

MACKENZIE JULICH West Des Moines 3 beds \$ 197,900 Hunziker & Associates, Realtor		JOYCE CONLEY-GIBSON Ankeny 3 beds 2 baths \$ 199,900 Hunziker & Assoc Huxley		JENNY LEAZER Ankeny 4 beds 4 baths \$ 289,900 Hunziker & Associates, Realtor	
--	--	--	--	--	--

Other editions: [Mobile](#) | [Mobile text alerts](#) | [RSS Feeds](#) | [E-Newsletters](#)

Find it: [Jobs](#) | [Cars](#) | [Real Estate](#) | [Apartments](#) | [Home Services](#) | [Deals](#) | [Place an ad](#)

DesMoinesRegister.com

SPONSORED BY:



HOME NEWS POLITICS SPORTS ENTERTAINMENT LIFE COMMUNITIES OPINION OBITUARIES WEATHER CLASSIFIEDS CUSTOMER SERVICE

Travel Health 2 Cents' Worth MomsLikeMe Homestyle Juice Des Moines Woman fiftysomething Q magazine Dating Milestones

Comment, blog & share photos
Log in | Become a member | Search people

SUBSCRIBE NOW!

14-0!
 Get home delivery of The Des Moines Register

Positively ready for 2011

BY KELLY ROBERSON • SPECIAL TO THE REGISTER • DECEMBER 31, 2010

Comments (0) Recommend [Print this page](#) E-mail this article Share Type Size **A A A**

Ten months ago, life looked pretty bleak for Jim and Katie Lacona of Urbandale. Jim had just lost his father, and his mother was dying. Then he closed his family's 53-year-old business, Mama Lacona's restaurant, because of federal environmental rules that would require them to spend up to \$80,000 to replace a grease trap interceptor.

The Lacona family was frustrated and angry with government regulations and local politicians.

"No one would help me," Jim Lacona said. "They all said they were going to help, but they never helped."

Yet when the Laconas closed the door to their popular restaurant, the outpouring of support from the community was amazing, Lacona said.

Mama Lacona's soon relocated to a near-new facility that had previously housed another Urbandale restaurant.

"The opportunity just fell in my lap," Lacona said. "The guy spent \$3 million building this place, and he gave it to me essentially for nothing. And business is twice as good as the other place."

It's not always easy to pick up and move on in the face of adversity - but many people now are facing that challenge.

"There's a lot of uncertainty about the economy and what's going on in people's lives," said Dr. Gaby Cora, a spokesperson for the American Psychiatric Association and a speaker and consultant. "People have been facing more stress than in previous years, and there's a cumulative aspect to this. But it is important to count your blessings."

Sundie and Brad Ruppert and their two children were driving to Austin, Texas, in June 2008 when they received an e-mail out of the blue: Meredith Corporation was closing its books division, and five of the projects the freelance graphic design duo were working on no longer existed. Twenty minutes later, a phone call came that Brad's mentor had lost his battle with cancer.

Within the span of an hour, the family's life was topsy-turvy. But two years later, Sundie Ruppert described losing the projects as the best thing that could have happened.



MARY CHIND/THE REGISTER

Katie Lacona and daughter Olivia, 13, in the new Mama Lacona's restaurant in Urbandale. Business and family troubles turned 2010 bleak, but the Laconas are optimistic for 2011 in the site that Jim Lacona calls "twice as good as the other place."

Squelching the negative

Sometimes negativity comes from within - that self-talk that we all have, the internal critic in our heads.

"You have to recognize when you are listening to that critic and replace it," said life coach Rita Perea.

Perea's advice: When that happens, visualize a stop sign and replace the negative inside voice with a mantra that's meaningful, simple and positive. Perea uses "I welcome the ease."

"It takes practice, because we aren't conditioned to think like that, but we need to retrain our brains," she said. "It's a technique that can be applied to any situation and helps us pick ourselves up rather quickly."

More Life headlines

- Tips on using your new gadgets (1)
- Your 2 Cents' Worth: Monday, January 3, 2011 (1)

Most Viewed Stories

Today | Yesterday | Last 7 Days | Last 30 Days

- Luther College student found dead on school's baseball field

"We've always said when the door opens a little, you stick your foot through it and see what's on the other side," Ruppert said.

The two gradually turned what had been their retail art business, Vintage Sculpture, into more of a wholesale venture. Today, some of their freelance graphic design business has returned, but sculpture is now their No. 1 priority. Their kids - who lost their regular allowances on that day in 2008 - have, at 13 and 17, created their own successful businesses (one mowing lawns, one taking care of pets), and Ruppert describes 2010 as a "blessed and bountiful year."

Part of gaining perspective and focusing less on what's lacking in our lives is uncluttering - sorting out the good and uprooting it from the bad. Part is also willpower and a renewed intent. Try these tips for acquiring a more positive outlook in 2011:

Tally your wins. Even the most miniscule accomplishments can be a good thing, said Cora, which is why she advocates writing down a "win list" of everything positive that's happened - with kids, spouse, friends and yourself. The goal, she said, is to capture everything over the course of a year that has been for the better. "You could look at terrible news every day, but you need to find some counterbalance," Cora said.

Ask yourself: What's holding you back? Sharing all that's bad with others is helpful - once in a while. But if you continually meet with friends after you've been laid off to rehash the day you lost your job and its aftereffects, perhaps its time to consider letting go of the group or the topic of conversation, Cora said.

"What you see is that people perpetuate the bad thing happening over and over again, and it's significant to try a makeover," she said. "Negative breeds more negative and won't bring more positive in. Even for people who are in therapy, if you're feeling down, there's no intervention that goes over the bad things that will make you feel better."

Life coach Rita Perea in West Des Moines uses "transition" to help clients who may be focusing on what they've lost.

"Our status quo as we knew it is not going to be the same again," Perea said. "We need to embrace the new status quo and realize that this is what life is like now."

Put your win list somewhere prominent and read it over and over. Not only is it a feel-good routine, but it will help you with the next step.

Create measurable goals. The goal list can be a mix of old and new but should contain five to 10 things to commit to. Some should be individual while others can be ideas that you do as a family or with your significant other. Did you help with a PTA fundraiser at your kids' school? That's something that probably gave you a sense of accomplishment and was tangible, so it can be easily repeated. "You want to capture that same spirit to achieve goals," Cora said. "All of a sudden, by that exercise, you'll get other fresh ideas for positive goals you can make."

Put that goal list somewhere prominent and read it over and over. Just like your win list, a goal list can also be a way to re-focus on the good things that you have and that you want to happen. If it helps, include photos or drawings and check in with both your win list and your goal list regularly - even just once a month. "Our ability to maintain our spirit as positive as possible will have a positive outcome," Cora said.

- Jane Schorer Meisner contributed to this report.

[Recommend](#) Be the first of your friends to recommend this.

1

[Share](#) 5

CLASSIFIED LISTINGS: [Des Moines jobs](#) | [Cars for sale](#) | [Des Moines homes](#)

Story chat

Be the first to share your comments on this story.

- Luther: College student found dead on school's baseball field
- Hansen: Life becomes a process of adjustment for Iowa amputee, his wife
- Guest column: Obsessed with gay marriage, Vander Plaats has gone too far
- Des Moines dance studio is burglarized, owner reports
- Health services agency probed for misspending
- Iowans in the NFL: Arrington makes impact in debut
- River rage: Why Iowa's flood risk is rising
- Iowa Air Guard chief receives promotion
- Death takes Dr. Wooters, caring bearer of bad news
- Basu: Iowa woman learns hard way perils of online matchmaking

The Des Moines Register on Facebook

Latest Blog Posts



Entertainment in Des Moines
What's fun in Des Moines: Ice Skating at Bre...
1 hour ago



Iowa Politics Insider
Former Iowan Collins withdraws from RNC chairman r...
10 hours ago



Happy New Year's
By: cynthiabettis
1/2/2011 5:26 PM CST

[More blogs](#) | [Create your blog](#)

NEWS ON YOUR CELLPHONE



Sign up for breaking news text alerts.

Enter your phone number:

Three input boxes followed by a 'Continue' button.

Cancel Alerts | Modify Alerts | Privacy Policy
Msg&data rates may apply. To Opt-out text STOP to 4INFO (44636). For more information text HELP to 4INFO (44636). Contact your carrier for more details. powered by 4INFO.

More text alerts | Email newsletter

ADS BY PULSE 360

Get Listed Here

Fort Lauderdale Refinance: 3.4% FIXED!

\$160,000 Mortgage: \$547/mo. No SSN req. No Hidden Fees. FREE Quotes!

www.LendGo.com

Fort Lauderdale: \$9 Car Insurance

Your Auto Insurer hates this. Car Insurance For Only \$9!

www.News9consumer.com

Lean Six Sigma Online

Get Trained & Six Sigma Certified. Flexible, Top Program 100% online.

www.VillanovaU.com/SixSigma

Related Topics

- Places - Urbandale, IA
Life - Arts, Graphic Design

Contextual linking provided by Topix

Inside Desmoinesregister.com



Top 100 restaurants

Results of the most complete survey ever of the favorite restaurants in the D.M. area.



Ames flood aerals

View more than 80 photos of the worst flooding in Ames history: August, 2010.



Winter in Iowa

Stay up to date with the latest winter weather forecast and information.



Find a new home

Search hundreds of homes for sale in Des Moines and surrounding communities.



Mug shots

View booking mug shots and related info from Polk County and Dallas County jail Web sites.

Advertisement for 'Mom Dilemma #36' featuring a young girl and buttons for 'YES, at least she's dressed!' and 'NO, I have some rules!'.

Site index

Full index

Classifieds

- Jobs
Cars
Real Estate
Apartments
Place an ad
Garage sales

News

- Business
Opinion
Columnists
Politics
Crime
Education
Nation & World
Obituaries
Databases
Photos
Video

Communities

- Ankeny
Clive
D.M. East, North
D.M. South
D.M. West
Johnston
Urbandale
Waukee
West Des Moines

Sports

- Preps
Bulldogs
Cyclones
Hawkeyes
Panthers
I-Cubs
Sports stats
Auto racing
Golf
Outdoors

Lifestyle

- Travel
Health
Home & Garden
2 cents worth
MomsLikeMe.com
Vacation Iowa
dmJuice.com
Engagements
Weddings
Anniversaries
Recipes

Entertainment

- Metromix
Restaurant guide
Events calendar
Dining
Music
Arts & culture
Movie Listings
TV Listings
Datebook
Celebrity news
Horoscopes

Extras

- Obituaries
Photos
Today's headlines
Forums
Blogs
Newsletters
RSS feeds
Mobile Site
Text alerts
Sudoku
Comics

Partners: [Jobs: CareerBuilder.com](#) [Cars: Cars.com](#) [Apartments: Apartments.com](#) [Shopping: ShopLocal.com](#) [Homes: Homefinder.com](#)

[Contact Us](#) | [About Us](#) | [Work for Us](#) | [Subscribe](#) | [Place an Ad](#)

Copyright ©2011 The Des Moines Register. All rights reserved.

Use of this site signifies your agreement to the [Terms of Service](#) and [Privacy Policy](#) , updated September 2010.