



How to Calm Your Brain During Any Storm

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How to Calm Your Brain During Any Storm

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There is a major storm in our economy today. Understandably, this situation results in many entrepreneurs feeling very stressed.

When you're overly stressed, the chemistry in your brain changes. Your problem-solving abilities are reduced, and your judgment is greatly diminished. In fact, it is a very similar state to being drunk!

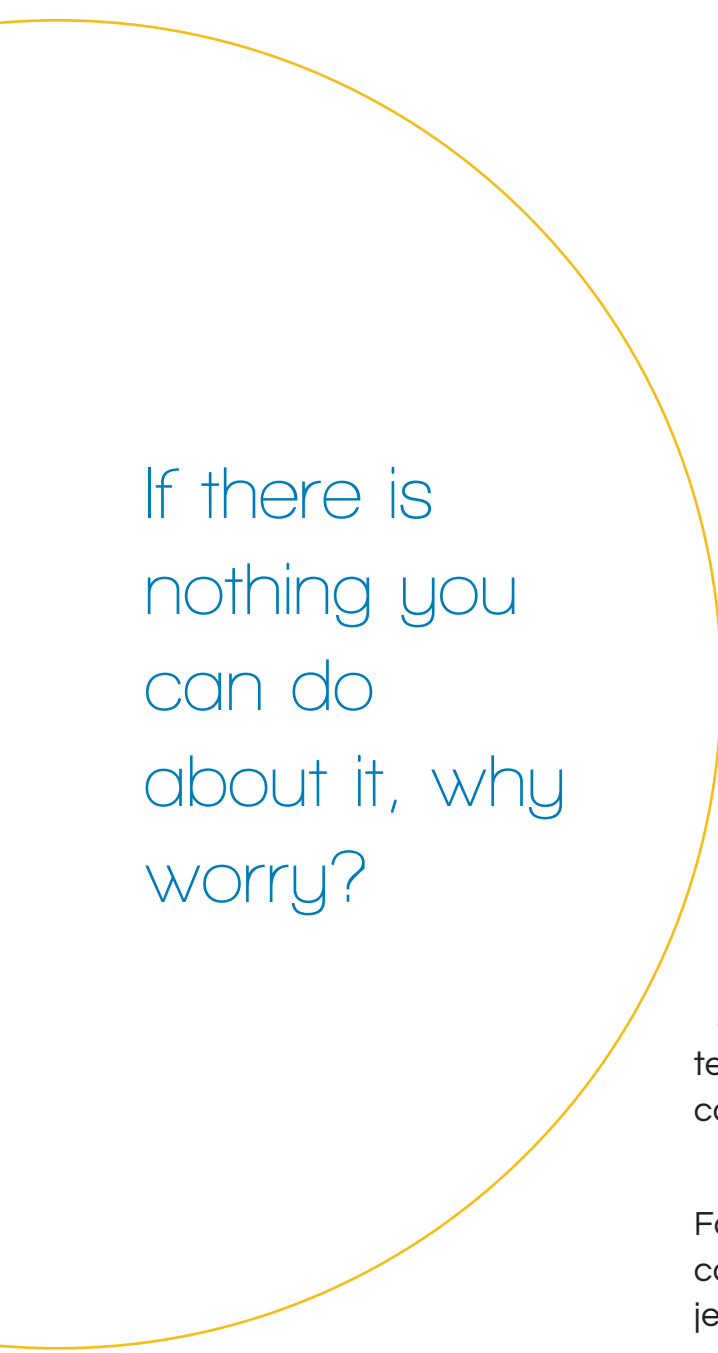
This is no state to be in when making important decisions about your business or your life. As the markets hit tremendous lows in 2009, many in-

vestors panicked under the stress and sold all their investments. In most cases, this was a major mistake because they sold low and locked in all those losses. They did so because they were stressed and not thinking clearly.

Here are some simple steps you can take to begin to relax and reduce the effects of stress on your brain:

- Take at least 3 deep, slow, regular breaths. This will start to slow your heart rate, lower your blood pressure, and restore cognitive clarity.
- As you breathe, let your shoulders relax and loosen your jaw – you may be surprised at how much tension you hold in your jaw.
- Focus your mind on the present moment. To help with this, you might focus your attention on your breath passing through your nostrils as you breathe, or pick a spot on the wall and focus your eyes gently on that spot. When focusing on the present moment, you prevent yourself from regretting the past and fearing

By focusing on the present moment, you prevent yourself from regretting the past and fearing the future.



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the future – both of which increase stress. (For a deeper understanding of this concept, read *The Power of Now* by Eckhart Tolle.)

- When uncomfortable feelings arise, don't try to ignore them. Instead, acknowledge and label them. Recent research at UCLA proves this technique allows you to detach from negative emotions and keep them from hijacking your calm.

You may also want to take a break. One good idea is to go for a walk in the fresh air and sunlight.

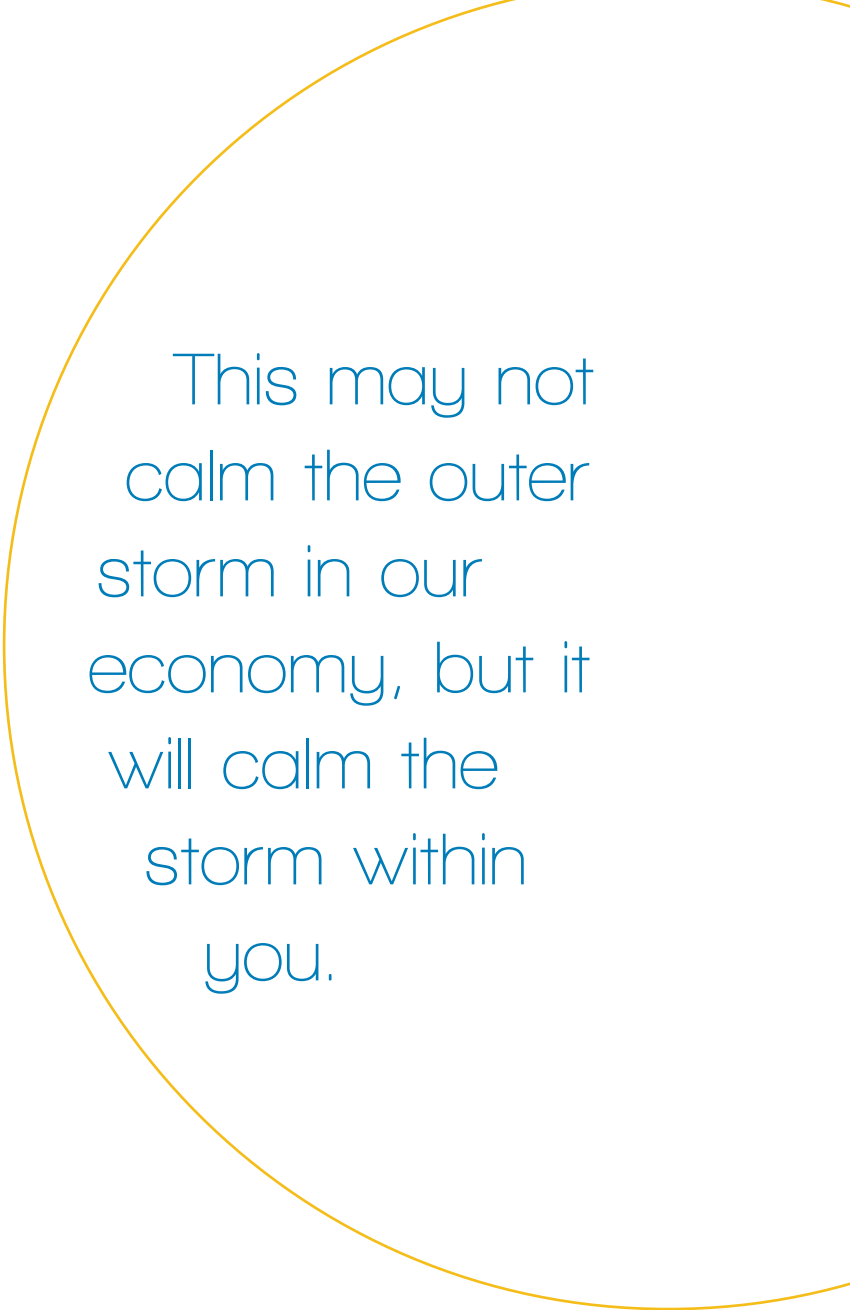
Once you sense you are relaxed, start to look at your situation more realistically. Then, like the serenity prayer says, accept the things you cannot change and have the courage to change the things you can.

Regarding the things you cannot change, simply accept the situation and let go of any tension you feel about it. If there is nothing you can do about it, why worry?

For the things you can change, use your state of calm and mental clarity to help you make an objective list of what you need to do – not one

swayed by emotion. Then, in a calm and relaxed manner, complete each task to the best of your ability.

Will this calm the outer storm in our economy? No. But it will calm the storm within you and make you less likely to do something irrational that you will later regret.



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