2 Ways to Lead in Uncertain Times

Here's an understatement for the books: The laundry list of lessons learned from the unprecedented days of Covid19 continues to unfold. It's been a (ever-expanding) season when many of us have whispered to ourselves on multiple occasion—while hunkered-down in our makeshift remote offices, "Wow, I didn't see that coming!"

What do you do when the uninvited, the unanticipated reality checks of life stare you down—daring you to flinch? Like driving a panel truck in a strong crosswind, how do you keep the wheels on the road?

Let me offer a few thoughts for your consideration.

- **STAND GUARD.** The very nature of leadership is rooted in the reality that the unexpected is to be expected. This fact is captured extraordinarily well on the opening page of *Leading With a Limp*, where Dan Allender writes: *So here's the hard truth: if you're a leader, you're in the battle of your life. Nothing comes easily, enemies outnumber allies, and the terrain keeps shifting under your feet.*

  Shifting terrain. True. So true. Leadership is messy—no argument. Leadership is unpredictable—no debate. But there is also another inarguable reality of leadership—one that is fundamental to what it means to lead as a follower of Christ. As a leader, in the middle of the unexpected, you are given the choice to embrace the challenge not as an obstacle, but rather as an opportunity—an opportunity to walk by faith. Though not always easy or immediate, the leader who expects the unexpected can view an obstacle as a gift—a blank blueprint as it were upon which something new and fresh and original can find its expression.

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- **DELIVER CLARITY.** The most significant thing a leader can do in the middle of the unanticipated is to lead. Obvious, right? But how? How do you deliver point-person leadership in the chaos of uncertainty? Allow me to serve as the broker between this question and some spot-on wisdom compliments of author and pastor Andy Stanley. In his book *The Next Generation Leader*, he doles out an insight that needs to be in every leader's toolbox. Take a look for yourself: *You will consistently be called upon*

to make decisions with limited information. That being the case, your goal should not be to eliminate the uncertainty. Instead, you must develop the art of being clear in the face of uncertainty. In short, you lead in uncertainty with clarity.

Let's break that down. It's Monday morning. Your team has convened for its weekly meeting. Discussion ensues about some directional issues for your organization. Perspectives are assertively presented. At the end of the dialogue, there remains two viable options—neither emerging as the obvious choice. There is uncertainty. It is at this point, with a mix of honesty, humility, and confidence the leader makes a decision about the option to be pursued—and does so with CLARITY. Everyone leaves the team huddle knowing exactly what play is to be executed next.

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So in the middle of these unprecedented days, embrace it for the opportunity it is and lead through it with clarity, remembering that the past is God's record book of miracles fulfilled, but the future is His canvas of miracles yet to be.

How do you lead in uncertain times?