



Forget About the Recession: How to Succeed

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Many people are struggling at present – many have lost their jobs and many who still have jobs have taken a cut in their take home pay. Many small businesses are struggling, unable to access necessary credit from unwilling bankers – and some are going to the wall. But, also, many who are in secure, well-paid employment, whose monthly mortgage payments have benefited from historically low interest rates, whose cost of living has tumbled over the last few months, have jumped upon the bandwagon of hand-wringing negativity – seemingly actually enjoying wallowing in swapping hard-luck stories. They’ve jumped on a sorry-go-round that they’ve no right to be riding.

What is it with people that they revel in having the worst story? As a client said to me a few days ago, he’s continually witnessing people competing with each other to tell their belt-tightening stories when they’ve no need to tighten their belts at all. People taking the bus instead of the taxi – and boasting about a mode of transport that was only for the great unwashed this time last year. Having take-away pizza on a Friday evening instead of going out for a meal. These people might just have thought take-away pizza for their kids twelve months back. As a restaurateur client of mine said to be recently, he’s avoided the nonsense of offering “early-bird” specials all evening and has actually decided to discontinue his early-bird menu altogether – as he said, it’s simply feeding recession fever.

Now, you might contend that taking a bus instead of a taxi is to be lauded. But that’s not my point. You see, when we devote our attention to the negative, we feed the very negative that we should wish to avoid. That is my point. At present, normal people are fuelling the frenzy of feeling sorry for themselves – and that, in itself, is sustaining and prolonging an economic situation that, at its very heart, was created by enough normal people behaving inappropriately in the first place.

We need a new world order – this is not some grand aspiration, it is something that starts with normal people behaving abnormally. In other words, it starts with you and me. If you want to see things change, you can’t expect other normal people to effect that change, it has to start with you and me. It has to start within, with a change of heart. Hard factual evidence from the US Federal Government proves that the state of mind of a small group has a ripple effect. Hard evidence from the world of quantum physics proves conclusively that energy – yours and mine – has an effect on

the energy of the universe. In other words, it is up to you and me to change the world – a change that cannot and never will take place until we change ourselves.

This change starts in the little things that we do every day. If we leave our state of mind in the already proven default state of the negative we simply perpetuate all the things that we want to change – from our own individual economic woes to the problems of the world at large. The change starts here. Your problems are your own fault – the solution is in your own hands. What's happening in the economy, in your work or lack of it, in your business is a direct consequence of your very own state of mind. External events should not be allowed to dictate your state of mind. If they do, you are no better than a puppet – with others pulling your strings.

The economic challenges that we all face are nothing more than obstacles to be overcome – they are not overwhelming problems to which we should succumb. What happens outside of you should not – and, if you want to be a success, cannot – dictate our reactions. We need to take real action and, as I say, that starts in the ordinary detail of our ordinary daily lives. We need to stop the rot by stopping ourselves in our tracks when we find ourselves happily joining in the negative nonsense that is currently so prevalent. That means we need to be mindful – something that does not come naturally to the normal adult who, research tells us, lives his or her life mindlessly.

The cards are stacked against you – not only is your default state of mind negative, but you are surrounded by people who share the same default settings. It's up to you to change, to pull yourself together and call a halt to the nonsense of so-called normal living. You need to rise above all that and become abnormal. Unlike normal people, you need to develop your innate ability to be mindful, to pay full attention to what is actually possible – you have to stop feeding the negative frenzy.

Mindfulness is simply about paying attention – not to what you think is going on, but to what is actually happening in the present moment. We are alive, we are living and breathing. And each breath that we take we are presented with a once in a lifetime opportunity to behave outside the sad norm of the negative. Each moment provides us with a unique opportunity to take control of our state of mind and do the right thing – because perpetuating the negative is clearly the wrong thing.

You develop mindfulness by clearing your mind, by taking one step back from the negative circus in which so many people seem to be taking a perverse pleasure. You need to start each day by ensuring that your mind is within your own control. This is done by taking a few minutes – only five or ten minutes will do – to pay attention before the challenges of the day or cares of the world come seeking your acquiescence. So, tomorrow morning, slow down. Take time to experience shaving, showering, brushing your teeth, chatting with your family – before the day starts. It is in these few moments that we can change our minds – and change our lives.