

## Seven Common Sense Strategies for Sanity... in Nonsensical Times

A client recently said to me, as we were discussing the economy, "It's not a bad economy; it's a different economy than we were used to. It's a change... that's all..."

What a refreshing way to look at it! I know lots of people who are doing very well in this "economic downturn." And I know people who are struggling. Here's a concept that I hold to be true; we cannot affect (to a large extent) the economy of the US or the world; but we do have control over how we react to the economy... and the world around us.

Now, more than ever some might argue, learning to be calm, cool, creative and effective is critical to your individual and our collective success. We create more easily when in a relaxed state than when we are stressed. We can more easily utilize our natural problem solving abilities when we are not in fight-or-flight mode, but rather in relaxation mode. Intuitively you know this to be true... so, "how do I do that?" you might ask...

Here are some common sense strategies to help you stay clam and collected in these nonsensical times.

GIGO – remember that? Garbage In. Garbage Out. It works for computers but we seem to think it won't effect our minds. Your mind is the greatest "computer" known. What you "feed" it will definitely determine what it produces. Garbage goes in – garbage comes out. Zig Ziglar calls it "stinkin' thinkin'." Follow these tips to treat and feed your mind – you'll be pleasantly surprised at how much more often you feel calm in the sea of distress.

**1. Limit the TV.** Did you know that just four hours a day of TV time equates to sitting in front of the boob tube for 2 months – 24/7 after just one year? Do the math. If you feel stressed because you don't have enough time – turn the TV down... or off. Perhaps this silly little idea just gave you an additional two months a year (or more). Be careful what you watch. Be entertained but... get the TV out of your bedroom!

So many people make the mistake of going to sleep with the TV on. While you are falling asleep, all the conscious filters you rely on to screen out negative information go to sleep with you. This means you are opening the most powerful and vulnerable part of your to the meaningless chatter of the TV. Your bed should be for two things. Sleep is one. Get the TV out of there.

**2. Up-to-date vs. inundated.** Yes, it is OK to be up-to-date on the events of the world. If you are in sales or interacting with the public, knowledge of the major events can almost be a job requirement. But you need not be inundated. I recently had a conversation with a man who watches the news all day long. CNN is literally always on. He is tuned in and is as negative as they come... No wonder. GI-GO. Limit your information gathering. Unless you need to be an expert for some reason, accept the fact that you'll never know everything. Give yourself a break and skim the information instead of swimming in it.

**3. Read!** One in four American adults did not read a single book in 2007! The typical person reported to have read four books with half reading more and half reading fewer... The 'dumbing down' of America continues...

Source: <http://www.iht.com/articles/ap/2007/08/21/america/NA-GEN-US-Reading-Habits-AP-Poll.php> Oh, by the way, it is good to read for pleasure. You don't have to read only self-help books or business development books. A good novel expands your imagination, increases your vocabulary and improves your ability to paint convincing pictures to move others. are you in sales? Read!

**4. “Automobile University”** You’ve heard this before – listen to CDs in your car. You may feel you are “past this” or it is too basic/pedestrian/ elementary (fill in your own term) for you. OK. Maybe it is. So put something else in the CD player besides the 15 year old tape you’ve heard a thousand times. How ‘bout “books on tape.” Remember, it does not have to be just personal development or business materials. Even a good Steven King book on tape is better than another talk-radio program hammering home the point that we are in a challenging time. No kidding. And hearing that for the umpteenth time today isn’t going to improve your ability to do something about it for yourself and your family. You are in control while you are driving, so decide now to get behind the wheel and do something productive with your time – and your attitude.

**5. Find things for which to be grateful.** This could be a whole course. Here’s the basic idea. Gratitude is one of the healthiest most positive and open of all emotions. You can find little things every day; a good cup of coffee, a child playing with a dog, clear sky, palm trees, perfect weather – even a winter storm, a glance from your lover, your child, your friend. Focus on little things every day. Take a moment – just a moment is all it takes – to “smell the roses.” When you do simply say to yourself, “I’m glad I caught this. I wonder what I’ll find next...” You can train your mind to be grateful and then more good things will come into your awareness. Guaranteed.

**6. Meditate before sleeping.** Ok, I now this is intimidating to some people but it really is a pretty easy thing to do. Find a quiet place to be uninterrupted. Turn off the phones. Gently relax, close your eyes and focus your attention on the “light” you see. Yes – the light you see. Make the room dark enough and you will have a sensation of light. Sometimes it is still, other times it is changing. Focus on it. When you find yourself drifting off on a thought – remind yourself gently to “go back to the light.” Let the thought go and bring your attention back to the light. This takes discipline. Your thoughts will want to race at first – but hey, they are your thoughts. If you aren’t getting control of them, who is? With practice, you can focus more time on the light and your thoughts will slow – or stop.

Training your mind to slow down is healthy, natural and relatively easy to do. I suggest you do this before bed. Find a special place to unwind, to meditate. Don’t do this in bed (remember – bed is for two things and the second one is not meditating), do this somewhere else. Then, when your thoughts have slowed, go to bed and sleep soundly. Unwind your mind before you climb into bed. Try it. You will sleep better every time. For more on this contact [George@JanusCenter.com](mailto:George@JanusCenter.com) and ask about the “Meditating on the Light” CD.

**7. Start your day.** Start your day – do not let your day start you. Take an extra 30 seconds or 5 minutes to do a quick meditation before you get out of bed to set the tone. Start your day once you’ve decided to feel good about it. You will be glad you did – and that is just one more thing about which to be thankful, isn’t it?