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Is the recession over?

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Norman Vincent Peale wrote a best selling book entitled "The Power of Positive Thinking." In it he strongly suggested that negative thinking is much stronger than positive thinking, so at all costs, avoid negative thinking. I was honored to briefly meet him at high school graduation, and his sage advice of erasing negative thoughts and staying away from negative people remained in my life. If it is true that every cloud has a silver lining, then it is up to us (you) to look for it. Reality says that what goes up must come down. It also says that what goes down must come back up. If you are a golfer you understand that even the great ones admit it is frustrating and humbling. Chi Chi Rodriguez was quoted as saying, "I don't fear death, but I sure don't like those three footers for par." I have always noticed that when my game gets real good - and for me that's bogey golf, the wheels fall off and the negative frustration sets in. Remembering Dr. Peale, I immediately convince myself that when your game stinks, you should realize that it will (and must) only get better. Today I shot a nine on the 1st hole - a 400 yard par 4. It was my first 9 of the season. Did I quit? The other three gentlemen (one 39 years old), shot fours. Hold on! There is a moral to this story. Obviously, I was frustrated, but also realized that I could only improve and they might not. Therein lies the power of positive thinking, and it works. I proceeded to shoot my best round of the year - paring four and bogeying the other four and winning the nine hole match by one stroke.

Let's all look at the past several months as shooting a nine on the first hole. Can things get worse? I suppose so, but predicting it will won't win us any prizes. The government is doing lots of things to plug the dike - some good, some bad. But here's the skinny. Newsweek reports home sales have risen three straight months and the stock market has rallied 44 percent since March, In June, seven of the 10 indicators in The Conference Board Leading Economic Index pointed upward. The economy has expanded 2.5 percent annual rate in the current quarter, and Ben Bernanke, Fed Chairman, told Congress that economic activity will increase over the remainder of 2009. All these facts are positive. We know that the doomsday jerks will quote some negative ones like on all the morning TV news shows that help start our day off on the wrong foot and scare the sh--, I mean scare us so we want to quit. Things in your garden can now come back in direct relation to how much you sow (or is it sew?), cultivate, plan, think, study what your clients need, and figure how to create an atmosphere in which they will be comfortable doing what you want them to do. Some of your competitors will fall by the wayside. But, guess what. If you've read this far in this message, I guarantee you won't be one of them. If I can recover from a 9, we all can recover from this recession by following Dr. Peale's advice.

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