

The ‘Scary Times’ Success Manual

Transforming current anxieties and fears into strategic growth, progress, and achievement.

by Dan Sullivan

Recent economic and political events have made many people anxious and fearful about their futures. At The Strategic Coach®, our business is helping successful entrepreneurs increase their sense of direction, confidence, and capability in all areas of their personal and business lives. In response to many requests from our clients for insight into the present “scary times,” we have developed ten strategies for transforming the negativity of the current situation into opportunities for growth, progress, and achievement. We hope these strategies support your creative thinking, communications, and actions in the months ahead

- 1 Forget about yourself, focus on others. Fear can drive people into themselves, making them feel isolated and helpless. The best strategy here is to go in the opposite direction, expanding your connection with others — focusing on helping them transform their negatives into positives. The more you contribute in this fashion, the less you will need to worry about your own situation. You will become a source of confidence for everyone else.
- 2 Forget about your commodity, focus on your relationships. In scary times, people become frightened about the viability of their “commodities” — the things they sell and the jobs they hold. A more strategic response here is to disregard your own commodity and focus on deepening the power and possibility of all your relationships — with family, friends, team members, suppliers, clients, customers, and prospects. Every time you strengthen a relationship, the viability of your commodity, without you focusing on it, will increase.
- 3 Forget about the sale, focus on creating value. Most people don’t like being sold at the best of times. When times are scary, they turn off, hang up, and slam shut. But what people want at all times is value creation — that is, solutions that help them eliminate their dangers, capture their opportunities, and reinforce their strengths. When you focus on providing these three solutions, the sales will naturally follow.
- 4 Forget about your losses, focus on your opportunities. Things you had, things you took for granted, may have disappeared. Some people never get over this. They keep trying to replay their old games. A better strategy is to start an entirely new game — using new ideas, new energies, new tools, and new resources. A big opportunity is suddenly available now for achieving far more than you ever did in the past.
- 5 Forget about your difficulties, focus on your progress. Things may not be as easy as they were. The new difficulties will either defeat you or reveal new strengths. Your physical muscles always get stronger from working against resistance. The same is true for the muscles in your mind, your spirit, and your character. Treat this whole period of challenge as a time when you can make your greatest progress as a human being.
- 6 Forget about the “future,” focus on your today. The “future” is an abstraction. It doesn’t exist except as an idea. The only future that has any reality is the one that you continually

create for yourself through each day's contributions, achievements, and results. This is an excellent time to ignore all those experts who never saw the present circumstances coming. Focus on what you can do over the course of each 24 hours, and you'll be the only expert on the future you'll ever need.

7 Forget about who you were, focus on who you can be. Many people define themselves by external circumstances. When these abruptly change, they don't know who they are, so they keep trying to be who they used to be. From now on, take your cues from the inside — from your dreams, ideals, values, and operating principles. These need never change, regardless of the circumstances. Take advantage of the present external confusion to become self-directed, self-managed, and self-motivated.

8 Forget about events, focus on your responses. When things are going well, many people think they are actually in control of events. That's why they feel so defeated and depressed when things turn bad. They think they've lost some fundamental ability. The most consistently successful people in the world know they can't control events — but continually work towards greater control over their creative responses to events. This period, while things are uncertain, is an excellent time to focus all of your attention and energies on being creatively responsive to all of the unpredictable events that lie ahead.

9 Forget about what's missing, focus on what's available. When things change for the worse, many desirable resources are missing — including information, knowledge, tools, systems, personnel, and capabilities. These deficiencies can paralyze many people, who believe they can't make decisions and take action. A strategic response is to take advantage of every resource that is immediately available to achieve as many small results, to make as much daily progress, as possible. Work with every resource and opportunity at hand, and your confidence will continually grow.

10 Forget about your complaints, focus on your gratitude. This is one of those times when everyone has to make a fundamental decision: to complain or to be grateful. When things turn negative, the consequences of this decision are much greater. Complaining only attracts negative thoughts and people; gratitude creates the opportunity for the best thinking, actions, and results to emerge. Focus on everything that you are grateful for — communicate this — and open yourself each day to the best possible consequences.

Dan Sullivan is co-founder and president of The Strategic Coach Inc. and creator of The Strategic Coach Program™, which helps accomplished entrepreneurs reach new heights of success and happiness.

For more information email info@strategiccoach.com or visit www.strategiccoach.com.

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