

COMMUNITY JOURNAL

IMMIGRANT LIVING: 101 AND BEYOND



MONETTE ADEVA MAGLAYA

(Primarily because the good life based on the American Dream is fast fading from the realm of what is possible for many immigrants, I am reprising this article to remind us that despite all appearances, there's still a lot we can do to affect the quality of our lives even during recessionary times. This is partly to counter the increasing tendency of many to lose hope and commit tragic acts of desperation, decimating entire families and themselves, because of financial pressures.)

DO you believe in luck? And if you do, have you got the moxie to be lucky?

On its face value, being in the right place at the right time seems to be completely random and impersonal, much like a lightning strike. We have all heard of the incredible luck of people who have won the lottery multiple times and each time, they at least, bought a ticket, took a chance and made themselves available for Lady Luck to smile at them. Some people modestly attribute their success to luck; others, to hard work but more than likely, it is a combination of both. They were lucky because they had gumption, persisted against all odds and worked their tails off.

The truth is, in some ways,

Luck, moxie and the good life

*"The harder I work, the luckier I get."
—Unknown*

we can influence good fortune with the attitude, motivation and oftentimes, with sheer moxie, with which we face our individual daily lives. If you expect bad things to happen to you or if you yourself confirm that you are unlucky, more than likely, it will become a self-fulfilling prophecy. You might as well admit it. You're a sad sack Eeyore with a permanent, black rain cloud hanging over your head. The negative energy you emit repels people who would otherwise be of help to you. You just might be the person who can brighten up a room simply by leaving it.

Perhaps, it's your personality and there's nothing you can do about it. You were wired to be negative and pessimistic and no motivational speaker can get you out of that rut. You're one tough customer for the Holy Spirit to work wonders with. Fine. But for as long as you think that you have nothing to do with the ill fortune that seems to bedevil your life, you can just live with the dire consequences of fear, anxiety and unhappiness which result from being toxic and always believing the worst of things or of people.

Particularly during these uncertain times, no one can afford the luxury of a negative thought. But much more so for vulnerable immigrants who are on survival mode, an optimistic can-do attitude is a must. With

this current economic morass, a big chunk of the immigrant population along with many more in the middle class, will regress back to survival mode, quite by default. Many who have moved to more comfortable levels but were caught by the real estate slump, lost their homes and jobs, may find themselves sliding back to square one and engaging in the daunting prospect of finding a job or retraining themselves to learn the skills that will help them find one.

A caveat: Jobs to your liking may be harder to find these days. For many in America and even in many parts of the globe, humble pie will be on the menu, even for those with the best credentials, abilities and track records. Be prepared to wait a long time until the clouds clear and the cadence of our modern lives move to an upswing. There's a cycle and a rhythm to this. As in all fortuitous events, timing is everything.

If you have the moxie to make the right choices, it is amazing to note how luck always dovetails.

Note Bene: To ask questions, send feedback and requests as well as to inquire about advertising in any or all of the 6 print editions of Asian Journal in California, Nevada and New York/New Jersey and/or advertising in the Print Edition Online of Asian Journal, e-mail monette.maglaya@asianjournalinc.com **THANK YOU TO ALL WHO HAVE SENT FEEDBACK.**

MINDING YOUR FINANCES



ATTY. RAYMOND BULAON

IF you are currently facing foreclosure, perhaps you are curious as to whether filing for bankruptcy can help your situation. Maybe you have tried and failed with all other options and are now looking at bankruptcy as a last resort. Can bankruptcy really help?

Contrary to all the negative things that you may have heard about bankruptcy, it may actually be the solution that you need to help you keep your home. If you're already behind on your mortgage payments and the lender has filed a Notice of Default against your property, you may have very limited time to act especially if your lender is not being cooperative in working out a resolution. Filing bankruptcy (Chapter 7 or Chapter 13) automatically stops the foreclosure by directing your lender to immediately cease all collection activities. In order to continue with the foreclosure after being notified of a bankruptcy filing, the lender needs to get court permission to do so.

Chapter 13 (debt consolidation) bankruptcy allows you to pay off the "arrearage" (late payments) over a period of 3 to 5 years. If you have other debts such as back property taxes, credit cards, IRS debts, student loans (and all other types of debts), these can also be included in your Chapter 13 repayment plan. In most cases,

Can bankruptcy avoid or delay foreclosure?

most debts are drastically reduced (example: credit cards and other unsecured debts). The end result is lower and more affordable debt payments every month. By consolidating debts, most people find that it becomes easier to make their mortgage payments. To qualify, you need to have enough income to cover your regular mortgage payments plus your monthly Chapter 13 plan payment.

Chapter 7, on the other hand, will not stop a foreclosure but it can delay the process by several months. This can give you additional time to work

competent bankruptcy lawyer for advice if you are one of the homeowners I described above.)

Lastly, in cases where the borrower has possible debt-cancellation income which could result in a tax liability (example: a bank forgives a debt otherwise collectible against the borrower but reports the cancelled amount as "income" on a 1099), Chapter 7 bankruptcy may be your best way to get out from under your mortgage debt and tax liability at the same time. This is because a debt that is wiped out by a bankruptcy is excluded from income and is not taxed. If the expected

“ Chapter 13 (debt consolidation) bankruptcy allows you to pay off the “arrearage” (late payments) over a period of 3 to 5 years. If you have other debts such as back property taxes, credit cards, IRS debts, student loans (and all other types of debts), these can also be included in your Chapter 13 repayment plan. ”

things out with your lender. If you have already decided to let your house go, you can live in your home for free during at least some of the months that your bankruptcy case is pending and thus allowing you to save money that you need for moving expenses. Where a homeowner faces after-foreclosure liability (example: liability for a second mortgage loan on the property after the first trust deed holder forecloses), Chapter 7 can also wipe out such liability. (Note: Most homeowners are not aware that they can still be liable for an unpaid 2nd mortgage loan even after foreclosure. The law provides some protection against this in certain cases but this is NOT always the case. See a

cancellation-of-debt income is substantial, this alone could be a good reason to file Chapter 7. Recent laws were passed to protect most homeowners from this tax liability but in certain cases, these laws do not apply (example: the loan was secured by rental property). Tax laws are complex and situations vary so if you are in

doubt as to possible tax liability in your case, seek the advice of a competent tax professional.

If you want to explore the possible benefits of Chapter 13 or Chapter 7 bankruptcy protection, we would be glad to help you evaluate your options. To schedule a free office consultation, call us Toll-Free at 1-866-477-7772. We have offices in Glendale, Cerritos and West Covina.

None of the information herein is intended to give legal advice for any specific situation. Atty. Ray Bulaon has successfully helped more than 4,000 clients in finding solutions to their debt problems. To schedule a free attorney consultation, please call Ray Bulaon Law Offices at TOLL FREE 1-866-477-7772.

(Advertising Supplement)

Filipino teachers are saying Yes! to the community

Western Union & SIPA present the EACH ONE TEACH ONE Program to honor Filipino afterschool teachers in Los Angeles

ENGLEWOOD, Co., – Western Union (NYSE:WU) in conjunction with Search to Involve Pilipino Americans (SIPA), the largest Filipino community based organization in Los Angeles, designed the EACH ONE TEACH ONE program to recognize Filipino afterschool teachers who go above and beyond to inspire and encourage progress within the community.

This program was created as part of Western Union's global yes! campaign – the first-ever global brand initiative for Western Union that creates an emotional connection with consumers worldwide. This campaign shines a spotlight on people who embrace their hopes and dreams and who say yes! to the world and their community.

The EACH ONE TEACH ONE program identified Filipino teachers who say yes! in three different categories; Academics, Arts & Culture and Athletics.

As a special education teacher for the Los Angeles Unified School District (LAUSD) and a tutor with SIPA, Amado M. Ponce de Leon III, the Academic honoree, says yes! to the community. He first got involved with SIPA eight years ago as a way of not only getting in touch with his culture, but also to give back to the community, lending his expertise in Math and English to the afterschool

program. "I appreciate that I am able to educate kids and help others in a time where other teachers are getting laid off due to the bad economy," says Ponce de Leon III.

Barbara Jane Ele, the Arts & Culture honoree, says yes! to the community as a 2nd grade LAUSD elementary school teacher and a Filipino culture teacher at SIPA through the Kultural Enrichment Language Program (KELP). "On my days off and during summer vacation I miss all my students," Ele says. The heartwarming teacher, who also teaches dance through SIPA, is a lead choreographer for Kayamanan Ng Lahi Folks Arts in the community.

With twin brothers you get double the yes! Emmanuel and Eristheo Raif, the Athletics honorees, are former SIPA youth clients and have been team coaches and program assistant coordinators for the annual Temple Gateway Youth & Sports League for the past three years. They currently are furthering their education at Los Angeles City College and continue to help with SIPA afterschool athletic activities.

In celebration of their honorable achievements and to help build the SIPA Afterschool Enrichment Program, Western Union presented a grant of \$10,000 on behalf of these honorees to SIPA.

(Advertising Supplement)

Pilipino po tayo! LAW OFFICES OF KENNETH U. REYES, P.C. ATTORNEY-AT-LAW



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