



Leadership Letter

Improving Your Response to Disaster

With exposure to tornadoes and hurricanes and floods increasing in the South, researchers are looking for ways to improve our response mechanisms, activate our leadership abilities and increase our odds for survival.

During a disaster, survivors say almost nothing happened the way they would have expected. Here is what can be gleaned from their experiences:

- **Decide and act.** Oddly enough, most people shut down in a crisis, becoming docile and still. Rather than panicking, they fall into a stupor. You can come out of it by thinking about your loved ones, especially the children. Another way is to quickly consider your options, choose one and act. People who respond well to trauma tend to believe they can influence outcomes, find purpose in chaos and learn from their experience, good or bad.
- **Train for the worst case scenario.** Drill for fires and other emergencies. Keep these drills unexpected, but at the same time, plan for them rigorously with appointed people to assume responsibilities, establish escape routes and viable alternatives. Before 9/11, Morgan Stanley's head of security, taught employees to save themselves, And on that fateful day, he led 2,687 of them to safety (EL, September 2007). In the event of a burning plane, many flight attendants now are trained to say, "Get out! Get out! Go!"
- **Trust people to do their best.** People respond well to leadership in a disaster. If you ask them to, they will rise to the occasion, following their leader almost anywhere. There is no need for anxiety or paralysis. This is your moment to lead.

—Adapted from The Unthinkable: *Who Survives When Disaster Strikes—and Why*, Amanda Ripley, Crown Publishers

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Nelson Mandela's Eight Rules of Leadership

The former president of South Africa who ended apartheid, Nelson Mandela, has an African first name, Rolihlahla, which translates literally as “pulling down a tree branch”. What that actually means is “troublemaker”.

Mandela's life means many more things: warrior, activist, and statesman. Here are his rules of leadership:

1. **Courage means surpassing fear.** When his tiny plane lost an engine twenty minutes from his destination, Mandela calmly sat reading his paper. Once on the ground, he said, “Man I was terrified up there!” He later explained that actual fearfulness would have been irrational, but as a leader he could not show fear.
2. **Lead from the front...but people must follow.** After decades of armed struggle and refusing to negotiate with the government, Mandela decided to start talking with his enemies. His allies thought he was selling out, but he brought them along.
3. **Lead from the back, too.** As a boy, Mandela herded cattle. “You know”, he said, “you can only lead them from behind.
4. **Know your enemies.** Mandela tried to understand and engage his opponents. He studied Afrikaans, the language of white South Africans, to learn their view of the world. While in prison, Mandela, who was a lawyer, helped wardens with their legal problems. It amazed those most brutal opponents of apartheid that he would help them. For Mandela, he realized he could handle the worst characters imaginable.
5. **Keep them close.** Like Abraham Lincoln, the prisoner kept in his brain trust the people whom he did not like and could not rely on. After his release, he called them on their birthdays and attended family funerals. People simply act in their own self-interest.
6. **Dress the part.** He maintained the appearance of a leader.
7. **Live in the gray area.** He understood that apartheid had many causes and required nuanced solutions.
8. **Recognize when to quit.** Once Mandela tried to get the voting age lowered to 14. His effort failed and he accepted it without sulking. He also left office at the right time, knowing that leaders choose not only what to do but what not to do.

—Adapted from “Mandela: His 8 Lessons of Leadership,” Richard Stengel, *Time*

Lead With an Authentic Voice

“One word expresses the pathway to greatness: voice”: says author Stephen Covey. Find your voice, and you will inspire others to find theirs. Fail to find it, and you will be swallowed up by the voices and priorities of others. Leaders find their voices by answering four questions:

1. What are you good at?
2. What do you love doing?
3. What need can you serve?
4. What is life asking of you? What do you feel like you should be doing? What is your conscience directing you to do?

People are internally motivated by their own four needs: to live, love, learn, and to leave a legacy, Covey says. When they overlap, you have voice.! (Adapted from “Finding Your Voice,” Stephen Covey)

Integrative Thinking: Can You Do It?

Consider the opposable thumb. Because of that pincer motion, we can do amazing things: write, thread, and fix robotic arms in space.

It is the same thing with our brains. Because we can hold two contradictory thoughts at the same time, we are capable of thinking through both of them toward a better option.

Sadly, most people opt for boring black and white choices. It is the usual process of inspecting the pros and cons, then picking one.

The alternative process—combining both elements of either/or—is called integrative thinking. Here is how it works:

- **Figure out what is relevant.** You may need to decide which factors matter. It sounds hard, but remember that the traditional approach is to throw away as many factors as possible, which is usually too many. This approach allows one to hang on to more salient features when considering a problem. Finding what is relevant means rising above narrow thinking. Marketing, legal and accounting people each have their own point of view, but you (and many others) need to consider the whole vision and process.
- **Determine what causes what.** Conventional thinkers like straight line causal relationships in which more of “A” generates more of “B”. In many decisions, unforeseen variables come into play.. Integrative thinkers take into account multidirectional and non-linear relationships.
- **Don’t do things piecemeal.** You and you alone, need to figure out the architecture of the decision. Never have different functional heads work independently on chunks of it. An architect would never ask others to each design, separately, the perfect room.
- **Find a resolution.** You may need to reject several solutions. True leaders will not except an either/or solution. More than a century ago, Thomas Chamberlin, a geologist and president of the University of Wisconsin, proposed “multiple working hypotheses.” He took into account the combination of several factors, calling it “parallel or complex thought” and noted that you can form a habit of looking at things simultaneously from different standpoints. That process need not be limited to a few people. We can use it too.

—Adapted from, “How Successful Leaders Think”, Roger Martin, Harvard Business Review.

Resource Recommendation

Employing Generation Why: Understanding, Managing, and Motivating the New Workforce.
By Eric Chester Tucker House Books



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***Promoting Quality Care and
Education for Young Children and
Their Families***

[http://
southernearlychildhood.org](http://southernearlychildhood.org)

The Southern Early Childhood Association (SECA) is a regional organization committed to promoting quality care and education for young children and their families. SECA is committed to providing leadership and support to individuals and groups by:

- *Enhancing the quality of young children's lives through early childhood care and education.*
- *Supporting families in their roles of caring for their children.*
- *Fostering the professional growth and status of individuals working with young children and their families.*
- *Increasing public understanding and support for policies and programs which ensure developmentally based services to young children and their families.*
- *Focusing on Southern issues concerning children and families*

Board Cafe

We searched the Board Café website at: <http://www.compasspoint.org>. The following articles are posted and can be downloaded for free for this month:

- *The Board's Role in Raising Money*
- *Two Good Reads on Generational Changes in the Non-Profit Sector*
- *Non-Profit Genie: Answers to Frequently Asked Questions*
- *Professional Development*

The website: www.guidestar.org. posts 990 forms of several non profit organizations. You can view your own form and forms of others to get ideas how others have completed the forms and raised money or events they held.

What It Boils Down To

Question: What 10 two-letter sum words up leadership?

Hint: This motto by an anonymous sage forms the core of a pop song, the jumping off point for teachers and coaches, and the inspiration for an army of Americans from psychologists to sales forces.

Answer: "If it is to be, it is up to me."