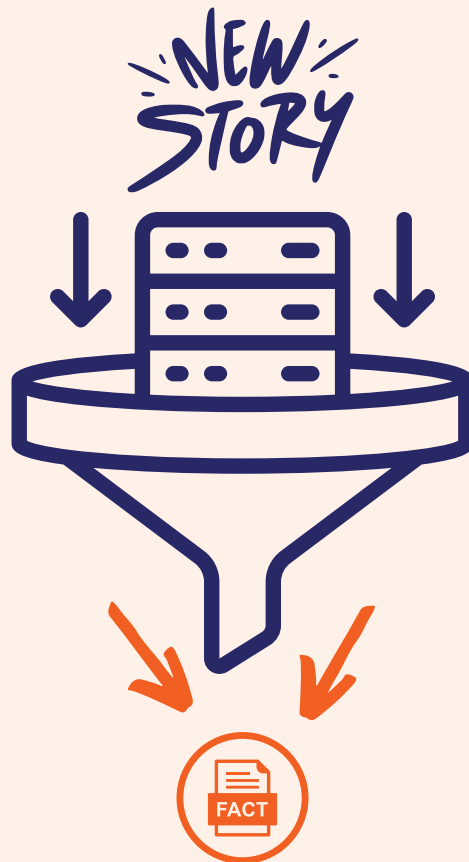


LIFE TOOL #1

# Distinguishing Content from Context

A simple way to take control of your life.



## INTRODUCTION

Content refers to the events and circumstances that make up our lives, such as our jobs, families, health, and goals. Context refers to the meaning and perspectives we give to these events, which are shaped by our mindset, emotional state, experiences, and preconceived notions.

For example, let's say you have an outstanding bill that needs to be paid. The content of this situation is the bill, and the context is your thoughts and emotions about the bill. If you're feeling worried and stressed about the bill, that's the context. If you're feeling financially secure and confident that you'll be able to pay the bill, that's a different context. It's the same bill in either scenario. But the meaning and impact of the bill on your life is different depending on the context.

It's important to recognize that context is something we own and control. By understanding and taking control of our context, we can shape our experiences to be more empowering and fulfilling. This means being mindful of our thoughts and emotions, and actively choosing how we want to approach life.

It's because we tend to collapse the two (content + context) that we usually feel stuck or disempowered. This exercise is here to help you separate the two and distinguish between the content of your life (what happened/is happening) from the context (how you're experiencing it and what you're making it out to mean). You can continue to use this as a tool in your life whenever you're feeling stuck, defeated, or anxious to help you regain your power and choose how you want to approach whatever is happening in your life.



## INSTRUCTIONS FOR THE TOOL

- 1 Answer the question on the next page and then come back here for step 2. *You can see an example of the exercise on pages 5 and 6.*
- 2 Go back and circle all the subjective and emotive words. They're descriptors like, 'horrible, fun, ugly, beautiful, heartbreaking, difficult, disrespectful, frustrated, annoying, scary, etc. Also include labels like, "jerk, idiot", etc.
- 3 Now circle all hypothetical language like, "might, could, should, would, will, need to, must, can, can't, did, don't want"
- 4 Circle all the "but's", "why's", and "what-if's"
- 5 Put a box around all the phrases or sentences that have circled words. These are probably going to be indicators of the context you're creating.
- 6 Now imagine you're pouring everything you just wrote into the arrow below which is acting as a filter. This filter will separate out all of the context - all of the subjective perceptions, interpretations, feelings, and thoughts from the neutral event. All of the boxed sentences stay in the filter and the remainder comes out on the other side.
- 7 Underneath the filter write the things that made it through the filter. Make sure that it is coherent. Everything here should be neutral. Just facts, no meaning. Imagine that everyone who observes it will report and/or measure the same things. (i.e. 10 pages of documents not "a ton of documents"). This section will probably contain the least amount of words.
- 8 On the "**Current Context**" column list out all of the things that stayed in the filter. This is all of the boxed text. This is everything you're making it mean. It might be pretty long.
- 9 Look at that list. Sit with it. Be with it. Think about how it makes you feel and what thoughts come up. Whatever it is, it's ok.
- 10 Re-imagine how you can approach this event or content in a way that empowers you. On the "**Empowering Context**" column, write how you can change your perception so that you can improve your situation. Here is where you have the power to expand your awareness, choose new thoughts, choose new emotions, perceive things differently, and take a proactive and empowering approach to what's happening in your life.



What is a recent event or circumstance in your life that has been challenging or difficult to deal with? Use the space below to write everything that comes to mind – all the thoughts and emotions - vent as you would to a friend.

Start here

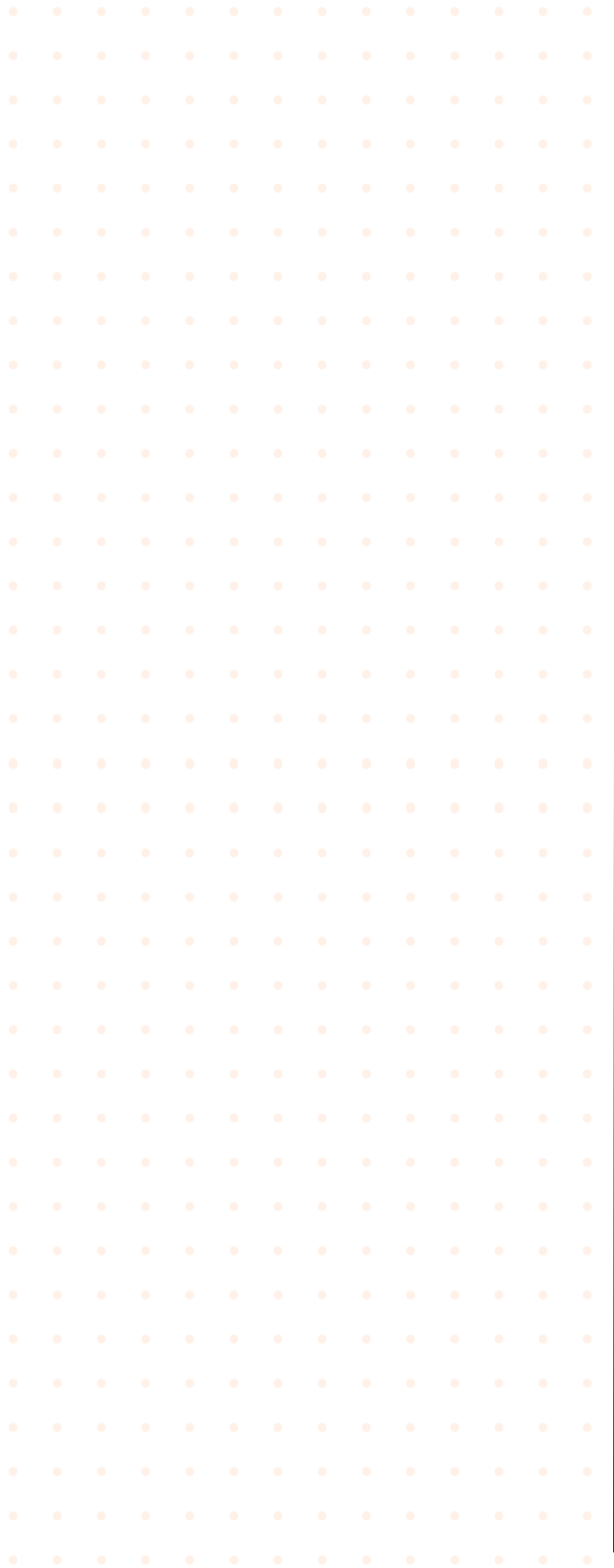

THIS IS STEP 7

Content (what happened/is happening) = \_\_\_\_\_



CURRENT CONTEXT

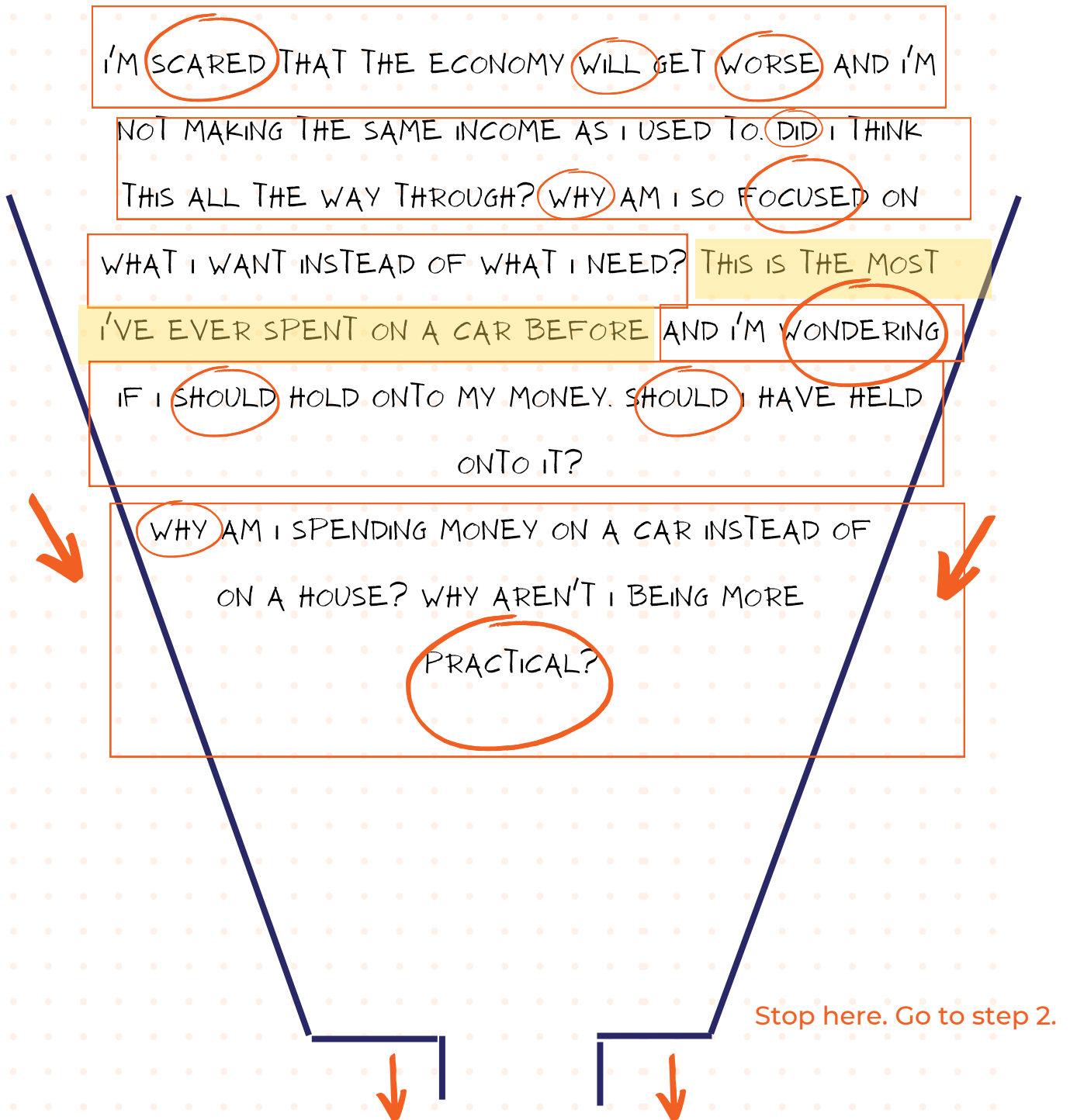
EMPOWERING CONTEXT

	
--	---



EXAMPLE:

Start here



THIS IS STEP 7

Content (what happened/is happening) = THIS IS THE MOST I'VE EVER SPENT ON A CAR BEFORE



CURRENT CONTEXT

I'M SCARED THAT THE ECONOMY  
WILL GET WORSE AND I'M NOT  
MAKING THE SAME INCOME AS I  
USED TO.

DID I THINK THIS ALL THE WAY  
THROUGH?

WHY AM I SO FOCUSED ON WHAT I  
WANT INSTEAD OF WHAT I NEED?

I'M WONDERING IF I SHOULD HOLD  
ONTO MY MONEY. SHOULD I HAVE  
HELD ONTO IT?

WHY AM I SPENDING MONEY ON A  
CAR INSTEAD OF ON A HOUSE?

WHY AREN'T I BEING MORE  
PRACTICAL?

EMPOWERING CONTEXT

I HAVE THE MONEY; I'VE BEEN  
SAVING FOR A LONG TIME AND  
HAVE BEEN CONSERVATIVE..

WE DO NEED A CAR TO  
ACCOMMODATE OUR FAMILY SO  
IT'S NOT A COMPLETE WANT.

EVEN IF THE ECONOMY GOES  
SOUTH, I HAVE SOME RESERVES.

JUST BECAUSE I DON'T HAVE A  
HOUSE, DOESN'T MEAN I CAN'T  
BUY ONE IN THE FUTURE.

HAVING THE CAR GIVES ME A  
BOOST IN CONFIDENCE.

IT'S A COOL CAR!

I FEEL GOOD WHEN I'M IN IT.



# This is Just the Beginning.

Our lives are made up of countless events and circumstances, which we can begin to see as the “content” of our lives. As you’ve just seen, it’s important to recognize that the real power behind these events lies in the “context” - or the meaning and perspectives we give to them.

Our mindset, emotional state, and preconceived notions all play a significant role in shaping the quality of our lives and what we ultimately come to experience. Even our dreams, goals, and achievements are initially born out of context.

Recognizing this distinction between content and context, between what happened and our story about what happened can empower us to truly hold the pen, re-write the story, and control our narratives no matter what plot twists life throws at us.

Feeling inspired to make a change in your life? Explore how coaching can help.

[Schedule a free discovery call →](#)

