

THERE IS NO TIME LIKE NOW TO CLICK THE RESET BUTTON

By: Robert S. Sher

Perhaps GE Chairman and CEO Jeff Immelt said it best this past February in a poignant five-page letter to shareholders. "I believe we are going through more than a cycle," he wrote in the 2008 Annual Report. "The global economy, and capitalism, will be "reset" in several important ways."

Wherever we turn, this phrase coined by Immelt continues to pop up. It's been the subject of interview prompts, talked about on blogs and Internet chat rooms and has made its way to the board room in business meetings. Why? Quite simply, it just makes sense.

I first heard it on NBC's Dateline when Tom Brokaw asked business legend Warren Buffett if he agreed with the summation that we are in reset mode. "We have lived in one way in one type of economy and we're now deleveraging that economy," Buffett told Brokaw. "We're gonna have to live without the same impetus from credit expansion that really helped propel the economic engine for a long period of time. He's right about resetting without credit expansion being the propellant for the economy."

Immelt and Buffett are onto something real. While it may be scary to think about a future in which nothing will ever be the way it was, we must consider Immelt's message. As a nation, we have lost sight of a few things. Our zest for innovation made us great and we've put that on the back burner.

All the experts predict it is going to take a long time to see any real changes from the economic stimulus package. We have to be patient and we must seek out new opportunities in a reset world. So, while we are waiting, let's focus on the future and find ways to adjust to the evolving landscape.

Change is not a bad thing. The world is not coming to an end. There may not be three cars in every garage down the road, but we will see a lot of growth and a great deal of new opportunity in the face of adversity.

Soon we will all be reading newspapers on our laptop computers, books and magazines on Kindles, hosting reunions online on Facebook and getting 24/7 Twitter news updates on our cell phones. We will find a way to use windmills, solar-power and other types of power plants in our everyday lives. Just like the cartoon characters lived in the futuristic TV show "The Jetsons," we won't be able to leave home without being wired to our tech toys.

No matter what transpires, we will always need services and we will always need innovation. Bill Gates started Microsoft while he was in college. Now he is one of the most influential individuals in the world. Google was just a concept when it began as a start up not too long ago and it has changed the way we search for everything but who knew that at the time? No one could have predicted it would have become the largest search engine in the world, let alone a common verb.

For you the prospects are endless in the areas of clean energy, emerging growth markets and healthcare. We just need to reset our thinking, be innovative and hunt for opportunity.

The future is exciting if you want to stay in front of the parade. To get there, network, over-deliver on your promises, keep up with the changes and get things done. Only then will you survive in the downturn and keep working while we wait for the world to reset.

Are you prepared for reset? Pause for a minute, then hit reset, and you will be ready to jump to restart.

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