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ENHANCING LIVES

Calm the Storm

If you step back and take a look at our society, we have become a people of FEAR. Government and big business learned a long time ago that our emotions play a crucial role in our decision making and fear is the most powerful of them. “Have you ever felt an upset stomach after a meal,” “Does your leg keep moving too much at night.” “Is your family safe from the ‘Terrorists.’” “Are you the next one to come down with Swine Flu?” We hear these things all day, every day. If you do not think they have an effect, well maybe you’re so scared you are now in denial. As a small business owner today, learning to stay calm, clear minded, and level headed during difficult times can be one of the best ways to ride the wave instead of standing there and getting hit by it.

There was a television show on the other day, about the worst plane crashes in history, and how learning about their causes ultimately made air travel safer. In the ‘90’s, there were three related crashes involving 737’s where planes, without warning, would bank hard to one side, then roll back the other way into a nose dive into the ground. After

years of research into the cause, it was learned that the rudder trigger would malfunction due to years of extreme temperature change and lock in the extended position. This, however, was not the actual cause of the accident. Pilots were taught a procedure based on wind shear from another plane to compensate with a full rudder in the opposite direc-

tion. When pilots assumed they were dealing with wind shear, they immediately went into the procedure they were taught. In reality, slamming the rudder pedals in opposite directions caused their planes to crash. I share this story because, as a business owner, overreaction to stimulus in your “flight deck” can result in a major catastrophe.

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We cannot change the world around us, but we can change ourselves. One of the greatest skills a business owner can possess is the ability to separate themselves from their emotions: To step away from the fear of the initial reaction and focus all of our energy on clear, rational thinking that will ultimately lead to the truth of a situation. One of the best ways to engage in this practice is through breathing or meditation. Meditation does not necessarily mean crossing our legs, lighting candles, and chanting. There are hundreds of styles and many are very simple breathing techniques. We breathe each day as our heart beats and our eyes blink...unconsciously. It is done automatically for us. When we take a moment to focus on the extension of the breath deeper into the lower abdomen and slow it down to help with relaxation, with practice, we will be more in control of our emotions and stress. Learning about ourselves is the first step to learning about the world around us. Once we gain control of our own bodies and minds, we will find our businesses following suit.