



TenStep Supplemental Paper

2 January 2003

Extraordinary Leadership in Tough and Challenging Times

Every human organization goes through tough and challenging times, because, well, we're human!

We need to expect that tough times will come, but know that by exhibiting extraordinary leadership during those times, the group can combat them and come out stronger than ever! Here are some thoughts on being an Extraordinary Leader during tough and challenging times, whether you lead a business, a city, a non-profit organization, a church, or a family.

Ways to Exhibit Extraordinary Leadership in Tough and Challenging Times

1. **Keep Your Eyes on the Big Picture.** When things get tough, everybody's temptation is to become acutely focused on the problem. The Extraordinary Leader, however, will keep his or her eyes on the big picture. This doesn't mean that you don't address the problem. In fact, you have to address the problem. But what separates a leader from a follower is that the leader does not get caught up in the problem. The leader sees the big picture and keeps moving toward the vision. The further he/she takes his/her followers toward the vision, the further away from the problem they get.
2. **Don't Get Caught in War or in Friendly Fire.** When circumstances get tough, even the most loyal team members can be tempted to start shooting and, unfortunately, they sometimes shoot each other! Rather than focusing on the enemy on the outside, they begin to question each other and find many faults with one another that they normally would not have seen. An Extraordinary Leader is one who escapes being dragged into the fray. Such people keep their eyes on the big picture and act rationally and objectively. They understand that people are heated and are saying things they do not really mean. This way, they take fewer arrows and set an example for their followers.
3. **Be the First to Sacrifice.** When it gets tough, like when there has to be cuts in salaries, etc., leaders should do just that - lead. They need to not only be the ones to be rewarded the greatest when all is well, but also be the first to sacrifice. The Extraordinary Leader says, "I know many of you are concerned with the salary cuts. I too am. In the long run we will be healthy again, but now this is necessary. Understanding this, I want you to know that I am taking a 20% pay reduction myself. I want you to know that we are in this together." The Extraordinary Leader is the first to sacrifice and will be rewarded with the loyalty of his followers.
4. **Remain Calm.** Panic is a common human emotion and no one is immune to it. The Extraordinary Leader, however, takes time out regularly to think the issues through and remain calm. He/she reminds him/herself that all is not lost and there will be another day. The Extraordinary Leader also reminds him/herself that being



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- calm will enable him/her to make the right decisions for the entire team. Panic only leads to disaster, while calm leads to victory.
5. **Motivate.** In tough and challenging times, people are naturally down. They tend to be pessimistic. They can't see how it is all going to work out. Thus, they have a hard time getting going. The Extraordinary Leader knows this and will focus in on being the optimistic motivator. He/she will come to the office knowing that for the time being, the mood of the group will be carried and buoyed by his/her attitude. Above all else, the leader will seek to show how the end result will be good - and with this, the leader motivates the team to continue on, braving the current storms.
 6. **Create Small Wins.** One of the ways to motivate is to create small wins. The Extraordinary Leader knows that in tough times, his/her people think that all is lost. They wonder if they can win. So the Extraordinary Leader creates opportunities for the team to win, even if they are small. They set smaller, more achievable goals and remind and reward the team members when they hit those goals. With each small win, the leader is building the esteem and attitude of the team, digging them out of their self-created hole of fear.
 7. **Keep a Sense of Humor.** Hardly anything in life can't be laughed at. The Extraordinary Leader keeps perspective and knows that we humans act irrationally when we get scared and fail, and sometimes that is humorous. Don't ever laugh at someone's expense in this situation, because that will be perceived as cold and heartless, regardless of what you meant by it, but do keep the ability to laugh at yourself and the situations that present themselves. By doing this, you will keep yourself and your team in an attitude that will eventually beat the tough times.