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HEARTBREAK HOTEL: Levin (right, with his wife) has begun offering pricey 'executive resilience summits'

ECONOMY

A Salve for Slumping CEOs

FEELING BLUE BECAUSE you're an embattled CEO getting blamed for bringing down the U.S. economy? Jerry Levin feels your pain. The deposed Time Warner chairman, who oversaw the disastrous 2000 merger with AOL, is now the presiding director of the high-end Santa Monica, Calif., treatment center, Moonview Sanctuary. Last week, the center issued a press release offering "executive resilience summits" for down-on-their-luck masters of the universe facing "the toughest times in their careers" and looking to "bounce back." The price tag for a three-day session restoring your equilibrium: \$15,000 for a one-on-one, or \$30,000 for a group of 10.

Levin insists that the workshops—a mixture of role-playing games, personality tests and lectures on the toll of relentless overachievement—are aimed at all overworked executives, not just Wall Streeters. They're also part of Moonview's expansion beyond chemical dependency, chronic pain and personal-crisis treatment to optimal performance seminars for athletes, performers and business people. "I'm putting my life experience out there to help others," says Levin, 69. "We didn't anticipate Hank Paulson's drive to save the world."

But the timing sure is convenient. And Levin isn't the

only businessman selling luxury during these decidedly un-luxurious times. In layoff-ridden New York, some push restaurants are slashing prices, offering coupons and discounts once seen mainly at chain cateries. New York's Jack Bistro tried cutting its entrees a penny for every point the Dow would drop on any given day. On

Craigslist last week, one poster got attention for touting "Recession specials for your Hamptons getaway!" The catch: the five-bedroom house is nowhere near the beach. Levin, for his part, says he doesn't know if anyone has signed up for his summits, but he believes executives are "more open now than before" to nontraditional ideas. Good, because their schedules are wide open, too.

—ANDREW MURR