

Rock Solid Leadership Options

BLOG

February 2013 – The scene is lodged deeply in my memory.

It was Saturday and the day had been spent in the home office—a day shoehorned full of workshop prep, project management, and getting ready to meet with my tax man. And it was time to change it up. Time for a workout. It was too beautiful of a day to be indoors pumping the elliptical at LA Fitness. So I opted for some road work. As I laced up the Nike Airs, I decided that I didn't have time to drive to my favorite spot to run (the Arroyo in Pasadena—home of the iconic Rose Bowl), and elected to run the local neighborhood.

As I looped up and down the streets of my community, I came across a scene—make that a storyline—that at once gripped my heart and messed with my mind.

A couple in their mid 40s was walking down the quiet cul-de-sac. He was average height and appeared to be in good physical condition...but she was nothing of the sort. While oversized sunglasses shrouded her eyes, they could not hide her ashen skin and her misshapen body. Her slow gait down the sidewalk was only made possible by his ever-deliberate assistance. Moments later, as I rounded the cul-de-sac and passed by the couple once more, I watched him gently help her stretch and exercise a body that was slowly being stolen by some form of cruel and debilitating disease. As they were in my line of sight for a few seconds, I could see that his face bore a storyline of care and confusion, of gentleness and devastation, of love and heartbreak. It brought tears to me eyes. It still does.

To this day, I continue to think about this couple. And in particular, I think about this husband—a husband who years earlier undoubtedly said “I do” without knowing what that might mean. A husband, who on a beautiful yet lonely Saturday afternoon, had rallied once more to fulfill a “for better or worse” commitment.

When I think about this scene, I often find myself reflecting on the call of leadership. The challenge of leadership. The commitment of leadership.

Not sure about you, but I've yet to fulfill a leadership assignment that did not have its fair share of challenge—the unforeseeable type. And truth be told, at times, the unimaginable type.

So what do you do when you wake up one morning and find yourself in the middle of a leadership mess that you simply did not see coming?

You've got options. You've got choices. Maybe not a lot of them. But you do have them.

Let me list a few. And let me include the internal conversation that attends them:

- **Cut and run.** “I’m outta here! This is not what I signed up for. I deserve something better. Someone else can clean up this mess. Last one out, turn off the lights.”
- **Grin and bear.** “Bummer. Sure wished things were different. But, hey, life’s full of twists and turns. I can ride this thing out. Besides, I’ve got some sidebar interests that can keep me going.”
- **Trust and obey.** “Didn’t see this coming. This is messy. Hard.”

(note where this conversation goes...)

“But I wonder what God is up to? He’s given me this assignment, for better or worse. Pretty sure God is at work here, not only in this place to which I give leadership, but also and perhaps more importantly, in my own life.”

Did you see it? Catch the difference?

Two simple takeaways.

First, leadership is a “for better or worse” commitment. Always has been. Always will be. You say “I do” to whatever comes your way. It’s the nature of leadership. It’s the heart of a leader.

And second, some of your best growth moments will be birthed in some of the hardest leadership circumstances. Always has been. Always will be. It is in those seasons of leadership desperation that you come to grips with the reality that not only has God enrolled you in His schoolhouse, but you learn to trust in His faithfulness and provision in ways that are simply not possible when all is well.

Yep, you’ve got options.

But only one of those options will get you where you really want to go.

WHAT DO YOU THINK?

Ever been in a leadership situation where you were tempted to ‘cut and run’?

Jump into the conversation. Post your comments below.