancelled trips to public places? If you have done any of these then you know you have control over how you act and how you manage your cash flow. In the same way, you can control your time outlay - and all the time you save can be put to better use.

I have pointed out in the past how experience of recessions shows that businesses and employers who used downtime to train and re-train and to create new opportunities were best placed to take advantage of the eventual upturn. Similarly, individuals who found themselves out of work and who took advantage of new government training and re-training initiatives were ready when the economy picked up again.

It is in times like these that people who have dreamed of a complete career change find that they suddenly have the opportunity, and maybe little alternative, to get on and pursue their ambitions. It is likely they would never have taken that leap had the 'recession' not pushed them ahead.

So, if you have often found yourself thinking: "There must be a better way to earn a living!" or "One fine day, I am going to get my act together and set up my own business!" this might be the very time to do just that. All successful entrepreneurs will tell you that they achieved their success because they followed their dreams and worked every hour available to get that success.

Do you have the appetite for hard work, for change, for filling every hour following your dream? Or are you sitting in a pool of anxiety about the state of the economy, the greed of politicians, the dread of a pandemic? Like most people, are you happy in your comfort zone and reluctant to look beyond the boundary and follow your dreams? Then wake up, because sooner or later somebody else might oust you from your comfort zone.

The April/May issue of Kent Profile highlighted various learning and training opportunities in Kent, but those mentioned are just the tip of the iceberg. In a county with so many educational facilities, adult education opportunities and universities you have no excuse. You can also spend time surfing the internet to check out opportunities further afield and to see what funding and support might be available.

It is time to live the dream, to jump from your comfort zone and create your own future rather than sitting at home moaning and dreading the next bout of bad news.