

Leadership and Crisis

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Pick up any newspaper today and you will read about economic crisis. Turn your TV to any news broadcast, and you will hear about economic crisis. I was with a group of business executives yesterday, and we talked about economic crisis. We are being overwhelmed with negative news and fearful conversation regarding the issues of the current, global economic crisis. But with all the bombardment of negative news and fearful conversations leaders must still lead. How do we do that?

During times of crisis a leader's greatest enemy is fear. During crisis most people respond from the emotion of fear. This is a natural response that can be traced back to our ancestral roots. The emotion of fear was designed to protect us from any imposing dangers. However, many people have developed the habit of responding to any crisis situation from the emotion of fear, and that poses three significant problems for leaders:

Fear paralyzes productive actions. Fear leads to negative attitudes which, in turn, get in the way of positive, productive actions.

Fear attracts and supports failure. Negative attitudes find comfort in failure. They offer an instant and comfortable excuse to quit, point blame, or procrastinate.

Fear eliminates ownership of possible solutions. Fear destroys creative energy. Fear causes us to think of ourselves as victims and victims have no solutions.

How do effective leaders respond to the natural, human emotion of fear? The effective leader knows that there are only two options in responding to crisis...**Positive Actions or Negative Beliefs!**

The leaders who respond with negative beliefs nullify their leadership position by joining the ranks of the fearful. When a leader responds to crisis from the emotion of fear, his or her position as leader is no longer effective. The leader has chosen to simply join the crowd, and any attempts at leading will be overlooked by those who are expected to follow.

The effective leader knows that there is only one productive option in responding to crisis... **Positive Actions!** You have to consistently fight your normal responses to fear because effective leadership demands positive, productive, and effective actions. This current economic crisis will be managed by effective leaders. In challenging times, effective leaders step up to the plate and lead with positive action plans and consistent high pay off activities. I wish you Godspeed in your significant role as an effective leader!

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