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What separates a truly great leader from the merely good? In most cases, it's the ability to rise to the occasion during times of crisis and chaos.

It's one thing to effectively manage people and set a positive example under optimal conditions. To do so under the most taxing kind of pressure, however, is another thing entirely.

During times of crisis in particular -- leaders must be ready to shine. Your team members will certainly be watching; their scrutiny of your actions will never be higher than during a period of turbulence and crisis. Great leaders know that others will take their cue from how they respond, and act accordingly.

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### Let's take a look at some tips and tactics you can apply when the going gets particularly tough.

When in crisis arrives it's imperative to remain calm, focused and cognizant of the fact that everyone is looking to you for leadership.

**Lead Decisively** – Make a decision, your actions need to be resolute; determined.

- The Worst Decision is No Decision - Many times, leaders postpone decisions for fear of failing or making a poor choice. Most failure stems from inaction, not from mistakes we make in the process. It's not uncommon to make mistakes, so it's important to be flexible and back up, change course, adjust and go forward again.

**Maintain Open Communications** - Staff members are going to want reassurance that leadership is doing everything within its power to resolve the situation.

- An open channel of communication is vitally important during these times. Without it, team members will quickly grow concerned, filling in the blanks with supposition and rumor -- which if left unchecked, can spread rapidly and cause serious harm to morale
- Acknowledge what you can and ensure you have a system that encourages timely two-way communication

**Continuously Frame the Crisis:** Rather than holding fast to the first impression and analysis of the crisis, be flexible to embrace new information as it comes along.

- If new analysis suggests a remake of the original plan, remake the plan
- Continually framing the crisis, having the ability to assess on a continuous basis, and having a process to do that is extremely effective in managing any crisis

### **Manage the Crisis Lifecycle, not Just the Event**

What's important is to manage the crisis in terms of a cycle—moving from preparation to response to recovery and then around again—applying lessons learned from one stage to the plans and processes that support the other stages.

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### **Below Are Four Guiding Principles for Managing Crises and Controlling Chaos:**

1. Well-being of people first, with caring and compassion
  2. Assume appropriate responsibility
  3. Address needs of all team members in a timely manner
  4. All decisions and actions are based on honesty and ethical guidelines
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**In the Midst of Chaos, There is also Opportunity**  
~Sun Tzu