

# 10 Things Leaders Do When Leading Through Crisis

-John Maxwell

*Every great president, presidents we revere, led through very difficult times. Leaders distinguish themselves during tough times. Also, during tough times you get more leaders. Great leaders emerge during difficult times.*

*“All of the great leaders have had one characteristic in common: it was the willingness to confront unequivocally the major anxiety of their people in their time.” — John Kenneth Galbraith*  
*Leaders stretch to the challenge. Followers shrink from the challenge.*

*“You’re not made in a crisis — you’re revealed. When you squeeze an orange — you get orange juice. When you squeeze a lemon — you get lemon juice. When a human being gets squeezed — you get what is inside — positive or negative.” — Jack Kinder*

## 1. During Tough Times, Leaders Face Reality.

- The definition of a crisis: When you can’t say, *“Let’s forget the whole thing.”*
- The first responsibility of a leader is to define reality. Peter Drucker said, *“A time of turbulence is a dangerous time, but its greatest danger is a temptation to deny reality.”*
- Leaders surround themselves with people like themselves... They become isolated.

### 6 Rules for Successful Leadership from Jack Welch (5 of the 6 deal with reality)

1. Control your destiny, or someone else will.
  2. Face reality as it is, not as it was or as you wish it were.
  3. Be candid with everyone.
  4. Don’t manage, lead.
  5. Change before you have to.
  6. If you don’t have a competitive advantage, don’t compete.
- The Law of the Scoreboard: *“The team can make adjustments when it knows where it stands.”*

## 2. During Tough Times, Leaders See the Big Picture

- Leaders see more than others see — Leaders see before others see — Leaders see for others!
- Followers see what is. Leaders see what could be. Followers think first of themselves.
- Leaders think first of others.
- Followers see the penalties of failure.
- Leaders see the rewards of success.
- Andy Stanley says, *“Uncertainty is not an indication of poor leadership. Rather it indicates a need for leadership. The nature of leadership demands that there always be an element of uncertainty. The temptation is to think, ‘If I were a good leader, I would know exactly what to do.’ Increased responsibility means dealing more with*

*more intangibles and therefore more complex uncertainty. Leaders can afford to be uncertain, but we cannot afford to be unclear. People will not follow fuzzy leadership.”*

We don't have all the answers, but we know where we're going.

### 3. During Tough Times, Leaders Make Good Choices

- Choices made during a crisis are more important than choices not made during a crisis.
- All leaders know that sometimes there will be a crisis.

Choices You Make Before the Crisis (This is outstanding leadership is enjoying the moment but be prepared for what lies ahead.)

1. Values — Who I am.
2. Mission — What I do.
3. Responsibilities — What I must do.
4. Potential Problems — What I should do.

Choices You Make During a Crisis

Courageous Decisions — What must be done. Crisis takes away options. *“Whenever you see a successful business, someone has made a courageous decision.”* — Peter Drucker

Priority Decisions — What must be done first. *“First things first and last things not at all.”* — Peter Drucker

Change Decisions — What must be done differently. *“If someone is going down the wrong road, he doesn't need motivation to speed him up. What he needs is education to turn him around.”* — Jim Rohn

- Creative Decisions — What are my options?
- Support Decisions — Who can help me?

### 4. During crisis, leaders develop a plan.

- Pre-determine your course of action.
- Lay out goals.
- Adjust your priorities. You will always adjust your priorities your course of action and goals rarely align.
- Notify your key personnel.
- Allow time for acceptance.
- Head into action.
- Expect problems. Motion causes friction.
- Always point to your successes. This gives encouragement to people during a crisis.
- Daily review your progress.

### 5. During crisis, leaders develop a plan.

- Leaders learn from bad experiences. They are always in a teachable mode. *“A crisis must never be experienced for the second time.”* — Peter Drucker
- My best lessons I have learned in life were birthed in bad times.

- I'm not really too teachable during good times.

*"When we fail, we either from it or it."* – Failing Forward

*"I learned more from the one restaurant that didn't succeed than from all the ones that did."* – Wolfgang Puck

## 6. During Tough Times, Leaders Value Teamwork

The Law of Mt. Everest — *"As the Challenge Escalates, the need for Teamwork Elevates."*

The true measure of a successful leader is not getting people to work. The true measure of a successful leader is not getting people to work hard together.

## 7. During Tough Times, Leaders Give Hope

Hope is the foundation of change... Without hope change is impossible.

*"The first and last task of a leader is to keep hope alive — the hope that we can finally find our way through to a better world — despite the day's action, despite our own inertness and shallowness and wavering resolve."* – John W. Gardner

*"Optimism is the belief that things will get better. Hope is the faith that, together, we can make things better. Optimism is a passive virtue; hope, an active one. It takes no courage to be an optimist, but it takes a great deal of courage to have hope."* – Jonathan Saks

## 8. During Tough Times, Leaders Make It Happen

- You can evaluate leaders by the size of the problems they are willing to tackle.
- If you can't make it happen for yourself, you'll never make it happen for others.
- Comfort Zone — "I do what I already know I can do."
- Challenge Zone — "I attempt to do what I haven't done before."
- "Making it happen" requires risk.
- During crisis, problems are a wake-up call for creativity.

## 9. During Tough Times, Leaders Watch Their Attitude

- Attitude always need adjustment.
- Attitude is a choice.  
We cannot always choose what happens to us, but we can choose what happens within us.
- Attitude isn't only thing but it's the main thing that determines how we handle problems.
- During tough times, attitude separates successful people from those who fail.

## 10. During Tough Times, Leaders Trust God

*"God is too good to be unkind, And He is too wise to be confused. If I cannot trace His hand, I can always trust His heart."* – C.H. Spurgeon