

# 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

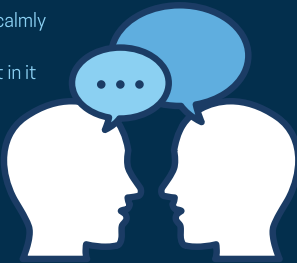


### BALANCE

- 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



### POLITICS

- 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



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