



## **Achieving Business Success in This Recession**

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Almost all of my clients are business people. They either head up large organisations, run medium sized businesses or own their own small to medium sized business. Regardless of their individual circumstances, they all find themselves in the same position right now. How do we continue to be successful in the current economic environment? I would re-phrase that question slightly: How can we thrive when everyone around us is feeling fearful, worried and sorry for themselves?

You see, the point is that the current economic environment is at least as much about state of mind as it is about economic “reality”. The “greed” state of mind created the current crisis. The “lack of confidence” and “sentiment” states of mind created the current “lack of confidence” in stock markets – and everything else has followed from there.

I had a long conversation with an acquaintance last week. She could have talked forever about the state of the economy, the worries that people have about their jobs, how the economy is “going down the toilet” and how people simply weren’t spending anymore. When I pointed out to her that she had the closest thing to a recession-proof job (she works in pharmaceuticals), that her husband worked for a state agency (and he simply cannot lose his job) and that, with the massive recent reduction in interest rates, that her mortgage costs her a lot less than it did six months ago so, in fact, she’s currently far better off than she was, she almost took offence at not being able to wallow in the self-pity and panic that many seem, perversely, to be enjoying at present.

What’s wrong with people that they revel in bad news? What’s wrong with people who like to be the first to tell the latest story of gloom and doom? What’s wrong with people who trade hardship stories as if they were playing poker? What’s wrong with people? Full stop!

I’ll tell you what’s wrong with people. Decades of psychological work proves conclusively that the vast majority of people are stark raving mad. They use just 1% of their mental energy in the present moment – the vast majority of it is buried, subconsciously, in the dark and distant past. OK! So, your past might have been happy. But the same research proves that, left in an enclosed space with no distraction, the average human being will become disorientated and very, very negative, within a few hours. Why? Because, as adults, we do not know how to use our heads. In fact, we’ve lost our heads.

Only those who keep their heads, whilst everyone else around them is losing theirs, will ride the current storm of self-induced crisis. Only those who are a little more present than the pathetic 1% that I mentioned above will continue to achieve success. Only those who realise (the word actually suggests an awareness of reality that few people really have) that this is a passing phase – and one in which we should not invest our energy in joining the circus of depression recession – will emerge head and shoulders above all the other poor people who are currently wallowing, or drowning, in a sea of bad news.

If you want to continue to achieve exceptional business success in this self-induced difficult business environment you need to focus your mind – not on positive thinking (thinking never changed anything – doing does), not on “strategic goals” (the stuff that management consultants make a fortune out of) – but on doing the right thing, here and now. In other words, pay attention to what’s important now – to just, and only just, what you need to do to be the very best you can be today. Put as simply as possible – pay attention, come to your senses, you’ve five of them, use them! Pay attention to the present moment and invest none – none at all – of your energy in joining in what is, at present, the most popular past-time – talking more crap about the crap that’s happened and, in turn, simply adding to the crap.

Stop it. Devote all of your attention – or, at the very least, more than 1% of it – to what you have to do (really do) just now. How will you know what’s the most important thing you’ll have to do at the present moment? If you’re paying attention, you’ll know. I’ve been enabling my clients do this for years. As one of them said to me recently: “My managing partner asked me why I’m so calm and how I’m so focused on the job in hand right now. I told him that I learned how to use more of my mind long before I had to!”

There’s a lesson in there for all of us. Use more of your mind. Use your five senses. Take one step back from the hysterical nonsense that’s being played out all around us at the moment. Meditate – you don’t need to be a guru – just spend a little time clearing your mind.

A clear and focused mind will prevail.