



February 2009

## **Mind Tools for Self Management & Advanced Leadership**

### ***Get Free of Economic Doom – Watch the Stories you Tell Yourself.***

**Andrew Burnham**

**There is the situation, like the ‘economy’, and then there is what you tell yourself about it. As far as your own resilience, creativity and ability to find solutions is concerned, it is the stories that you tell yourself that helps or hinders you, not the situation itself.**

Do you notice your mind ‘going-on’ about the economy? Are you repeating doom and gloom stories over and over in your mind? Are the stories you tell yourself constructive? Are they helping or hindering you?

### **Improvisers are in the Moment**

One of the key skills an improviser uses, on or off stage is their awareness of their own thinking. They know how to be in-the-moment. This being in the moment is not a ‘just follow every thought at random’ state of being, it is a state of complete and total alertness.

### **Making Choices**

This alertness allows them to make choices about how they see events. Without the ability to make choices they lapse into

unconsciousness and repeat the same story in their mind, over and over again. If they fall into a repetitive story, they lose their ability to make creative and entertaining scenes happen for their customers. Then they lose business and are more stressed. Are you being led by your own mind into unconsciousness? Are you aware of how you are processing your world?

### **You Create the Stories**

You and only you create the stories about what happens in your life. And you are responsible for the affect that these stories have on you. My phone rings less. What’s my next thought? Is it a panic or fear story or is it a ‘what can I do NOW about it’ thought? Is there anything I can do about it now? What would happen if I accepted it and dropped the story I make up about it?

### **Drop Negative Stories**

Whenever you find you are creating a negative story around a situation or an event, stop it. Drop it like you would a hot pan. This is challenging but the rewards are huge. You could also counteract the negative story by focusing on something else or interjecting another thought.

### **Arresting Stories that have No Benefit**

When I start to become worried about the economy I might say ‘this is natural’, and it



is 'normal for economies to go through cycles', remembering some education I had in economics. Maybe these thoughts are true and maybe they are not. What matters most is that I am successful at arresting a negative story that is about to control my thinking, drain my energy and cut my effectiveness by half. Are the stories you are telling yourself helping?

This thinking will not change the situation. But if you could change the situation, the economy, than focus on that and call me. My guess is that for the time being, you can't change the outside but you do have the power to keep your inside world free of stress and suffering.

### **Acceptance if that is all You Can Do**

The next level up in control and power is not to make a story at all. Accept what is. Once you accept a situation, you free energy to take action if that is possible and you are no longer are stuck. And if no action is possible, you remain free of any negative dwelling and are able to move on. Your job, career, and daily activities may change.

What will you be telling yourself when and if they do?

### **Watch the Content of your Mind**

Place your attention on what is occurring in you as it arises. Start spending more time in-the-moment and jettison any and all

stories that do nothing to change the situation and reduce your ability to cope.

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### **Mind Tools Power Training Hour**

Imagine being calm and focused despite what is happening to you or around you in just one hour! Arrange a **Mind Tools Power Hour** in your organization.

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### **Are you involved with:**

- Leadership or Team development?
- Learning?
- Training?

Arrange for a Mind Tools for Self-Management workshop or presentation.

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### **Do you plan meetings or conferences?**

Email us at [andrew@beinginthemoment.com](mailto:andrew@beinginthemoment.com) and we'll talk about a key note or break out session.

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### **Help Spread the Word.**

Were you moved in the right direction by this article and others? Consider the others you know who stand to benefit. More good news is coming.

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*Andrew Burnham is President of two learning consulting firms and an international workshop leader and speaker who specializes in re-emerging ways of learning, being and doing.*

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