



WAXING OPTIMISTIC ABOUT THE FUTURE

Kathlyn Q. Barrozo
Class of 1991, University of Santo Tomas
B.S. Medical Technology

How truly ironic, and maybe even oxymoronic, that people today strive to make history by creating futuristic gadgets and some other device. I myself am only concerned with surviving till tomorrow with my family. Life has become harder and more challenging, and there are more people facing bleak futures ahead. What with every little grocery item going up to unreachable prices, the average man on the street can only wish that tomorrow's prices could still be yesterday's. Alas, even the world's most powerful nation, fresh from a slim-margin presidential election, has faced a divided future. Hopefully, people everywhere can look forward to better fates ahead and a much-improved economy in the offing.

Going to the grocery store or supermarket has always been a depressing undertaking for me. The bills and coins I carry are the same size, but seem to have become more diminutive in value. They have even become lighter, thanks to technology. But that only serves to emphasize their buying power: lighter coins, lighter power. Catch my drift? They do look smarter and more 21st century. But that does not take away the fact that they have also declined in value.

Time was when our own mothers used to have a little extra every time they did the marketing. Nowadays, people have to stretch their budgets to make it to the next paycheck. I often fear for my children's future, asking myself whether they still have a genuine future to look forward to.

We fear what we don't know, and the future is so out there it's simply scary. Despite the pep talk about flying cars and floating highways and futuristic gadgets, the fact remains that we might not be able to afford such things in the future. Maybe, if we got reincarnated as a famous high-earning athlete or a member of a very wealthy clan, we might yet be able to lay our claim on the ultimate futuristic comforts of life. But as it is, we just have to remain optimistic about the next day and the next and the next. Believing is half the battle; acting on your objectives wins the rest. No matter how dark and uncertain the future really is, it is our intrinsic responsibility to make our lives worth living and to enjoy each day like it were the last. Yesterday's gone, today is here and now, and tomorrow is yet to come. No matter what the doomsayers say, there's always tomorrow to look forward to.

It doesn't matter now whether I can buy less with the money I hold in my hand. What counts is how I am able to contribute to the future of my own family, others, and even the world. The journey to the future may not always be straight and uneventful, but I definitely need to face it. If I won't, who else will?

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION:

1. How do you look at the future? Is it with optimism or pessimism? Why is it easy to become pessimistic today?
2. How do you keep your hopes up in highly-uncertain situations?
3. What is it about today that makes the future a lot brighter?
4. Why is it important to plan for the future?
5. If you could invent something for the future, what would it be? Why would you create such an invention?