

New York Governor David Paterson has described our nation's current financial crisis as our worst economic downturn since the Great Depression.

Although our new president inspires hope for the future, many of us are angry.

We are angry with our banks and with our credit card companies, with our mortgage and insurance companies, with our corporate and political leaders.

Some of us are angry with our family members and even with ourselves.

There are so many directions towards which to point an accusing finger right now that our anger can feel overwhelming to us at times.

It takes a great deal of discipline to channel anger in a positive direction.

Temptations towards depression, substance abuse and revenge can become so seductive that they start to look like attractive, even comforting, options.

Anger is an extremely intense and powerful emotion. Wonderful things can be created with the angry energy generated by our losses.

We are free to choose whether to focus this energy in a self-constructive direction or in a self-destructive direction.

There is so much that needs to be done to heal our country at this time that each of us can surely find a way in which to generate something positive, meaningful and helpful with the energy generated by our own anger.

For example:

- Corporate greed and abuses in our banking system need to be corrected.
- Long neglected causes like homelessness need to be vigorously addressed.
- Many of our family members, friends and neighbors will need our help.

Given that many long-standing-practices in our country will need to change, we will also need to choose whether to embrace change or to resist it.

Like anger, change can feel overwhelming to us at first.

It can also energize us by offering us new options to consider and pursue.

Several people have told me about wonderful changes they have made recently:

- One man quit smoking, saving \$60.00 every week;
- A mother has decided to bake bread and cookies for her family;
- A woman has reduced her beer consumption and lost weight;
- A friend has decided to drink one glass of wine with dinner each evening instead of two;
- A woman decided to bring nutritious lunches and snacks to work instead of eating restaurant and vending machine food.

We are all free to choose our attitudes towards change.

We can choose to view any losses as crushing defeats or stimulating challenges.

We might have to remind ourselves daily of our affirmative choices, but if we do something constructive with our angry energy and if we maintain a positive attitude towards change, we will certainly grow and evolve.

In time, we will discover that our current, difficult circumstances have been significantly improved by these choices.

We will have created a new, upbeat and exciting future for ourselves.

We might even become grateful for the strong motivation we have received to change directions in our lives.