

To read the economic news is like watching an approaching storm. Sub-prime meltdown, collapse of household name companies, government bailouts, falling stock values.

As the bad news unfolding over there starts making its way in our direction, you see the results in terms of canceled contracts, forgotten promises, corporate restructuring, price competition, and lots of finger pointing. Since economies are so closely interconnected, it affects all of us.

If everyone else is to blame, then who is really at fault? They certainly aren't stepping forward to admit it, and in a sense everyone bears some of the responsibility, if not for the problem, then *definitely for the solution*.

To appreciate what is happening, you need flexible focus.

What would change if, instead of blame and shame, we took an *attitude of gratitude*?

In Buddhism, the principle of gratitude starts with kindness or benevolence, looking at your situation with gratitude for what you have, and making the most of it.

If you look honestly, you may be surprised at how much wealth you already possess, but had not fully appreciated or utilized properly. Wealth comes in many forms, health, relationships, talent, knowledge, timing and location.

Rather than regretting the inconvenience of changing circumstances, why not seize the day (*carpe diem*), by taking advantage of what you already have, better integrated and better appreciated?

This is not naive in any sense. Rather, it takes maturity, awareness, and persistence to demonstrate gratitude in action. Moreover, it is noticed by the people around you, and returned to you many fold when your actions result in practical support for others around you who need your help.

## Attitude of Gratitude



In Japanese the principle of gratitude is written with the character 慈 (*Itsukushimi*), shown here in my calligraphy done for the Carre MOJI exhibition.

The exhibition is was held for two days (Nov 23~24 2008) at the Carre MOJI Gallery in Omotesando.

We are caught in the centre of the storm,  
Financial and economic typhoon;  
Where is the light that may end our plight?  
Or should we just hibernate in our cocoon?  
Life as we knew it, no longer the norm.

Contracts are cancelled, promises forgotten fast;  
It seems everyone else is to blame,  
It's their fault; in our own innocence exalt!  
It's now just a finger pointing game,  
As we look for other targets to lambast.

Everyone bears some responsibility;  
So what would change if, instead of blame  
We adopt an attitude of gratitude?  
Kindness or benevolence bears no shame,  
Surely it's a mark of our civility.

Not problem but solution we should seek,  
Accept your circumstance with gratitude;  
Wealth comes in many forms, even in the worst of storms:  
Health, relationships, talent, aptitude  
Are more important than things to keep.

Seize the day, take advantage of what you've got,  
Maturity, awareness, and persistent thought,  
A positive mind, the best way to be kind,  
Returned to you many fold when you give support  
To others around you who need help a lot.

*Verse by Hugh Purser*