

## Release Brakes *How to Break the Fear Barrier in Business*

By Waldo Waldman



As I write this article at my favorite Starbucks, I can't help but hear the conversation next to me. A middle-aged woman is having a coffee meeting with a peer discussing job opportunities, the market, and their personal networks. It's obvious that she's lost her job due to cutbacks and is networking like mad, reaching out to her wingmen and exploring job opportunities.

Sound familiar?

We all know someone who recently lost a job or who is struggling with their business. The economy is tough today. Sales are down, credit is tight, budgets are being slashed, and jobs are being cut. We've all been affected. It's just reality. And while we can't control Wall Street, the only thing we can control is **how we react** to what's going on. As my friend and wingman John Harrington of OTR Consultants says, when adversity strikes, "we either fear or we lead."

If we fear, we *crawl* out of bed anxious, worrisome, and focus on what we don't have. We become strangled with doubt. We strap into our jet ready to take-off, but push up the throttle with the brakes on. Doubt prevents us from releasing our brakes and destroys the warrior spirit. It kills performance which eventually leads to failure.

If we lead, we *jump* out of bed, acknowledge our fear (hey, it's normal to be afraid when adversity strikes!), and then give thanks for what we have. We gather our resources, plan the day's mission, and then take action. We focus on doing, not doubting...on performance, not philosophy. We understand that we're in control of our jet and are ultimately responsible for results.

Here's the question you have to ask yourself during adverse conditions: Will you fear or lead?

In turbulent times like today with the missiles being launched, **we have to be warriors, not worriers.** Warriors confront the reality of their fears, and then lead by taking action. When I flew in combat with my wingmen, sure we were scared. Sure we had doubt. But when it came time to execute, we prepared relentlessly and then took action as a team. We felt confident because we weren't flying solo and knew we could count on each other for mutual support.. Most importantly, we focused on our actions, not on our attitude.

In business, attitude alone won't get you to take off. Yes it's important, but ultimately you have to take action for change to occur. Attitude gives the thrust, but action provides the vector. You have to release the brakes on your jet and roll down the runway with a **target and a plan**, knowing full well what the stakes are. I know it can be overwhelming and it isn't easy. But let's face it; the greatest results in business often require the greatest effort and risk.

I want to emphasize that being a modern day warrior isn't about combat. It's about commitment, courage, and accountability. It's about fighting for a cause that means something. Warriors fight for those they serve, but they also fight for freedom, peace, family, and love. Warriors work. Warriors live by the credo "*the more you sweat in peace, the less you bleed in battle.*" They plan and train with discipline and intensity and put forth the effort so that they never have to go to battle. As the great Chinese General and military strategist Sun Tzu wrote in "The Art of War," the greatest victories in war are the ones that are never fought.

Most importantly, **warriors are a beacon of hope for those in need.** In essence, warriors are wingmen. Warriors are your friends who refer business to you, who share their best practices, give feedback on your sales performance, and who take your keys when you've been drinking. They give their love and advice freely, but also help you be accountable to the most important wingman in your life...yourself!

Warriors are wingmen who will do what it takes to help you turn your fear into courage, push up your throttle, release your brakes and take-off. Warriors want you to win.

As we deal in these uncertain economic times, I would ask you to lead rather than fear. Be thankful for the warriors in your life who fight the good fight and who give you the courage to release your brakes and take-off in turbulent conditions. And last but not least, pray for the strength to be a warrior for your customer, your co-workers, and for those less fortunate who can't release the brakes on their own.

Be a wingman – a warrior with a heart.

***About the author:***

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