

When I sat down with my morning coffee on Wednesday, I did what I always do: turned on some quiet music, listened to the birds that have been singing since 4:30am, and opened my Tribune to the business section. Now what was different this day is that I rarely read the business section, yet I did and thank goodness, measured optimism! Imagine, people are feeling better, however we were warned we are far from being out of the deep woods of "recession."

I sat back and thought about this interesting article. Imagine reporting good news, of course laced with caution. Upon further reflection it felt right to me. People have been talking with more energy, less anger, and a sense that maybe we can get through this tough time.

It reminded me of a small yet powerful book called, *Man's Search for Meaning* by Victor Frankl, a Jewish psychiatrist from Vienna who developed a technique called logotherapy, and a survivor of the death camps of World War II. After surviving four years in Auschwitz he made the following observations, "that no matter what the SS did to him, they could not take his soul from him." Further he tells us, "there were those among us, who in the midst of this deprivation and hell, chose to care more for others than themselves, they gave away their last piece of bread, they stayed to care for a dying friend to the risk of their own lives." Frankl's conclusion is that we have the will to choose how and who we will be in any given situation. He observed it in the camps. He wrapped new meaning around free will.

I carry this idea with me everyday. As I listen to the media tell me how I feel, or the news telling me the worst is yet to come or the cynics who say we are crumbling as a nation, I listen. Then I choose, for me, for Lou, who will I be in this very hard and tough period of our history? When I am old and my grandchildren gather around me and ask questions what will I have to report? Will I say that I was led by the national murmur of death and doom, or will I report that I made my own way, I used this time to form and shape my inner being, the part of me that belongs to me and no other.

I want to tell the children that I used myself up in service to others, that I encouraged and inspired and supported others. I want to tell stories of looking beyond my own worry and fear. Everyday I choose to leave these monkeys at the curb and yes sometimes I go back and invite them in, however I almost always show them back to the curb by the end of the day. I refuse to live my life in fear and anxiety. I choose to see this time as one of opportunity for me and for all of us to reflect on what brought is here, then choose to act differently in the future. I want to embrace our new and amazing world, a world re-formed on compassion, concern for others and a love of all creation. A world that for the first time in decades has a chance to truly restore itself from all the devastation and destruction we have caused.

In my mind the price for doing differently is too high. I am not willing to put the future of my children, grandchildren and great grandchildren at stake because I choose to be mediocre in the face of fear. I choose to enter the ring with vigor, to stand for the future and to face the sun with hope determination and grit.

This is question for this fine Spring day: who will **you** choose to be in this time? What will **you** choose for yourself and for your families? I invite you to come along, join others and me in this our next great adventure and then hang on for it will be one hell of a ride!