

# A Leader's Guide to Managing Crisis, Change and Chaos

Mark Miller  
Entrepreneur-In-Residence  
Adjunct Professor  
Ramapo College of New Jersey  
mmille14@ramapo.edu  
CEO - Biosynthetic Technologies



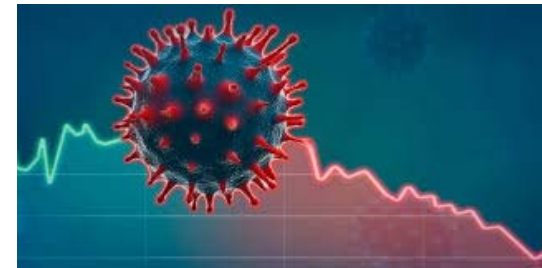
## Seven Key Takeaways

1. YOU need to stay strong
2. Prepare for the worst – Hope for the best
3. Get clear on where you are
4. Communicate consistently and confidently
5. Manage your thinking (and your stress)
6. Seize opportunities for positive change
7. Make decisions and take action



# Anatomy of a Crisis

- Precrisis
  - Calm between storms
  - Sense making
  - Looking at seemingly unrelated events can pose a danger
- Crisis event
  - Starts with triggering event
  - Ends with resolution. May not be so obvious.
- Post crisis
  - Back to business
  - Don't forget lessons learned



# Leading in times of Crisis, Change and Chaos is a full-time job.

- Now you have TWO jobs – get use to it
- You still have your day job
- Don't forget your family and friends



# YOU need to stay strong

- People are counting on you for guidance
- If you are not on your game, no one else will be
- Appear confident
  - You can cry when you're alone
- Stay healthy
  - Work out, meditate, eat right



# Prepare for the worst – Hope for the best

- The Best crisis management happens in the quiet between crises
- Make a plan of action
- Keep the team engaged – “This is not spring break”



# Get clear on where you are

---



## **Before you jump in – take a breath**

Where are you now?  
What's real vs what's perceived?  
Get the facts




## **Gain clarity**

Assess impact on business and team  
Evaluate your resources  
Determine mission and what you'll need to accomplish it



## **What's Important Right Now?**



# Communicate Consistently and Confidently

- People are worried, looking to you as a leader - **Be One**
  - Always be present and accessible
- You may not have it all figured out
- Communicate frequently, transparently, empathetically, confidently
- Engage the team:
  1. Make people feel safe
  2. Be authentic
  3. Pump it up
  4. Show gratitude and empathy
  5. Express optimism

Be the charismatic leader your people  
can rally around



# Manage *your* thinking (and your stress)

- Positive thinking begets positive action
- Get into a positive “headspace”
- Shift thinking from the problem to the solution

Ask yourself:

- Am I reacting in a negative manner on purpose?
- Is this way of responding helping me create the life/results I want?
- Is this the way I want to be defined?
- Would I teach or recommend this way of reacting to my children?





# Seize opportunities for positive change

- Every challenge brings great opportunities — if you're looking for them.
- Take a step back, look at the lay of the land and future-proof your business and yourself so you emerge stronger than ever.
- **Organize for the future.**
  - It may be necessary to restructure your organization for the near term, make changes that will also support future growth.
  - You may have some great people who could be temporarily reallocated.
  - Whatever the case, treat people with integrity.
- **More remote, less office?**
  - Ramapo quickly pivoted to having employees work remotely during the coronavirus outbreak.
  - Even prior to COVID people were increasingly asking for remote work options.
- **What isn't working?**
  - Look at your processes, your technology and your systems. What can be streamlined and upgraded?
  - What has been a source of headaches and waste?
  - What technology have you wanted to pursue but have "had time" to learn

# Make decisions and take action

---



THERE ARE NO WRONG  
DECISIONS



ALTHOUGH SOME DECISIONS  
MIGHT NEED TO BE CHANGED



FOCUS ON WHAT NEEDS TO BE  
AND CAN BE DONE TODAY

# A Couple Leadership Tips For Good Times and Bad



Reject shortcuts to growth.



Carve out space to work on the business.



Challenge your thinking with fresh perspectives.



Stoke curiosity.



Apply discipline to decision-making.



Find a trusted guide.



Rise by helping others.



Have and share fun