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**It's all up to somebody**

**By: Lawrence Howes, MBA, CFP®**

So far the second quarter has offered weary portfolios some long overdue sunshine and warmth. The market was up 20% or so in April, and there should be some clear direction here shortly, with perhaps just a hint of how and where we can start to recoup a bunch of lost money. This anticipated growth in the markets suggests that a budding market recovery of some kind is in the works. On a note of caution, there is nothing predictable about the returns from recoveries or even the length of them, however corrections are replaced by recoveries and this recovery is starting to take shape

Most of the US Government programs, as well as many global efforts, designed to help this crisis have done what they were suppose to do - put money into the system and restore confidence. Not all is rosy just yet; however the prospects of an economic collapse have abated if not completely disappeared. It is an interesting state of affairs when I look at this financial meltdown, because most of the root causes were diagnosed and promising treatments were underway in less than seven months - some relatively quick action was taken by both the Bush and Obama administrations. Not bad, and as usual, there is little credit given to how resourceful the US financial system really is.

Before the construction cranes start to refill the skyline again, the one really big player must return to the game - the US consumer. The low-cost manufacturers across the globe have realized that without the open wallets of the basic US consumer the wheels of production literally grind to a halt. There has been some paltry spending so far this year, but the real dollars are being saved for the rainy day that is now upon many. Before our economy warms up, spending has to increase. Before the global economies warm up, US consumers have to get motivated and start buying things.

Nothing new here, it is the basic multiplier of money. Now the gauge to watch on the health of the economy is how quickly money goes from one hand to another. Not whether or not there is any money at all. It is a tragedy when you look at all the lost jobs, hopes and aspirations caused by this correction, however there is a great deal of good that is coming from the aftermath. 2009 is going to be interesting.