



To survive the crunch, take control of your life



By Sunny Massad

No matter how conscientious you have been to secure yourself financially, the events of 2008 have had ripple effects. Every U.S. taxpayer is anxiously watching the massive bailouts, engineered by the same players in the federal government who turned their backs on regulating the practices that are at the root of today's financial crisis, the decline of the value of 401(k)s and IRAs, and all the other repercussions of the credit crunch. If you find yourself feeling overwhelmed, scared or angry, these are appropriate responses to the global tremors.

Whether you once thought you knew how to handle your finances but are no longer clear about how to move forward, or whether you are someone who planned to deal with your money issues later in life, everyone is being forced to respond to this wake-up call. Each of us has to find our own way to adapt to the post-meltdown reality. In times of such stress and anxiety, it is natural to react by making decisions and taking actions that bring instant relief. But more often than not, the decisions that are made to calm us in the short run are actions that end up sabotaging our long-term security.

The issues of the 21st century require new strategies. Curling up in a fetal position hoping that you emerge unscathed is certain to sabotage your well-being. You will have to get up and take control of your life. Make that commitment and you will be able to build a solid financial foundation even if everything around you is crumbling.

Stand back and look at the big picture: You have survived rocky times before and like a cat, you always seem to land on your feet. The markets will eventually recover, but in the meantime, our economy is like a hospital patient in critical condition. As we proceed through a long, slow period of recovery, you need to protect what you have in order to reach your long term goals. If you are committed to replacing your own stress, fear and anger with the secure sense that you have done what it takes to protect the security you worked so hard for, you will need to turn your apathy into action.

Sunny Massad is president and founder of Hawaii Wellness Institute. This piece is from her series, "Coping Skills for Trying Times." For more e-articles, subscribe at hawaiiwellnessinstitute.org/keepmeposted.html. "The Goddess Speaks" is a feature by and about women.