

## Spending for the Greater Good

By now, everyone knows someone who's been hit by the economic distress. Even **hardcore shopaholics** are thinking twice before reaching for their credit cards. But is saving a worse idea than continuing to **splurge**?

It used to be that during hard times our government **urged** us to save money to help **cushion the blow** if we lost our jobs. But then the consumer economy took full swing. For many countries, the service sector far **outweighs** the industrial sector when it comes to overall importance and jobs per-capita.

Once this shift firmly established itself, a new **mental-set** took hold. If you want to help your country recover, get out there and spend! We now realize that we are part of a much greater **food chain**.

If we stop buying new televisions, the guys at the electronics store lose their jobs. Then they have less money to eat at restaurants and the waiters lose their jobs, which means the government has less **tax revenue** and has to cut back on employees at local parks. Dirty parks make a country look bad for tourists, who go home and tell friends about the over-flowing trash bins. Fewer tourists come to visit, so the airlines suffer ... and so on and so on ...

As a general rule, we should have at least three months of income saved to cover fixed costs, like mortgage payments, electricity bills and car insurance, in case unemployment strikes. We should also have long-term savings tucked away.

But if we scare ourselves so much that we close our **pocketbooks** altogether, ultimately everyone suffers. And **therein lies the rub** – how to save and spend simultaneously?

So, now that you're done reading, make plans for dinner – at a restaurant – and call some friends to join you. **The more, the merrier**.

## Glossary

<b>cushion the blow</b>	to protect from an impact
<b>food chain</b>	here: hierarchy, usually: the feeding relationships between species in a biotic community
<b>hardcore</b>	the most dedicated and intensely loyal nucleus of a group
<b>mental-set</b>	a frame of mind involving a model that represents a procedure for problem solving
<b>outweigh</b>	to be more significant than
<b>pocketbook</b>	wallet
<b>shopaholic</b>	a person who shops compulsively or very frequently
<b>splurge</b>	to spend extravagantly
<b>tax revenue</b>	government income due to taxation
<b>The more, the merrier.</b> (idiom)	the more people there are, the happier the situation will be
<b>therein lies the rub</b> (idiom)	a problem has been identified
<b>urge</b>	to force or drive forward or onward