



Head & Heart is a collection of ideas, resources and frameworks to support your personal and professional development in leading yourself, others and organizations with head and heart.

Spring 2009

From the Editor

Dear Readers,

"Turbulent times" and all that's associated with them dominate the news channels and headlines. But reading the headlines (or even the fine print) won't help you lead more effectively in uncertain times.

Here's a suggestion. Before you begin reading this issue of Head & Heart, find yourself a quiet spot, take out a piece of paper and pen and jot this down at the top of the page:

"What do I need to work on to get better at leading (myself, my team or my organization) in turbulent times?"

After you've gotten a few ideas on paper, then read through this issue. I am confident that you'll make one or two connections that stimulate your thinking and actions as a leader in a new and more effective way.

Dan Norenberg

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Thought Leadership

Leading in Turbulent Times

"Everybody's got to change sometime"

Taj Mahal

Just stop and reflect for a moment. When was the last time you really had to change? When was the last time you felt really uncomfortable? Your reflexive, hard-wired responses to people and situations just no longer seemed to work. Your impact had gone. You were forced to step back and review the situation!

For me, the big moments were getting married, having a child, my first proper career job, changing organizations at a senior level with a steep change in culture, starting my own business and... today. Yes, today! There is something very different about our economic times today. We are in a truly global recession, which is new for all of us. This brings with it that sinister edge of uncertainty - with so little money available and with much less confidence about the assumptions our business plans are based on.

Leading in this time of economic uncertainty is a profound leadership challenge. Its demands are both intensely rational and deeply emotional. If everybody's got to change sometime then that sometime is certainly now. Or as the song goes on to tell us, if we don't change "we will be down some lonesome road."

The key question that emerges from this is "what are the most important leadership traits for managing in this

downturn of downturns?" Ram Charan gives us some very solid advice:

Honesty & credibility – level with people. Tell them how you see the world. Acknowledge the limits of what you know. Ask for their views.

The ability to inspire – work with your team to toughen them to get through the storm successfully with realistically optimistic pictures of what can lie ahead.

Real time connection with reality – reality becomes a moving target. Continuously update. Allow your picture to change as you get new information.

Realism tempered with optimism – focus your people on a vision of what is possible and energize them to search for actions that will realize the vision.

Managing with intensity – your hands-on participation is essential in these times. Your people need to see that you have put reality on the table and have a plan for addressing it as a team.

Boldness in building for the future – resist the pressure of shortchanging the future through the necessity of conserving cash and surviving in the short run.

Be Honest! Be Bold!

Ed Norman

Leading Self

Defeating Distractions

"Any occurrence requiring undivided attention will be accompanied by an equally compelling distraction."

Hutchinson's Law

Over the last few months, there has been an endless stream of distractions, all demanding that we spend time, energy and effort elsewhere. The media push the current crisis to the top of every front page, every news bulletin, every story. To what extent we have talked ourselves into an even deeper recession is an issue that is still up for debate.



The point is the environment in which we are operating provides a huge number of potential distractions. For leaders, this context can easily pull them away from concentrating on the things that matter most in making their organizations successful.

The source of distractions can be internal or external or both. Internal distractions include being dominated by pessimistic thoughts, nervousness, worries or unrealistic expectations. External distractions include disruptive colleagues, unexpected delays and technical faults.

Distractions are defeated by being fully focused. Focus purely on what is relevant and stay focused until the task is completed, the goal achieved. Those who let their focus wander onto what others are thinking, or who spend too much time looking at how well their competitors are doing are

more likely to make mistakes and take bad decisions.

Most top performers apply a handful of simple principles to make sure they focus on the essentials.

- Recognize the distraction for what it is. Accept that it has happened. We're all human, we all succumb to distractions in one way or another.

- Plan an alternative response. To decide what to do, first identify how you are reacting to this distraction:

intellectually, emotionally and physically. Then plan to minimize the level of interference from each of these three factors.

- Implement it. Holding out for the perfect solution often takes too long. Better to implement a solution that is good enough and improve it as you implement than to wait for somebody to come up with the perfect, risk-free solution. Of course, in times of crisis our desire to take risks is weaker than normal.

Above all, the critical factor in staying focused is to be present. In the words of Abraham Maslow, "I can feel guilty about the past, apprehensive about the future, but only in the present can I act." Focus on the "here and now," on completing one task at a time and watch your performance soar as the distractions melt away.

Steven Hunt

Point of View

Thriving or Surviving?

"Success is not so much what we have as it is what we are."

Jim Rohn

Never has your "Point of View" had more significance than today. Amidst the turmoil and turbulence of current times, your true point of view remains the strongest influencer of your feelings, your thoughts, your actions and your results.

Get quiet for a moment and listen to your self talk. It's that radio voice that is going on in your head, sometimes consistent with what you say out loud to others, and sometimes not.

Is your radio gently saying, "let's just see if we can get through this year, the worst will be over soon" or are you looking for growth opportunities for the future? Are you cutting costs and lying low or being visionary and strategic?

Why is it that only a select few will come out of the current crisis stronger and more successful than before? It's because most fail to re-imagine themselves and their business in times of trouble. More of the same won't work in turbulent times.

To realign your point of view in turbulent times, get a clear picture of where you want to go and concentrate on the pivotal activities that will help you and your team get there.

Take a new and elevated personal point of view into your next client or management meeting because whether you will only survive the crisis or thrive on the crisis all depends on your point of view.

Dan Norenberg

Word Watch

Crisis

International, diplomatic, personal, mid-life, financial, economic, identity... there seems to be no end to the types of crises we may have.

For many people a crisis is, by default, linked to a dangerous or unstable situation. Often there is a sense that this situation has appeared out of the blue. From this perspective it is only a few steps to associating it with a traumatic and stressful change in life. And there are more than enough examples of this today. A personal (financial) crisis may arise for those who have lost their jobs; a societal crisis may arise from armed conflict or a pandemic.

But it also helps to consider the other meanings of crisis and its origins.

The word "crisis" originates from the Greek "krisis" – a decision for or against a particular course of action. This is very similar to a second meaning in English: a turning point for better or worse in the progress of a series of events.

It has the meaning of a crucial or decisive point. A judgement is required, and an important one at that. We can learn from a man who faced many crises, Winston Churchill, who said, "One ought never to turn one's back on a threatened danger and try to run away from it. If you do that, you will double the danger. But if you meet it promptly and without flinching, you will reduce the danger by half."

So as we face our own crises, both small and large, remember that a crisis indicates a turning point in a person's life. It may feel like the end, but, then again, it may be a time when life takes a turn for the better!

Steven Hunt

Leading Others

Be Visible – Your Followers Need You!

*"Presence is more than just being there."
Malcolm Forbes*

When times are great with calm waters and smooth sailing, we encourage leaders to celebrate success. Celebrating success is the perfect moment for a leader to praise and recognize people while linking the success to new challenges in the future.

Currently, the waters are anything but calm. People are experiencing fear, confusion and other toxic emotions. What are key things for a leader to be doing in turbulent times? My thoughts: be visible and be present - in every sense of those words.

After the attacks of September 11, the Mayor of New York City, Rudolph Giuliani, wasted no time to get out among the people and be visible. He did not pretend to have the answers to the thousands of questions people were asking – he was simply visible as a leader. He was demonstrating that, while there may have been a vacuum of information, a lack of answers to the way forward, no perfect strategy yet to master the situation, **there was no vacuum of leadership.**

We can't scientifically prove that Giuliani chose the "best" course of action, but it has been cited countless of times as "the right thing to do." We can learn from this. Leaders must avoid the temptation to lock themselves away building the perfect plan and then emerge with a great Power-Point pack to roll it out to the masses.

Especially now, be visible - your followers need you.

When working with leaders, we usually invest lots of time learning together about the role of the leader in change. In my recent leadership work however, many discussions have centered on leaders experiencing the demand to acknowledge the emotional reality of their people in the **here and now**. A huge amount of wealth has been destroyed in a short period of time and stock prices are in the basement. Many of the successes people celebrated just a short while ago and the hard work

that led to them seem meaningless now.

Change is needed, no doubt, yet before a leader can energize people for the coming changes they must **first be present in the present** and truly listen to and acknowledge the emotions their followers are experiencing. Pausing and being connected with people in the present builds the credibility and "followership" to leading change for the future.

Being visible, present and connected to your followers is not as easy as it sounds, but is well worth the effort. When you look back in a few months I am sure you will say that taking this action was the investment upon which the success you created was built.

Michael Couch



Leading Organizations

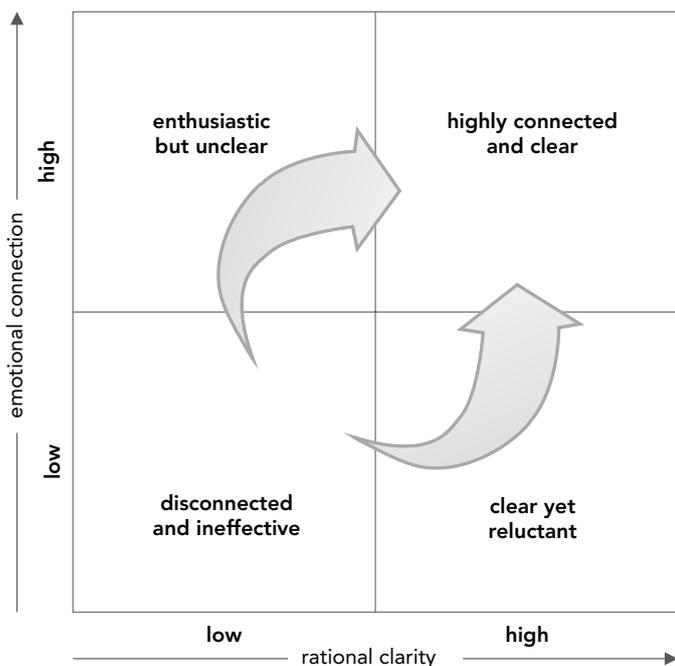
Get Ahead of Turbulent Times

Turbulent times disrupt the current and future landscape that leaders intended to use to achieve their business targets. Leaders often react by dramatically reducing resources and activities as they have not yet come to grips with how to make sense out of the current situation, much less their future desired outcomes.

Watch carefully for leaders and companies that start to pull ahead of their competition during these times. These leaders are able to make sense of the emerging data and communicate this to their people in a way that

What's even more important is that these leaders are able to unite and align people to the new purpose at hand through their emotionally engaging leadership practices. These include opportunities for personal expression (and doubt!), public challenge and debate.

Leaders that create high emotional connection in their organization understand that during this dialog it's more important to listen and understand with heart than to bombard people with pep talks from the company chorus line.



allows everyone to understand and act on newly defined priorities and key metrics along the way. People feel confident in the new landscape – they have a new sense of rational clarity.

real way to help you excel in challenging times and find a different way of doing things successfully.

Dan Norenberg

Food for Thought

"The fishermen know that the sea is dangerous and the storm terrible, but they have never found these dangers sufficient reason for remaining ashore."

Vincent Van Gogh

Leadership Facts and Figures

15 years of research of the key events that have shaped the careers and lives of executives has shown that hardships such as those experienced during a crisis can result in significant learning. In fact, 34 percent of the hundreds of managers CCL has interviewed indicated that their greatest learning occurred from hardships, which included leading in a crisis situation.

Adapted from the book "Crisis Leadership" by Gene Klan Center for Creative Leadership (CCL)

For more interesting **Leadership Facts and Figures** go to our Leader's Toolkit at http://www.nvision-learning.com/leadersedge_toolkit.php

Challenging Situations?

What challenging situation would you like us to deal with in a future issue of Head & Heart? Get our perspective.

Send us an e-mail at: headandheart@nvision-learning.com

We will of course ensure that your challenging situation remains anonymous.