

EXTREME CRISIS LEADERSHIP

Key Take-Aways from **Station Blackout** by Dr. Charles A. Casto

CHARACTERISTICS



HUMILITY

- Do not "boss" - because you *can't*
- Do not pretend you know it all - because you *don't*
- Do not pretend you are better than others - because you're *not*
- Be humble, cheerful, comforting, thoughtful, & reasonable
- Strive to understand other perspectives & approach issues as others see them



BALANCE

- Remain neither too optimistic nor too pessimistic - hold onto healthy skepticism
- Break down barriers, both perceived & real
- Remain calm and collected, do not submit to panic
- Be a problem solver, not a problem creator
- Know when to *speak up* & when to *shut up*

COMMUNICATION

- Common understanding within your team depends on effective communication, & common understanding is the key to success
- In high visibility positions, trust must be rebuilt with every decision, action, & statement
- Assure employees that you will protect them from outside interference
- Present the realities of the situation to your team calmly
- Debate outside of & before the formal meeting, not in it
- Casual conversations & speculation is dangerous
- Be quick to apologize, both publicly & privately
- Appeal to others' sense of duty
- Do not say more than you know



FINDING SOLUTIONS

PLANNING

A plan reduces chaos, which reduces overall fear

Keep the speed of the response ahead of events

Establish working relationships with other groups and leaders as early as possible

Establish a culture that constantly studies mistakes with the objective to learn from them and improve the system

Adapt, innovate, be prepared for unexpected challenges, take action, never lose focus, be calm

Once outside of a planned response, the chances of success decrease exponentially



EXECUTING

Focus on systemic failures, assume that individuals are doing their best under the circumstances

Discourage yourself and your staff from isolated perspectives

There is a fine line between rushing into a solution & working incrementally toward one

Strive to never need heroes-engineering designs, procedures, & equipment must be robust, safe, protected, & simple

Assess where established procedures must be circumvented

Avoid over committing to one exclusive path

NAVIGATING FACTS & POLITICS



FACTS

When possible, make decisions based on vetted facts

Do not chase after information that is not relevant- this can cause second guessing, unnecessary strategy changes, & a lack of confidence

If there are no facts, make decisions anyway- find ways to inject coherent information despite the lack of reliable data, especially when dealing with non-technical personnel

Politics must be managed, just as technical issues are

Political and other unrelated considerations will always complicate the situation

Transboundary effects can exert tremendous pressure on political leaders to make social decisions that could be at odds with technical realities- this social pressure is usually counterproductive



POLITICS



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