

Getting it together

Bob Trezn understood crisis

(Bob Trezn, Rochester psychologist whose "Getting it Together" column has appeared weekly in Observer and Eccentric newspapers for several years, died last week after a brief illness. This column, which first appeared Aug. 21 of this year, was the one his wife said the 36-year-old marriage counselor considered one of his best. It is being reprinted in his memory.)

Faced with big crises, like death or divorce, it's not hard to slip into a downward spiral of self-pity and discouragement. Even with less distressing challenges such as broken cars and financial setbacks, a natural response is to react with shock and frustration.

Most try to minimize and avoid distractions to a smoothly functioning life. A lot of people spend most of their time anticipating and defending against possible disasters. By careful planning and staying in control of even the slightest threat to harmony, they hope to get through life as peacefully as possible.

All of these people tend to see crises in a negative light. They see them as losses and failures.

BUT THAT'S a very narrow view.

Crises are more than just subtractions from happiness and harmony. They are the opportunities for reaching even higher levels of satisfaction from life. They are vehicles for personal development.

This isn't to deny the pain and grief that can go with a life crisis. These are very real and can even be crippling in their immensity. But it's important to see such apparent disasters for their benefits as well as their costs.

In contrast to the belief that personal happiness is the absence of painful problems, trials and tribulations can have a very constructive role in our lives.

If we were fully developed adults at the age of 21, this wouldn't be true. But the fact is that we are only partly ready for life at that age. And we're not much further along when we hit middle age.

When it comes to living a life of as much happiness and creativity as possible, we are only operating on a minority of our resources. We have much to learn before we can truly tap all our personal capacities.

And personal crises can be great teachers.

Divorces, financial failures; family blow-ups and job stresses test our cur-

By BOB TREZN.



rent strengths and show us where we need to grow.

THEY MOTIVATE us to improve ourselves. By making it more functional to rock the boat and change, crises break us loose from our inertia. They free us from our natural tendency to hang on to the comfortable status quo.

In the face of loss or frustration, we are likely to turn to our deepest personal resources. In crises, people find personal courage that they didn't know they had. They reach out to friends, families and their faith in an ultimate guidance. And using these strengths

brings them to life.

Our usual facades of independence and self-sufficiency are cracked and fall away in times of crisis. And we learn that it's not so humiliating to admit we need other people. In fact, as we open ourselves to our basic nature as mutually supportive, interdependent social animals, we notice a sudden reduction in our feelings of loneliness and isolation.

Emerging from the other end of the crisis tunnel, people notice amazing improvements. Self-confidence has increased, and so has self-awareness. There is much less confusion about what they want from life, much less doubt about their capacities. Values become clear and stable. And there is a calmness that comes from knowing more surely that the world is essentially benign, that they can make it work.

Little problems take their proper perspective after a crisis. And big problems don't seem so overwhelming.

In the midst of a seeming disaster, it's hard to realize these eventual benefits. In fact, the easiest thing to do would be to withdraw, to cover your head with the warm blanket of self-pity and surrender. A little of that can't hurt, but it can be a boring way to spend the rest of your life.

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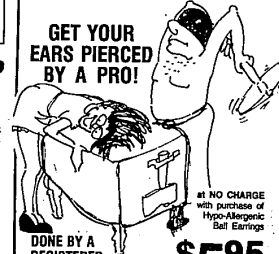
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Yule shop in Troy

The Child Research Center's biannual Yule Shoppe will be presented from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. today at the Somerset Inn on Big Beaver Road in Troy.

A fiesta of handcrafted items to be displayed includes baked and canned pantry items, hand designed silk flowers, hand painted apparel, pillows, toys, games, and puzzles. Christmas Seals and cookbooks will also be available.

Art sale

The Oakland University Alumni Association annual art auction will be held at 7:30 p.m. Friday in the Crocker of the Oakland Center. Admission is \$1 and proceeds go to the Alumni Fund.

For composting information, send a stamped self-addressed envelope to Compost, Inc., Detroit, 1 Northfield Plaza, Troy, MI 48068.

BARBARA CRANDELL Guest contributor

Consumer mail bag

Spring gardens begin now

I've just finished a successful first year as a gardener in our new home. Is there anything I should be doing now to get ready for next year?

Betty S., Southfield

Yes, and it's a very good idea to start thinking this far ahead. There are many tasks to do in your yard and garden in the fall that make next spring's work much easier and more productive. Here are a few suggestions.

If you plan a vegetable garden, now is the time for general clean-up. Pull weeds and diseased vegetation and dispose of it; rake leaves and grass

clippings and begin a compost pile, or use the hardwood leaves (oak, hickory, beech) as a mulch for newly planted trees and shrubs. Save oak leaves for use as a mulch for acid-loving plants such as rhododendrons and azaleas. Pine needles are good for the same purpose.

Now is a good time to review this year's garden plan and make notes for next spring's planting. Did you like the varieties you chose? Should you add any new varieties? Was the planting arrangement good? Did you plant too early? Too late? Ask yourself these and other questions. Note your ideas and incorporate them in next year's

garden plan.

Once your garden has stopped producing, lightly cultivate the area and sow liberally with rye grass. When dug over next spring, this cover crop will benefit the soil decidedly. This is a good tactic to use under your trees now, to stimulate their growth next year.

Don't forget to supply your evergreens with plenty of water before the freezing winter weather and before pruning.

Newly planted trees need protection against winter winds and storms, so give them needed support with stakes and wires. Keep them supported for a full year. Also, new shade trees should be protected from "sun scald" by wrapping the trunk with tree wrap or burlap.

Continue mowing the lawn while new growth appears—though not as soon as in spring. Keep free of leaves

and clippings as litter tends to smother a lawn during winter.

If there are any low spots or irregular surfaces in your lawn, you can still correct this by spot top-dressing (no more than two inches or you will smother the grass). Now is a good time to apply slow-acting fertilizer such as bone meal or milorganite.

If all this seems like considerable work, try to visualize how much better your yard and garden will look, plus being one step ahead of next spring's chores. The exercise will be a personal benefit and working out of doors on a beautiful fall day is a bonus for the spirit that might help you through a Michigan winter.

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BARBARA CRANDELL Guest contributor

Sisterhood to hear Danto

Dr. Bruce Danto of Birmingham well-known psychiatrist, will be the Temple Israel's

guest speaker at a luncheon meeting at noon on Monday, Nov. 6, in the Leon Fram Hall of the

Temple, 17400 Manderston, Detroit. Reservations are being taken at the Temple office, 883-7762.

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Advertisement for Rhodika international make-up artist, featuring a portrait of the artist and contact information for classes on November 5th & 6th.

Advertisement for Atlantic Drapery Shoppe featuring a drapery sale with labor for \$5.00 per panel, custom spreads, and a chair for \$42.90 and sofa for \$52.90.

Advertisement for the linen closet, featuring a picture of a closet and contact information for Barbara Crandell.

Advertisement for BE YOUR OWN DECORATOR or LET US BE YOUR DESIGNER, featuring a spiral graphic and contact information for Custom Interior Designers.

Large advertisement for Heidi's Salons featuring a woman's portrait, the text 'Hair Styling Excellence', and details about introductory offers and salon locations.

Advertisement for bathsheba inc. featuring three images of bathroom fixtures: a tooth brush stand, a soap-dish, and a toilet paper holder.

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