

Crisis Leadership

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I frequently encourage leaders to copy principles, not practices. Principles in times of crisis remain the same. The main takeaway is that **the way you respond as a leader will almost always determine the quality of recovery for the organization after the crisis.**

No doubt you're well underway with your COVID-19 crisis leadership, but something tells me that there will be other times we will need these principles. I want to share some principles I have learned on how to respond during crisis times of life.

Here are 5 things NOT to do in times of crisis:

1. **Panic.**

The word panic means *"a sudden overwhelming fear, with or without cause, that produces hysterical or irrational behavior"* (Dictionary.com). If you panic when crisis occurs, you'll almost always make bad decisions and cause yourself more pain. Calm down, think and pray so you can make wiser decisions. There is always time to pray.

2. **Quit.**

When I was in a business that was struggling the worst reaction to my situation was to run from the problem. And, sadly, I did this one frequently. I would disappear for hours. Looking back, it never solved anything. Reflecting on those days, I wish I had stayed the course, because when I gave up, so did those I was supposed to be leading.

3. **Blame.**

Figuring out who is at fault when you are in crisis-mode is probably not as important as figuring out what to do next. There will be time to analyze later — and that should happen — but don't become paralyzed with it now. (This includes kicking yourself for being in the crisis.)

4. **Refuse Help.**

I have learned by experience that, when God is allowing a crisis to occur, He is also stirring people to intercede on behalf of the suffering. It's amazing how it happens. He may have prepared someone else, through their own season of crisis, intentionally so they can help others. Don't deny someone their opportunity to be obedient to what God calls them to do. That may mean swallowing your pride, raising the white flag of surrender, and letting them help.

5. **Deny God.**

People either run towards God or away from God in times of crisis. You can probably figure out which option works best. This is a time to learn to fully rely on God. He's never taken off guard or by surprise. He always has a plan. It's always good. Lean into Him.

Here are 5 things to do in times of crisis:

1. **Rejoice.**

Be thankful the crisis is over, and a time of peace has come. I have many times prayed fervently during the hard times but forsaken my “God-time” when everything is going well. Don’t follow my example in this. Let us remain as desperate for God as we have been the last few months.

2. **Share.**

The Bible is clear we are to allow struggles to help others in theirs. I love how this seems to have brought churches together. Pastors are learning from each other again. That is a good thing.

3. **Prepare.**

If you have lived long enough you know that seasons of crisis come many times in life. During the quiet times — when all is going reasonably well — is when we should be preparing for harder times.

4. **Rest.**

To borrow from the Cheers theme song, “Taking a break from all your worries sure would help a lot.” Many people never enjoy the peaceful times because they are too paranoid about the next crisis that may or may not even occur. We should prepare for times of trouble, but we should never live in a state of worry. Worry is a sin. And it’s never helpful. After a crisis, and even with mini breaks in between, rest. Recover. Rejuvenate.

5. **Grow.**

I have grown spiritually more during the hard times than in the easy times of my life. Crisis-mode teaches us valuable insight into the character and heart of God. Use the down times to evaluate your relationship with God, your life, and see how the two connect. Work on the places you are out of sync with God’s will for your life. Work on your skills as a leader. Become a better person. Some of the strongest character is developed only through times of crisis. Evaluate post-crisis.

It would be nice if you never encounter such a misfortune. But crisis leadership is a part of leading.

It is what we do!