

# LEADING THROUGH CRISIS

SEIZE THE OPPORTUNITY TO CREATE A BETTER FUTURE

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## 1. RECOGNIZE THE NATURE OF A CRISIS:

A crisis is a convergence of issues and forces that has elements of both danger and opportunity.

It is a critical turning point where heightened tension or conflict must be resolved. Resolution will either lead to improvement or deterioration. A crisis requires new and creative responses to the emerging situation in order to prevent serious damage.

**2. KNOW THE ISSUES:** If you pay attention to ongoing problems and challenges before a crisis occurs, it will be easier to identify the issues when they converge in a crisis. Use the crisis to look at and respond more deeply to what has been avoided, neglected, or crying out to be resolved for a long time.

**3. RECOGNIZE STRENGTHS:** Know the strengths of your organization and team. This will help you mobilize and direct your resources when you need to. Some pockets of strength will only become apparent after the crisis has occurred. Actively look for long standing and possibly hidden sources of support.

**4. KNOW YOUR KEY PEOPLE:** This will include both their strengths and limitations. Look honestly at whom you can count on for what. A crisis isn't the time for fantasy. Trust your instincts. Once you've assessed key figures, find the most strategic way to mobilize and use their talents and to offset their limitations.

**5. CHOOSE THE PATH OF OPPORTUNITY:** When issues come into focus in a dramatic way, the opportunity for change is also heightened. Choices can be made along the lines of avoidance, fear and denial, or along the lines of vision, courage and responsive action. These choices will determine the nature of the outcome.

**6. RESPOND TO UNDERLYING ISSUES:** During a crisis, issues that have been hidden in the shadows may become visible. If these issues aren't processed as they emerge, damage can occur. Deciding to take responsibility is pivotal and may mean hearing some things you don't want to hear.



**7. CONTAIN ANGER AND RAGE:** Anger and rage can alert you to what is important, but do not let anger lead you. Don't make decisions based on anger. Unchecked anger is not wise enough or kind enough to build a future that can address what is needed.

**8. FACE FEAR:** Fear doesn't go away but it can be managed. Don't let it guide your actions. Use it to alert you to danger but don't allow it to be the decision-maker. Face the fear, address worst-case scenarios, do some worst case planning and then proceed by taking action to create the future you want.

**9. DEAL WITH LOSS:** There is always loss in a crisis. If loss isn't addressed, it will be an ongoing source of needless suffering. The greater the scope of the crisis, the more important it is to provide support for grieving that loss. This applies to the group you are leading as well as to yourself individually.

**10. RELINQUISH THE PAST:** When loss has been processed enough, its time to let go and relinquish the former status quo. This usually means accepting an interim state of disruption, instability and chaos. When loss of the past is accepted, renewal can begin and life can to return to a new "normal".

**11. LEARN FROM THE CRISIS:** Learn from the issues that are surfacing, from the bad news you don't want to hear, from the strength you see around you, from your trusted friends and associates, and even from your enemies. Without learning, the past is often repeated.

**12. DISCOVER AND ACT FROM VISION:** A vision will emerge naturally, if you have done your part in dealing with your own fear, loss and anger. If you have had enough support to see clearly, if you are learning from the crisis, and are oriented toward a positive future, it will come into focus. Plan for best-case scenarios. Hope for the future you want. Nurture that future. Create alliances that will support and protect your vision.

This 12-point guide is the basis of the **LEADING THROUGH CRISIS** training. To discuss coaching, consultation or training possibilities, contact Barbara Bouchet.