

**IMMIGRANT LIVING:
101 AND BEYOND**



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Not out of the woods yet

“The little reed, bending to the force of the wind, soon stood upright again when the storm had passed over.”

—Aesop

IF the news from the mainstream media about the economic climate is to be believed, it seems that there are faint but encouraging signs that the worst of the recessionary storm is over. Economic indicators are trending up a notch. Real estate bargains are being snatched up and the inventory of houses for sale, previously about a year's worth is now down to just about 6 month's worth with real estate investors and those who waited for this kind of market are having a ball with foreclosures and bargain basement-priced properties. All good news, right?

I would treat all that with a grain of salt and some caution. We're not out of the woods yet. The problem is not so much the credibility of media or the tremendous pressure it collectively bears in further depressing an already dreary state of affairs if it churned out news of doom and gloom but in the fairy tale, magic wand, Polyanna approach to a serious situation that affects millions of ordinary people.

While the puffed up numbers

may allow us to give a temporary sigh of relief, the reality of it down on the ground where it matters to ordinary people affected on the gut level, is far different. I do a lot of anecdotal personal research, asking cashiers when I check out about how business is. I talk to the butcher, the waiter, the gardener, neighbors, friends, associates and strangers. I read up on the trends. Most everyone I meet tell a far from rosy story. Everyone is feeling the pinch or reeling from the blows. Unpaid furloughs mean there's a lot less to go around. At 10% unemployment rate, this indicator is a serious cause for concern. If this indicator hits 15% to 18% unemployment rate within the next 24 months, then we would have reached the threshold of the Great Depression. This also means that, with few exceptions such as the healthcare field, employment-based immigration based on merit will be on hold for as long as there is a glut of unemployed skilled local workers who are either citizens or permanent residents. The picture is totally different from what media would

have us believe. Perhaps there is a time delay of 3 to 6 months for the trickle down effect of positive indicators.

Media is between a rock and a hard place with the option and the power to skew the truth or to lay it out straight, whether it's a bitter pill to swallow or not. In the end, as a business that is hurting just as badly as any, media will do what it has to do to improve its bottom line, pumping up the volume for inane entertainment that sells, and further doping us with the "circus" we desperately seem to hanker for when times are dire. Sigh.

About a year ago, I wrote a cautionary piece about getting ready for a perfect storm. I still think that we are not out of the woods yet and that the process of mending, bracing and pumping new life to a severely broken down structure will take more time than we are prepared to give. And so, here it is with a few tweaks and a bit of updating.

Batten down the hatches, a perfect storm's still bearing down on us. Those of us who have lived long enough in the US know all

too well that going through a recessionary storm is nothing new. We've been there before and more than likely, we will cycle out of it again. The question is, how soon. Still, with or without the reassuring advantage of experience and hindsight, the period we are all facing brings with it certain dangers that have had no precedent, and it would be foolhardy to predict easy solutions and an effortless way out of the morbid mess we're in.

During the recessionary storm of the early nineteen nineties, we didn't have two foreign wars, launched on false pretext, that drained us in human capital and national psyche, not to mention the billions of dollars being spent. We didn't have the serious magnitude of the real estate crisis in foreclosures that we have with millions of Americans rendered practically homeless and languishing in financial limbo, duped by the unrelenting greed of the mortgage industry. Nor did we have the serious energy crisis that is driving the whole world to distraction coupled with the threat of global warming and a planetary balance that's out of kilter, e.g hurricanes, floods, earthquakes, tornadoes, heat waves. No place on earth is exempt. Which brings us to wonder: Is God mad at us and the world? What we have right now is a recipe for a perfect storm, the disastrous results of which could be of a magnitude and severity, we can only guess at. The most that economists can tell us is that this storm, is going to be a long and deep one.

Yet that stubborn survival streak genetically encoded in the innards of millions who live and thrive on daily doses of faith pray that all such indicators are

wrong. We still hope that despite all appearances and flying in the face of all reason, we can endure these challenges. It can happen. Still, there is work to do, for man proposes, God disposes.

One thing I learned from my father who was a ship captain for 40 years is that you have to heed the storm warnings, smell the wind with a nose that knows, and with keen eyes, study the shoals, reefs, drifts and the waves and the clouds, and to never underestimate or second guess Mother Nature's tempestuous fits, to duck and take cover in a cove on the safe side of an island out of harm's way, stack up on basic provisions, batten down the hatches, pray and wait out the storm until it's all over. Only then will he sail on to his destination, his men and his cargo intact, when all was clear. Above all, he was a leader that brooked no mutiny or interference when less seaworthy men with paper thin experience tried to overrule what he knew to be sound judgment.

It's not all bleak though. There's an upside to this downside. We are all learning from our excesses and greed during the good times and learning to live with much less during these tough times. We are paring down our egos to size. We are becoming more aware of our impact on the environment decrying conspicuous consumption as a way of life. We are finding ways of doing things more efficiently, more effectively. We are learning to look out for each other as we find the strength from within to endure all. But perhaps, more importantly, with the loss of the trust and the onset of cynicism with the financial markets, Wall Street, the government and its leaders, we are learning to

become more self-sufficient, more informed and thus, more empowered and by default, becoming more proactive and saying no to all those that have played dice with our future and that of succeeding generations.

Corporate society has espoused the era of unmitigated greed and produced hucksters and conmen of gargantuan proportions. We hope to spot these conmen in Brooks Brothers suits, the Madoffs, the Ken Lays, the Milkens and their ilk long before they can wreak havoc. It's going to be a steep uphill learning curve but in the end, when someone in the future will write and recap what we did in our time, he or she can say in all honesty, that we became better, wiser, far happier and thus richer, because of and despite all struggle, sacrifice and suffering.

With or without experience in how to deal with this, we all need to learn how to batten down the hatches and weather these challenging times. The deep anxieties that lurk about and hover in our souls scare us half to death. And yet to dwell and validate such fears only corrodes courage.

Feel the fear if you must, but do grapple with it and decimate it. Astute Dorothy Bernard aptly said: "Courage is fear that has said its prayers."

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JUNO CONNECTION



CHARMAINE TEODORO

NURSES fall into the trap that their profession is limited to the four corners (or wings) of a facility. It is of course not unusual

for them to think this way since from the beginning, everyone from the educational sector, society, and even our culture portray a nurse as someone who directly cares for patients. They imagine nurses as individuals who assist doctors, administer dosage, serve food, and act as

primary caregivers to patients. Although this view of nurses is accurate, it does not paint the whole picture in terms of the career paths a nurse can take. In fact, a nurse can work in an accounting department, law firm or even a media organization. Nurses' experience in the field

of healthcare, an in-demand and highly discussed sector, can be leveraged to other types of jobs that do not involve dealing with patients directly.

What is non-clinical nursing?

Non-clinical roles for nurses are positions that do not involve direct patient care. They are healthcare occupations that focus on the operational and strategic aspects of a facility. These positions can be administrative, managerial, financial or technical, to name a few. Non-clinical nurses are usually those who opt to do these things due to lack of interest in serving on the floor, or those who may be more inclined to do office-related posts but still want to be in the healthcare industry.

Job options for non-clinical nurses

Research. Nurses with advanced degrees can be hired as researchers by consulting firms, government organizations, and research institutions to study healthcare delivery solutions. They can contribute their clinical experience and deep understanding of healthcare systems and methods in a way that will make an impact on the industry or facility. With their experience, nurses are a valuable knowledge asset when it comes to providing inputs for decision making purposes of high-level healthcare executives or advocacy of large-scale policy recommendations.

Health and nursing media. Since nursing is the largest of all health industry workforces, with millions of them spread out in different states, facilities, and regions, a cornucopia of health-related media are made for them. In a larger scale, health-related media have a continuous demand for fitness, diet, and nutrition information. As care providers in an environment where health is valued, nurses are able to convey what is needed to live a healthy life. By honing their communication skills in writing or speech, they can monetize their ability to articulate ways on how to live a healthy lifestyle and how to prevent illnesses and diseases. As experienced nurses, they can impart their knowledge on how to become an effective nurse, or their techniques on how to perform a treatment for a patient.

Blogging. The advent of blogging has allowed aspiring authors and freelance writers alike to build an audience

that could potentially lead to income opportunities. Network blogs or those with hundreds of thousands of visitors hire freelance bloggers to fill their space for quality content. Like working for health and nursing media, blogging for income requires training and expertise on both the writing and technical aspect of the practice. Also, since blogging is a highly competitive industry, it is important for an aspiring professional blogger to find the right niche for their topics and posts.

Consulting. Legal nurse consultants are skilled in providing expertise on clinical matters and analyzing medical liability or clinical cases. They are providers of medical experts' testimonies. These nurses perform an influential role in the litigation process by acting as a bridge between medicine and the judiciary. Legal nurse consultants have the clinical experience as well as the specialized training to research and analyze medically related issues relevant to a legal case or claim, and interpret it in a way that will provide substantial opinion on the handling of the matter.

Patient advocacy. Nurses' experience in dealing with patients' healthcare issues makes them competent in framing the issues between the system and the people it serves. They know what's best for the patients and have also been exposed on the operational and administrative functions of care provision. This knowledge, therefore, makes them competent candidates for patient advocacy. Since they deal with them regularly and intimately, they know firsthand the challenges and opportunities that providing care presents.

Management/Administration. Healthcare practitioners understand that part of giving care to patients involve doing a lot of paper works. Managers and administrators of hospitals or nursing units become masters of the logistical and administrative activities involve in providing care to clients. They give the administrative and technical support necessary to ensure successful and smooth sailing operations of their hospitals or divisions. Nurses who may be more comfortable in an office environment and have leadership skills fit well into this type of job. Administrative and managerial training in some capacity, through continuing

education or by getting another degree will definitely be helpful.

Healthcare Finance. Mobilizing the funds for healthcare services and allocating them appropriately to different regions and types of healthcare offerings is a task that requires not only quantitative skills but also a socially conscious understanding of the healthcare system. As direct care providers, nurses are in a position to be competent in this capacity as they are socially aware of the consequences of healthcare-related financial allocations and through education and training, they are knowledgeable on the mechanisms, policies, and factors that will maximize the ability of an individual, organization, community, state or federal institutions to pay for healthcare needs.

Recruitment/Staffing. Nurses are very much aware of the hurdles one has to take before he/she can be officially hired as a nurse. If they're experienced and considerably successful in what they do, then they have the practical knowledge of how to excel as a worker in the industry. They also understand what makes a good nurse and care provider. With this knowledge and skill, becoming a recruiter either for a hospital or a staffing agency is a good fit. They have been exposed to the arena where these organizations are rooted in and have the skill to both share and use in order to find the right nurse for a particular position.

Entrepreneurship. A hospital, nursing home or outpatient clinic is not only a customer focused organization where emphasis is given on the welfare of the patients, but it is also an enterprise that requires having a balanced budget and sustainable cash flow. As employees of such a noble business, nurses who are risk takers, leaders, and innovators can translate their caregiving skills to enterprises that are focused on fulfilling the healthcare needs of patients.

Training, openness to change and the desire to learn new things is vital if a nurse, who is experiencing dissatisfaction in his/her career as a clinical practitioner, will aim to shift to a non-clinical occupation. The options discussed can serve as your guide as you search for a good job that will allow you to utilize the skills you already know as a

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FOR NURSES: GOING BEYOND HOSPITALS' HALLS

Why not all nursing professions are clinical



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THERE IS
STRENGTH.**

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