

How to Maintain a Strong Mindset in a Weak Economy

Interview with Mike Michalowicz., author of The Toilet Paper Entrepreneur

Tom: **Is the economy really as weak as the media is portraying it to be?**

Mike: That's a great question, you know, the edict of the media is "If it bleeds, it leads." They want stories that would grab people's attention and the more sensationalism that there is, the more angst that there is, they pursue it. The funny thing is basically in marketing is you send out email marketing. If you send out an email marketing letter out with the headline "Bad news," it will get, I think it will get 50% increase in reads over any other title including a title that says "Good news". We eat up bad news and the media knows that and they sell it.

So, getting back to that core question, is the economy that bad? No! It's not! But the media will keep pitching it and as we, the entrepreneurs start believing it, we start behaving consistently with it and in some degree it becomes a self-fulfilling prophecy. The funny thing is, the down economy, the struggling economy or at least the perception of struggling economy inevitably is the best time. It's the golden opportunity to start a new business.

Tom: **And why do you think that's the case?**

Mike: Well, a few things. First of all the "get rich quicks," - that's the title I give to people that are going to business with the fore front of making money and secondarily trying to find something that makes them content - and I think it's a wrong of starting a business. In any time in history, there are people going out to make a quick buck and when they see the reports of a down economy and they will feel symptoms. I mean, it's not like it's untrue. It's just being way blown out of proportion. The get rich quick guys and gals immediately go for the next thing. So, there is a dearth in competition immediately from those people but the other thing, their phenomenon is that new startups don't start up. They see that the economy is dropping because that's what the media is saying. They believe it and they say it's the worst time to start their business.

The great irony is classic Economics 101, you know, buy low sell high. When the economy dips and everyone is running fearful, that's the time to

jump in because there's the least competition. Right now, Warren Buffet is lapping up stock. He knows what to do in these scenarios. This is his gig. He got rich by being a contrarian and doing what the masses don't do. So he's now lapping up stocks and prudent and smart entrepreneurs will see this as a golden opportunity to start their business because of how much competition is going away.

Tom: **What do you think about, you know, we went through a similar situation and it probably wasn't as – I don't want to use the word like “vicious” in talking about the economy – but earlier in the decade, in the year 2000, 2001, actually there was a struggle there. Why do you think it's getting so blown out of proportion now? Do you think that people forget that “Hey, we went through something similar just seven years ago or so and we--**

Mike: Yeah.

Tom: **--got out of it pretty fast.”**

Mike: Yeah, yeah. Yes. The economy is difficult so we go through the same thing over and over. But we, as human beings, don't seem to change much and we react the same way. You know, it's kind of like a horror movie. You go there knowing you'll going to be scared, knowing that something is coming and still get scared and react that way and quiver. And when the economy hits, we go into this mindset going, “Oh my God, it's over forever.”

I call it the “Perpetuality Syndrome” and here's the example. In my book, “Toilet Paper Entrepreneur,” I referenced this and here it is. You go into a restroom. You finish when you're finished. You look over and you have three sheets. Now, we've all been in that situation and it's like, “Oh my God,” you know, “What am I gonna do?” And you find a way, you know, I won't get into the dirty details but you find a way to navigate that. The next time you go into the bathroom, you still have that reminder saying, “Is there three sheets?” So the first thing you do is check for three sheets. But it's a full roll, everything is fine and now you get instantly back into the abundance beliefs and unpreparedness or the abundance perception. And you need to start tearing through the paper roll.

And then again, you know, a month later, you get caught. “Geesh, there's only three sheets again.” Whatever the current scenario is, I think it's human nature to believe that's going to be the perpetual scenario. So when things are bad, it's like, “Oh my God, the rest of my life is going to be bad.”

When things are good, it's like, "I can't do anything wrong." The fact is, things go in cycle and when we go through the cycle, and it's the media's best interest to blow it out of proportion because that attracts us and then for us to overreact.

One more example is when people drive cars. If you've gone through, you know, defensive training, if you start to go into a skid because of ice or snow or whatever, the most common reaction is to oversteer in the other direction and that worsens it. The car bucks back and then you oversteer the other way and now you're in a total out of control spin. So the key to success in navigating a car out of control is actually when the car is going to spin, is holding the wheel steady and taking your foot off the gas. Just go a little more cautiously and you face a good response and the car automatically, so to speak, brace itself.

In a down economy, a lot of people are overreacting and taking these dramatic swings which kind of further perpetuate that media has talked about how bad it is and the entrepreneurs that kind of states, "We'll take our foot off the gas, be a little more cautious, proceed a little more slowly but keep on pushing forward," that come out, you know, the big winners in this scenario.

Tom: **When you say that people are overreacting, what are some of the examples and when I say examples, somebody's mistake that they're making.**

Mike: Yeah. So it's why I met with a few guys today, I mean, our mastermind group where some have this exact scenario and these guys have been through. I myself had a business during the Dot com bust and I had a business during the last bust in 1993. The reaction, most commonly the first step is "I got to stop selling."

Now this sounds bizarre and people don't say it that way but they say, "Listen, business is slowing down. Everybody knows my phones calls are not coming in as aggressively. Marketing, I can cut off very quickly. I could cut it and just take it off on marketing very quickly as an outsource cost in most cases. So I'm going to stop marketing so I can get some cash back in.

Then the next thing to go is staff. It's like, "Well the business isn't coming in, probably because things just slowed down but mostly because they're not pushing aggressively forward." Then the next one to go is then staff, saying, "Oh, I'm overstaffed," and start cutting staff. Well that staff, if you

fire and especially if you fire the wrong people also will perpetuate in sales.

Either they were the direct sales people or maybe more likely there were the administrative and service people behind it that people buy repeatedly on good service and maintenance, not necessarily on a good sales guy. So you start cutting back there and then it comes as a little bit of downward spiral. I am operating a business so I cut staff. I cut staff which results in less business coming in and you keep this downward spiral going. Again, just kind of going back to the point, that the first reaction inevitably is people say, "I got to cut the easy expenses". Marketing is often the most easy expense and that gets cut and that starts to perpetuate the downward spin.

Tom: **So you're saying that people then may assume with the business isn't coming in that it could be a direct result of the marketing sales. If it's not coming in and then the marketing isn't working, isn't it?**

Mike: Right. Yeah. That's one way of perceiving it. It's perceived in many ways. I mean, here's the trickle-down effect too. You know, the banks did get into serious trouble. They aren't lending money as easily. The businesses out there that are contingent, their survival is contingent upon borrowing money start going out of business or they can't sustain the way they used to. They start cutting and then the middle-sized businesses who are often vendors to them start losing business and trickles down to the small businesses that are servicing the medium-sized guys. So they're absolutely is a slow down effect.

The thing is why this is an opportunity is as the slow down occurs, you are losing customers. But your competitors inevitably drop at a faster rate, a faster percentage or a greater amount of competitors drop off than customers. So while there is less customers, there is a higher, often a higher degree or availability of customers and this smart, contrarian kind of entrepreneur wisely ramp up marketing, you know, to capture these customers. Maybe the other competitors are too weak to service them well and there's an opportunity to capture. Maybe they go out of business and that's an opportunity to capture.

But most of the people are doing the wrong thing and they say, "Well, settle with the slow down and they're like, "You said the marketing clearly wasn't working for us so we're not gonna do it anymore or we're gonna ratchet it down. We're gonna save money that way."

Tom: **What do you think right now, from a marketing perspective, are some**

of the strategies that work well?

Mike: Well, yeah. Now it depends on what kind of business you're in. If you're in a private business or service business, there is some differentiators but here's one thing that works. I call it the sympathy, the sympathy strategy. People are being affected. There's no question. The question is how much? But the vendors that quickly go into "We feel your pain and here's how we're going to help you," often take up a surge of activity.

The smart vendors in their successful businesses in the retail chains - like Target is one example - just announced a few days ago that they're cutting cost for traditionally Christmas gifts and stuff like that early and deeper than they have ever before. I don't know if they're really doing but the release says they're announcing it and the media is picking it up and that makes people feel good. So, there's a strategy that people can use and you can use in your own business to kind of capture more customers.

The other thing and this is kind of another contrarian advantage point, is spending from customers for certain niches goes up somewhat or dramatically in a down economy and the area is what is called microluxuries. I think a lot of businesses have it but they don't even know that. But here's what a microluxury is not and I'll tell you what it is.

A microluxury is not the traditional luxuries of going on a nice vacation, or "I want to renovate my house," or "I want to buy a new car". Those are in a nice strong economy - with my feeling and perception of a nice economy - I feel comfortable making those purchases.

But in a down economy, I'm saving myself as a consumer. You know, I don't know if that money is going to be here or if I really didn't have the money. I'll put off the car, put that on hold. I'm not going to renovate my house for sure and we'll cancel the family vacation. Well that's such an emotional void in my head. And my wife is like, "Oh, Mike, we canceled our vacation. We are really looking forward to it. You know, the kids--," oh!

So then, I go into this mindset where I got to make up for it for my own emotional satisfaction. So I start procuring microluxuries and that maybe I'll tell my wife, "Hey, let's go out for a nice dinner." "Well let's do a day trip with the kids." "Why not some really nice home dinners but really, you know, do it up right." "Well let's go out to the movies." So there are millions of different microluxuries, the common ones are like hobbies. People often get more in tuned with their hobbies again be it, you know,

hunting, or playing guitar, or what have you, selling, you know.

The other thing is one microluxury that no one can ever dispute and this drives home the point, the biggest microluxury that skyrockets in a down economy is alcohol consumption. It's an instant vice for freedom. It's a getaway and it's cheap and alcohol consumption is the first to go up and we're starting to see that trend. Alcohol purchases going up. All the other microluxuries will start to filling this trend and it's an ideal time to be someone that's selling those.

Tom: This idea of the microluxury is such a great idea. How could somebody, if they're running a business right now, how can they figure out what is a microluxury in their business?

Mike: Yeah. So the first strategy is you look at the trends that happen immediately. People start feeling the bite recently but now they're really...it's really been out for the last two weeks. So I would look at my trends for the last two and three months and see if I have 10 products we'll see, or 10 different services that I provide, does any of those services start increasing in sales? Was there any more procuring of certain things and did any drop? And that's one clear indicator of a microluxury.

The thing is a lot of people say, one that I have talked with my focus group, "Well I'm just going to think through it." I tell you, nothing speaks louder than the wallet. Your friends, your customers, they can tell you what they want but when it comes to really committing to something, it takes money and that shows their real heart's content. So look at the sales trends you have had. Now, the other thing is maybe they'll have sales trends or maybe you don't have a product that is a microluxury but then you got to go to the second pencil turn which is still pretty good, and it is ask the customers.

Get what customers - not friends by the way, I'll tell you why, but - get what customers that don't necessarily like you or love you or even care about you but they do care about your product, and say based upon your current needs in this crazy economic times, what could I do that would really serve you better that you've ever been served before? And they might just tell you and you maybe surprised what it is and do that.

With my own book for selling, we put that exact question out about two weeks ago saying, "Hey these are crazy times. We so appreciate your buying these books and leveraging it, but what great things could we do to really help you through these times and we'll include it with our book," and

there was two feedbacks that we're moving on.

One group of people said, “We would love one-on-one consultation. For some way, I can buy the book and also speak to the guy who wrote it and just pinning off some questions, that will be huge and if you include that.” Another person said, “If we know there's a hundred bucks in every book”. Now, we would lose our shirt doing that, but putting a hundred bucks randomly in a book here and there now kind of spawned that on that, “Hey I may receive it.” So these are a couple ways that we're leveraging feedback and people should do the same.

Tom: You mentioned just a second ago is that to ask customers but not friends.

Mike: Right.

Tom: Do friends give us biased opinions?

Mike: Yes. Now I just have to say a swear word here. Is that OK if you're recording?

Tom: That's OK.

Mike: I call it the “pity fuck syndrome” and here's the deal with the pity fuck is just in case we all need a refresher course. You know, back in high school or college is that, you know, the thing among guys and girls too is like “Oh, he or she is the pity fuck.” And so what is that? That's the person that you'll sleep with because you feel sorry for them. You go the extra mile to care for them even though they aren't really “deserving” of that. The problem with asking friends and family about your product or your service or your company on what they think about is because they pity fuck you.

Let me give you an example. Believe it or not, with that mouth like mine I go to church regularly. Every Sunday I go to church and in our church, in our congregation, there's one guy who started a meatball company, making meatballs. And so the first that I want to give it to and sell it to are people in the church. It's, you know, a relatively good-sized congregation, I'm sure some people will buy some. So people would buy a box of these meatballs, and everyone tells him that, “Yey, it's pretty good! “Tastes good.” “I like it.”

I got a batch of these meatballs and I tell you it tasted like cardboard. It

was, as in horrible. So I go to him - we'll pretend his name is Mike also as mine - I go to Mike and say, "Hey, Mike, I want to tell you something but I'm gonna tell you something with a true interest in your success. Your meatballs suck." So what happened is he got very defensive and said, "Wow, everyone else say my meatballs are great. They love my meatballs!" and I said to him, "Mike, just for a minute, just for a minute, look at how many people are purchasing them again. No one. You know, one or two people that felt really guilty and wanted to show him something, you know, bought a second package.

And so people who speak with their wallets. Friends are out to support you, encourage you and the worst feedback you can get. Consumers give you the best feedback because they ultimately speak with their wallets "And I would never buy these meatballs. They're horrible. You have to change something about it." He was pity fucked so much by these other people, he believed he had something genuinely great. He really lost a shirt on it and I'm not trying to say I'm this guru, but I have been seeing this syndrome play out over and over again and he bought into it and he lost his business because of it. He was making horrible meatballs and he perpetuated that.

So, you or I or anyone at any time, this market or a booming economy goes out and says to friends, family or consumers that have an interest in us and us saying, "What do you think of my product? Do you think it's good?" Of course they're going to say it's good, or they're going to make it really mild. They're gonna say, "Well, you know, I may make a few changes but overall I got to tell you, you got a great product there." They're pity fucking you, and it's the worst thing that could happen to you.

Tom: **So an obvious trigger ... if you asked the question – and it sounds like an obvious trigger would be – immediately all you're hearing is nothing but positive and no criticism.**

Mike: Right. Yeah. It's funny. There's these three types of feedback and the worst is positive. There's positive feedback, negative feedback, and no feedback. Positive feedback is the worst because it simply allows you to think you are walking on the water. Negative feedback is actually the best feedback you can get because negative feedback now is actionable and the person is showing up interest in you to voice something.

The most dangerous feedback is no feedback. You don't hear anything because now you don't know if they like it or don't like it. Well at least you do know, it's not significant enough to cause a reaction. So if you're making

a product and you're getting no feedback, watch out. You're Mr. or Mrs. Mediocre.

If you're getting negative feedback, we can celebrate because this your opportunity to expand. If you getting positive feedback, better be careful and watch out and don't start thinking you're walking on water. Now, if you get constant unsolicited positive feedback from people you don't know, that's beautiful. If you get positive feedback from people that know and love you, you know, it's smoke and mirrors. Don't listen to that.

Tom: **For those people that aren't getting feedback, is it sometimes a case of they're caught off guard if you're asking for feedback and you haven't asked for it before from your customers and then you don't get any? Do you think that there might be a case where the customers might think it's kind of weird that you're asking for feedback?**

Mike: No. I found that people are very receptive. I regularly approach people that don't know me for feedback but I think they're ways of doing and ways of not doing it. Here's the way not to do it. A survey, a big going out survey thing. Yeah, we receive our customers feedback.

Now the second, now I'm speaking from own advantage point, the second I see more than three or four questions and I start the survey, I'm doing one of two things: I'm stopping or I'm just clicking as fast as I can. Plus, I don't want to share all the information. What's your personal income? Oh, you know, I'm a billionaire today and I'm homeless another day. I'll just click on whatever.

The best feedback you can get is direct inquiry. Contact the customer directly and say, "We want to thank you for your purchase. We have a few questions. May we call you? May I speak with you directly?" And then within those questions is to keep it short and concise and ask the most influential questions at all.

Here's the question I ask almost every time. What is the worst thing that you found about my product? I never ask what's the best thing, because that seems to me the opportunity to say, "Well I like the way you delivered this. There's a half million things to complement but no one expects that question to come, what's the worst thing? What was the thing that you found to be the worst? People started thinking for a second and say, "Well you kind of flipped up on this," or "It really sucked on that." And I'm looking for trends when I ask more people.

The second question I ask is if I could do something that was literally a hundred times better, don't worry about money or cost or even if it's feasible, what could be dramatically better that you would literally wet your pants it's so good? And again, it forces people to think. "Wow, I could, you know, if this product was delivered all ready all set up for me and installed, I would just go bunkers over that" or whatever the question is.

The final question is would you refer a customer? We're you so impressed by the product that you would refer in a customer? And if they say yes, I often say, who would be the customer you will be referring? You don't have to give me information. I just want to know a name. In those three questions I often identify 80% of what's right and wrong with my product and if the customer is really going to buy again.

Tom: **All right. We kind of got off there a little bit by talking more on the marketing, and I want to turn in back to the whole mindset thing and thinking about keeping that strong mindset. What are some of the resources that you use for staying positive? You have mentioned the mastermind group that you have.**

Mike: Yeah.

Tom: **Are there some other things that you use to really maintain that positive focus and positive mentality?**

Mike: Yeah. There are and it's for a second let me just point back to the mastermind and why that is so powerful. The mastermind group, I encourage everybody, anyone to join one. You need to be an entrepreneur. It's a great support mechanism for life. And what the mastermind group is at least for me, to surround myself with eight peers who had all achieved more than me in different verticals. So one may be a great father. One may be an extraordinary sales person on retail. Another person may be a great communicator. And those people see me as a value better than them in one vertical aspect. So everyone has these little vertical silos that they are extraordinary.

The benefit of it, of the mastermind group, is first of all the peer effect. The peer effect is, the five people you must closely surround with, your five best friends or five closest friends. Whoever they are, if you take the averages of their personalities, they behaviors, their successes, that will equate to you. So if you're still hanging out with your friends from high school or college

or family that isn't doing especially entrepreneurial endeavors, they're holding you back.

You got to hang out with people that have achieved more than you in certain entrepreneurial endeavors and they have to see the same value you bring to the table. The other thing is friendly competition kicks in with the mastermind group. You see someone, you know, pushing ahead, it inspires you to push ahead. The other thing is once we get into a negative spiral and say, "Oh my God this sucks," "This is such a bad day, "Nothing is going well and I expected this," these are your buddies that will often slap you in the head because at least one of those people in the group is having a great day. Now if you're surrounding yourself with eight people even on the worst day you can think of, one person is probably having a great day and he and she can pass that in the group back up. So that's one source.

The second thing I do and I just started this about three or four months ago, I did it a different way. Now I do it more religiously. I maintain a journal, "my success journal". Every single day, I put a positive entry about what I did and the I periodically go back and review it and some are minor, you know. I watched my son play a great soccer game, you know, sold a hundred thousand books today, you know, that could be a big one. But when I look back on it, it kind of fires off these little shoots of positive memories and then inevitably, the more minor ones become the big ones. Wow! That was so cool, that I get to my son's soccer game. So, a success journal.

Another thing that I do and it's not a secret. On the day before Christmas and whenever, you know, holiday is significant to you, you can do the same but the day before Christmas, the office closes at noon. My wife knows I'm not getting home till about 4 o'clock that day and when I went down in the office, I used to have an office because this one company, we had about forty employees. It was a 3.5 million dollar company and we had forensics. It was forensics lab and stuff like that. Half of the stuff that we're doing there I couldn't comprehend. It was beyond my technical capabilities. I walk room to room and just sit there and just kind of absorb it all in and just say, "Holy smokes. Two years ago, this was the thought that passed my mind and now, look what has come out of this," and just really give myself praise. And it sounds egotistical maybe, it's definitely hard to do, I mean we don't deserve to pat ourselves on the back and I'm saying, "Hell freaking yes we deserve to pat ourselves in the back." So that's an important thing too.

And the final thing is no matter how dire the situations are, or how bad things are, it's just the knowing that whatever the situation is, it's going to

change. It's always has. Unfortunately, when things are good, they are going to turn and get bad again at some point. But when things are bad, they always turn into good at some point. If you have the cajones as an entrepreneur, just stick it out through the tough times until it gets good.

Tom: **And we head off with this a little bit, but that Mastermind really quick. You have mentioned of eight people. How did you find your people in your Mastermind and how do you recommend others find the best people for their own group?**

Mike: So what I did is I joined an established group. In my case I joined the Entrepreneurs Organization, EO. We used to call it YEO when I joined it, "Young Entrepreneurs Organization," and this was established specifically to facilitate Mastermind. It's an easy way to do it. There's many groups out there. There is this one called TAB, "The Alternative Board". You can have a brand new business and they'll accept you in. EO, they have a bit of a requirement that you have to be a little bit, you know, more established.

Here's what I did do and how I first went about it was reach out to contacts I already had and people I already befriended and said, "Hey, why don't we start a group together?" The beauty of the mastermind group is really getting matched up with people that you don't know and learning all these different aspects and stories about people.

So, in alternative ways, if you don't want to go an established place - that's a quick easy very effective way of doing it - is to write down your wish list. If I could have this dream team of people, who I would I aspire myself. I'm saying big names here. Dale Carnegie, now he's past away but Dale Carnegie, his books and the teachings out there have been a huge influence on me. Anthony Robbins. Before I knew it, I thought the guy was crazy infomercial guy. Once I got into it, it really, you know, vibrated with me. It really reverberated to me and made sense and I have a list of other people.

And then what I did was I write down the attributes, you know, why do I like Anthony Robbins? Because for me, he's a powerful inspirational speaker. That's my favorite attribute about him. Dale Carnegie, the master of stress reduction, huge, you know, a prodding force. Another thing, you know, I really aspire to be a good father and there's one of the guys named Frank whom I really aspire to with his attributes of being a father.

And I work on these traits and then I started looking for people like this and when they popped into my awareness, you know, in the introduction of

someone, I would then think, “Wow. Maybe this is someone,” and I start building a list of now more practical people you can get access to.

I would tell my friends I'm trying to form a Mastermind group. I'm looking for a guy or a girl that's like this person, you know, a very inspirational speaker. Who is the most inspirational speaker you have ever seen and then I get a list of five people and I'm like well this person is kind of local. Let me reach out to this person and I call them with my crazy idea. That's the way of doing it. I've done that in one case where I formed a small mastermind group but found EO for me was just a much easier way of establishing one quickly in getting settled in. So my current mastermind group is actually facilitated through this organization, EO.

Tom: **You have mentioned some people that seem to really keep your mind set. Are there any others that you would recommend that people should look up in addition to like Anthony Robbins or Dale Carnegie?**

Mike: Yes. Anthony Robbins. Look up Napoleon Hill. He wrote “Think And Grow Rich,” really a book that everyone should read. The funny thing I heard about three or four times, yeah, “Think And Grow Rich,” I don't know, you know, sounds really cool and corny kind of and then I read it and said, “Wow, this one I really good.” All powerful book. That movie, “The Secret,” I don't know, Tom, if you're familiar with that.

Tom: **Oh yeah, yeah.**

Mike: Yeah. OK. Freaking great, great, great movie. I've watched and I'm sure you have to and you know well more than one time. It's very powerful. Local leaders. When you admire someone, when someone really touches you, reach out to him.

There is for me, there is a pastor in my church and I'm not actually not typical of a religious guy. I'm definitely not ever pushing religion. But, you know, there are many pastors that came through our church like there would be with The Temple or any other religious organizations and there is one, and he is from Kenya and barely speaks English but man, something touched me about him and I go out of my way to stay in contact with him. He is a caring, caring person. And he doesn't mind if the drop the “F” bomb in his face, not at him, but in a bad situation and he just he comes back with a caring response.

Firefighters and policemen and there's different things like, you know, that

one teacher from grade school that I look up and was like, wow, that was such an inspirational person. I love how he presented to me and to this day, I could remember Donald Johnson's name. You know, reach out to him. He's still out there and if he touched you back then and having blast the impact for 20 years, maybe there's something to learn from Donald Johnson that I can learn from. So there's a lot of people on our own community.

The final thing is don't be afraid to ask and this has always been a challenge for me and I've gotten better but I'm still not perfect about it. What seems to be untouchable may and this is why one of the reason the name of the book is the "Toilet Paper Entrepreneur", no one is untouchable. We all go to the bathroom. We all have the same human experience. No one is any greater or worse than anybody else. I don't care who you are and if you think Donald Trump is untouchable, well then he's going to be. But if you recognize he is the same as you and me, Donald Trump becomes very accessible.

So I start reaching out for names of people that I want to aspire to, and now I can say I have at least a business acquaintance with a billionaire which I thought, you know, there's not so many billionaires on this planet, but just with the saying, "Well this guy goes to the bathroom just like I do. One pant leg at a time when he puts his pants on." He is accessible and I reached out to him and I asked him "How many people reach out to you? He's like, "You know, you'd be surprised. Not that many because they think I'm inaccessible." So reach out to some of those kind of wish list people and recognize well you don't even have to wish. They're pretty much the same as me and you.

Tom: Is that billionaire, is that Bill Bartmann?

Mike: Yeah. Bill Bartmann.

Tom: Yeah. I heard him speak last February. Definitely a great speaker and very entertaining to listen to. He gives great straight-to-the-point information.

Mike: He is extraordinary, definitely one to look up to. And he started getting aware of all that so in my life I would never preach and coach him. He's, you know, "out of my league." But once I said, "You know, he's just like me," and then I approached him and discovered he's more like me that I have ever could have imagined. He's such a good guy. He's such a human guy. I mean now he's someone I really aspire to be like. That kind of level in the playing field and like "The Secret" talks about law of attraction and

stuff.

Now I have approached and people approaching me that are of that similar success quotient. I just met with Pat Croce. He was the owner of the 76ers and just a phenomenal human being and I once considered him inaccessible years ago and now that we have this kind we're all equal mentality, he reached out to me, which I would imagine as unfathomable before. So you got to breakdown the barriers, shoot high, believe you can hit high and you will and then hitting high over and over again becomes a no-brainer. That's how we're meant to be.

From my own experience, was it two months ago? July, August, September, October. So now it's four months ago. The "Toilet Paper Entrepreneur," what we're doing literally started July 2nd four months ago. Before that, no one have heard of me and no one had known about me and I came into this kind of realization that Mike, you can be what you want to be and then the greater realization is that we much become who we are to our fullest to be successful, however you want to define that.

When I realized and I started doing it, and the feedback I've been experiencing is something that I would never consider plausible or possible two years ago. I'm getting emails and it's so funny, you know, saying the emails often talk the same way, "Now, I'm sure you get a million emails and that you won't write me back but I just had to write you anyway and then when I write to them back they're like, Oh my God!" I had a guy drive from New Hampshire down to see me. It's a five and a half hour drive just to see if he could shake my hand and then he was going to drive back that night. And I had lunch with him and I'm like, "Dude! I'm me! You know I'm not different than you!" And you know, you now you look at Anthony Robbins or the other people, it's like, "Wow! I still feel like they're so successful. There's so up there but no! I mean they are so successful and so up there, but, you know, you can drive an hour or two or ten, and I bet you Anthony Robbins will shake your hand. You have to have the awareness that it's more than possible. It's probable.

Here's the summary. People are ruling themselves out before they even try. They're saying they want things but that little conversation in their head is saying, "You know, forget about it. Anthony Robbins must get a thousand emails a day. Everyone wants to gets a part of him. I don't have a shot, blah, blah, blah. And a thousand people are doing it. So he's probably getting less emails than you or I get everyday.

Tom: **Good point.**

Mike: I'm getting fired up now. If you want me and keep rambling, I've got one more example of that.

Tom: **Oh, go ahead. Yeah.**

Mike: OK. I do presentations to colleges. I'm actually...this one I'm driving to now, there's a college here in New Jersey that I presenting to, and I presented at the local county colleges. I presented at Harvard. Princeton has invited me down and presenting there and I presented internationally to colleges too. It doesn't matter what school I present to or what the people's background are or anything. I go to this demonstration the reaction is the same.

I go in front of a class and this is an example that I took from Jack Canfield. I heard he did this and it works great. I go in front of a class and I'll say "Who here, you know, wants to be a multimillionaire?" Everyone raises their hands. And then I say, "Who in fact is a multimillionaire?" and you know, one person jokingly may hold her hand up or maybe they will put their hands down. I said, "OK. Now let's go through another one. How about who here wants to have a significant impact in the world, something that they're remembered for?" Everyone raised their hands. "Who had or who's willing to do that?" every hand down.

I'll ask another question, you know, "Who wants to have, you know, a great caring family, you know, some that when you have children one day who will inspire to be just like mom or dad or whoever you want?" Everyone's hands up. "Who's really had said that culture and tested them to be that way?" Hands down. And I say, "Well I recognize all this stuff in this moment, this second is impractical. We can't achieve this by clicking or fingers but --"

I pull out of my pocket a hundred dollar bill. I say, "Well, this one is something we can see right now. It's very tangible. Who here wants a hundred dollars? , you know, hands up. Then I said, "OK, well who wants it? And then you know, hands stay out with some odd looks and then I go, "Well who wants it? And then it's like really weird looks. Some hands go down. Some people started chitchatting. I'll ask that question 5 or 6 times until one person very sheepishly will get up and kind of walk toward me and starts walking more quicker and then often, a second person gets up and tries to make a dash for it and then the first person grabs it.

They sit down and the rest of class, they would look like stupefied and I'm like, "In this is one example, we proved the power of that chatter in your head, those limiting beliefs and here's what goes on." I said who wants a hundred dollars. Everyone says they want it. Then, I hold it up and ask this question and then the chatter starts in the head, and I ask people, you know, what would you say? "Well in my head I'm saying, it's a trick," or "He's probably gonna to take it away," or "Someone else deserves it, you know, "I don't want to embarrass myself." It's embarrassing to be in front of a class. So all these limiting beliefs. And I say, "Everyone here says you want it yet your beliefs say you can't have it or you shouldn't have it and it's those beliefs that shatter that becomes this insurmountable wall."

Therefore, it doesn't matter what you want. Wanting doesn't do it. It's beliefs, the chatter in your head that is determining everything and between me standing there and students that are 15 feet away from me just thin air and that insurmountable invisible impenetrable force called beliefs. Now, when I pointed the person who took the hundred dollars and I said, "What happened? Why did you go? Inevitably the chatter in their heads first were the same thing. "I don't deserve it." "I can't get it." They hear me repeat it and at certain point they say, "Well, you know, what's the worst that can happen?" you know, "Maybe there's a trick but we can get this stupid thing over with. You know, I'm not the biggest guy in the world. I'm kind of skinny so I was like, "Well, I could kick a guy's ass," you know, "if he tries to take that money back or push me away," and the belief now becomes enabling belief.

But the amazing part is enabling belief now puts them in motion. It's gets their butt out of the chair and then starts pushing them because the person who gets up and then actually starts moving faster, often running and jogging toward it especially when they see someone else now potentially going for it.

And so that one example, we can see the power of beliefs and how I wrap up the presentation, I say, "Listen, everyone says you want to be a multimillionaire. You want to be a multimillionaire and I'm here to say you ain't gonna do it because you won't even get out of your chair to make your first hundred towards being a multimillionaire. What do you think you're gonna do, you know, go for more money later on. And I'm willing to take a hundred bucks and wave it in your face, but you're not willing to make that tough phone call or going to that appointment or the extra crazy hours or whatever is required to become a multimillionaire.

So, the goal here is to change your beliefs. The key to success is changing your beliefs. If you want to change something, all that matters is that nasty conversation going on in your head, not what you're saying you want. That's the example I do.

Tom: **Oh, that's great. I have two more questions before we wrap this up. It may go along in the many beliefs, I may be stretching it but ... you've been on "The Big Idea" multiple, multiple times. I'm a huge fan of the show. I'm wondering for you was that one of those things where you thought, "Boy I don't know if I could ever get on that show," and now you've been on it, what, four or five times?**

Mike: Yeah, ten times, and now I'm on ABC and now it's going. So yeah, absolutely the reason I was not on the show before was because it's unfathomable, right? I can't be on TV, and I'm arguing, Tom you could be on TV in a heartbeat and anyone that believes they can be on TV in a heartbeat can. That all boils down to with beliefs. I have to have that chatter in my head saying, "Oh dude, you will be a TV star." Now the chatter that's going in my head by the way, and now when I'm on my upward spiral, I will have my own reality show, you know, going in and helping people resuscitate their business. I'm going to be on Oprah. I'm gonna be on this. I'm gonna be on that. Will all of these things come true? Yes, if I believe it. I don't know if I believe all those things but I definitely believe there's a lot greater things that I do on TV now so I know it's going to come true.

The reason is a thing called in all our heads, part of our brain system is called the reticular activating system, and actually when I go this class today, we'll be talking about this. When we have something that's important to us, for example, we buy a new car, our mind now places significance on our car and it will pop it out of the scenery around us.

So you buy a new, you know, whatever, a new Celica, this brand new car and it's white, you will be astounded by how many passing white Celicas are out there that other people own and before you bought it, you never even know it, but when you buy your car, it's like "Shit! Everyone has the same car I have! What's going on here?" You know, we know nothing has changed in reality but in your mind, you have placed importance on it so it starts popping out of the scenery.

If you say, you know, "I am on TV. I am the TV guy. They haven't discovered me yet. I'm gonna be discovered and I'm gonna start getting on TV" All of a sudden, the thing starts popping out, like wow, it's all around

me. You know, I talk to people all the time. Few people even say they'll gonna be on TV, so a few people would say, "Mike how did you do it?" Some others would say "How did you do it?" And those are the people that I already started this belief and they have started filling that momentum kind of like getting out of the seat and going for the hundred and then they start running for it and it becomes a no brainer.

Tom: That was pretty quick for you once you made that decision that you are going to be on TV? It came fast?

Mike: Yeah, it came in three weeks and here's the strategy I used. I saw the show. I was a fan of the show and I said "Well, I would love to be on that show one day," but what I want to do is really to support the show. It's an awesome show. So I called them and said, "Hey I--", and then no one answers and I said, "Listen, I'm calling not to be in your show so just listen to my message. I'm calling because I love your show and I want to help you guys out. I recognize that you guys do live audiences. I saw one. I personally would love to be in your live audience but I also know a lot of other entrepreneurs that can help bring people in. If that helps you, please call me back and I'll gladly get people packed into your place."

Well, sure freaking enough, they called me back. They said, "Hey this is Jane from CNBC and we got your message and you know what? We do have live shows coming up and we need to pack the room."

Well shit! That was the easiest deal I made in my life. I called all my friends and said, ""Hey you want to go and watch the recording of "The Big Idea" at the studio?"" And they're like yes. I got ten people in the room, put them in and then I made sure the person that asked me, you know, to help me get people was there and I talked with her and said "Here's the people I brought and if you ever needed again, call me" and that night, she called and said, "We're going to do three or four live shows. Help us pack it."

I became the "pack the audience" guy. So then it gets to the one of the producers and this is like week number 2 now. The producer calls and said, "Hey, I heard about you. You're bringing people to our audience, all these entrepreneurs. How do you know these people?" And I tell them what I do and stuff and they said, "Well, we're always looking for great people, if you know anyone, we would love to invite them on." I said, "I know people. So tell me what you're looking for and I'll help you out." And then they explained what they're looking for and I started thinking, "Well, you know, if you go for this person, here's the type of answers you're going to get".

Well I didn't know they were actually interviewing me to be on show.

Tom: Oh.

Mike: And they invite me on and they called me and said, “You know what? We want you to be one of those segments and it runs for 95 minutes like 3 seconds and I put everything I could into it and then they called. I don't know if they even called. I was just walking out, and they said, “We want you back for a five-part series, full hour every day for the next week.” I'm like, Hell yeah,” and they, “We'll fly you off to Vegas.” We're going to do this and that but I tell you that went differently than I expected.

I was on for five shows and then now it's gone then I'm a regular to the point where they wanted to negotiate a deal where I was a paid guest and that fell through and I'm knocking and thanking my lucky stars that fell through because now, now I'm on ABC. There's other programs like Rachel Ray reached out and there's other opportunities which I was excluded from if I accepted as paid guest and that's one little extra formula is sometimes things happen and it seems bad and they end up being your best thing.

So when bad things happen, maybe you should be counting blessings or maybe at the bare minimum we should weight it out. Maybe this isn't bad and potentially, and this is the best formula, when a bad, perceivably bad thing happens is to stop, sit down and say, “What could be the positive things?” What potentially could be good about this?

And here we go about disasters, you know, I'm not just talking about TV. My father unfortunately came down with cancer and we went through this exercise, and it was like, what is the potentially good things that come from cancer, and we listed as a family about 30 good things that came from having cancer and one of the most significant was it brought our family closer together to communicate more and sure enough - that's was years and years ago, that he came down with cancer and he survived it - we now, are a closer family because of it.

So when Danny Deutsch, when they said you can't be paid guest, it took me a lot to absorb it and then I said, “Well what's the best thing that came out of it? More TV shows. Then I started making more TV and sure enough, ABC now has picked me up and now other programs like Rachael Ray are looking to do the same.

Tom: **That story about getting on “The Big Idea,” that reminds me of Zig**

Ziglar. He says, “When you help people get what they want, they will help you get what you want,” and that's a perfect example of that.

Mike: Oh yeah. I mean think about this moment right now. You were doing me something of significance. I have a sensation of indebted. I want to help you right now because you're doing something significant for me. You're exposing more people to what I'm doing. It's now like in my head, that chatter in my head, is “What can I do for him? What can I do for Tom? You know, I got him on “The Big Idea”, you know, but what am I gonna do for him?”

So by helping other people, you instantly start building these emotional alliances in other peoples' head. The thing is you got to grasp it. You have to professionally persistently grasp it. You can't be a pushover and you can't be a nuisance but you say, “Hey man,” you know, “I really want to be a TV guy. I leave a contact there. I hope I'm not asking too much because of the way you're going to expose me or help me out with that,” you know, and you got to take that action step.

Now, I think, unfortunately the movie “The Secret” emphasized so much on the positive thinking and the belief systems which are totally right but I think it deemphasized the action step. There has to be an action. Now often, the action is very apparent and usually goes what you want to do is very easy to do but you have to take that little action step. At least that's what my experience dictate.

Tom: I know you got to get to your appointment there at the college so I want to wrap this up real quick. But before I do, I'd like to give you an opportunity to tell people how they can get a hold of you if they want more information and, of course, tell people how they can get your book.

Mike: Yeah, well thank you. So, to get a hold of me, my email is mike@toiletpaperentrepreneur.com. It's M-I-K-E@toiletpaperentrepreneur.com. I do check those emails personally. I do get dozens to hundreds a day but I don't get thousands. I mean it's not unmanageable. And most of it, by the way, is spam anyway, so I have a filter to it and I read the real ones.

To get the book, you can always go to Amazon. It's there on Amazon, but potentially a better way is directly on our website which is toiletpaperentrepreneur.com. When you go to this site, there's the book

itself and that's pretty clear. You click on the book, just buy it and you can get it.

The reason that may be a better way is we like to throw in a little surprise, something, something. Let's talk about that hundred dollar bill. That's something were sneaking in potentially occasionally but with other cool things too. Sometimes, it's simple as autographed copies come out. Other times, plenty of pictures would come with it and I can't guarantee there will be a surprise. Sometimes, there is not just a little cute thing to do.

Tom: Just from personal experience, when they do go to the site, I recommend they check out your videos as well ... very informative and, of course, humorous.

Mike: Yeah. Thanks. Yeah, I encourage everyone to check out the videos, I think that's the best way to get a sense for who I am. I love, I love to joke around, typically not like an interview like what we're doing now, but, you know, if you were here, I would like be like "Let's go out for beers" and just start ballbusting and just, you know, have some fun. That was the intention of the videos is to show that you know, we are all the same. We all like to joke around and have a good time but I think there's a good underlying message in many or if not, most of them. I don't know when this comes out on Thursday of this week but potentially our funniest video. I mean it's a crazy video that's coming out on Thursday. It's really crazy.

Tom: I saw the tweet that you sent out a little bit earlier today about that so I'll definitely be watching.

Mike: Yeah. It is so funny. Give me your honest feedback because this one has, the message it's there but it's creative. It was just simply for pure entertainment so I would love to hear your feedback on that.

Tom: Oh sure thing. I will give you the unbiased feedback, for sure.

Mike: Yeah, please, please, please.

Tom: All right. Well Mike, I really appreciate the time and all the information -- extremely, extremely valuable information.

Mike: I appreciate that and please tell me how can I help you. Just write me an email or tell me now or talk with Scott and we want to help you in your endeavors and achieve what you want to achieve.

Tom: Well I appreciate that and I'll definitely, I definitely will be in touch.

Mike: Good. Bye. Thanks.

Tom: All right. Thank you, Mike, and have a good rest of the day.

Mike: You too. Take care.

Tom: You too.

Mike: Buh-bye.