

Some changes we create. Others, like the current world crisis, are thrust upon us. But in addition, those you lead also experience the changes you're creating as being thrust upon them. *How* you lead them will define whether you thrive or just survive once you've executed your strategic plan.

Never Waste a Good Crisis

I don't mean to make light of the pain and death and hardships that come with a pandemic. We need to grieve with those who are grieving and make personal sacrifices to support those in need. Those things happen when our leadership is built on good character and we truly care about those we're leading.

But part of caring for those we lead is bringing hope and creating a future that justifies that hope.

A time of crisis tests our management skills and our leadership skills (two different things). But a good crisis, well led, also creates unique opportunities. Opportunities to bond teams together as you slay a common dragon. Opportunities to discern what's really important from what we just thought was important. Opportunities to cast new vision and cast off old shackles. Opportunities to prove ourselves as trustworthy leaders.



The Strengths of a Good Crisis Leader

Amidst revising our strategic plans, managing our cash flow, and other management imperatives of this season, let's be committed to being good leaders. Here are a few principles to keep front and center:

- **Be Intentional yet gracious** – *Intentional* is a good word. Not blown about by the wind, but having clarity about what's important and disciplining ourselves to stay on course. *Gracious* is another good word. Not letting our intentionality bulldoze through others but giving them the space they need to process the new ideas we're thrusting upon them.
- **Be Vulnerable yet Confident** – People see through your masquerade of having all the answers. Don't try to fake it. Ask for their help and input as you shape your shared future. Allowing them to participate increases their trust in you and their personal dignity. Besides, you'll probably learn something. But don't be an Eeyore! Realistic positivity will come across as genuine and trustworthy.
- **Embrace creativity, but don't compromise your values** – The "way we've always done it here" doesn't matter anymore. A new "normal" is coming. Be open to new ideas that would have seemed impossible before. Love every new idea for a few minutes before critiquing it. But don't lose sight of who you are, why you exist, and what really matters to you (personally and organizationally). Use innovation to strengthen, not weaken your identity.

Don't Go It Alone

Balancing efforts between surviving in the short-term and thriving in the long-term takes a skillful leadership team (*find some trusted advisors quickly if you're trying to do this alone!*) Ignoring either one puts you, your organization, and your followers at risk.

If every day through this crisis you're intentional about *learning to trust and being trustworthy* you won't have wasted this crisis.