Remembering 2008, but looking forward to a new beginning ...

By Dennis J. Tartakow, DMD, MEd, PhD, Editor in Chief

Well, the year 2008 is over and the pervasive status of affairs in our country is in limbo, the likes of which have never been encountered at any one moment in time and on so many fronts.

Everything seems to have been changed. We have been hit with a wake-up call, facing one new issue after another, from global warming to the downward spiraling economy and stock market, to the energy and gas crisis, to the decline and freezing of the housing market, and now the rise in unemployment. This planet is indeed experiencing unprecedented and uncertain events to the point where our ubiquitous future has been shaken up and is uncertain.

The voice of America is saying: “OK, we can’t continue with business as usual, we can’t continue making big bucks the old-fashioned way, going shopping is out. This cannot be happening to us right now, can it?”

We are frozen in our tracks and the universe is telling us: “Take a step back humanity — take a real hard look at what changes are essential, what changes are necessary and be frugal to survive.”

However, there are new and auspicious vistas of opportunity right now in orthodontics.

Recapture our past is impossible, but reassessing our complacency for now in orthodontics.

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We will start by “learning to look” at our external and internal environment more methodically with inductive, deductive and abductive reasoning, followed by (a) applying this thinking to improved information technology, higher education and leadership; (b) developing strategic and scenario planning, which will be especially appropriate during these depressing and discouraging times; and finally (c) allowing for systems thinking rather than linear thinking.

No longer can it be business as usual, but rather we must take the attitude of carpe diem — seize the day — and use this opportunity to utilize the dynamics of intelligence. Leave emotion and fear out of the equation and make the necessary changes to practice within this financial Katrina and general dis-comfort zone.

The willingness to learn is what is important, not preserving our moniker of what is already known.

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