Leading the Way When the Way Is Unclear



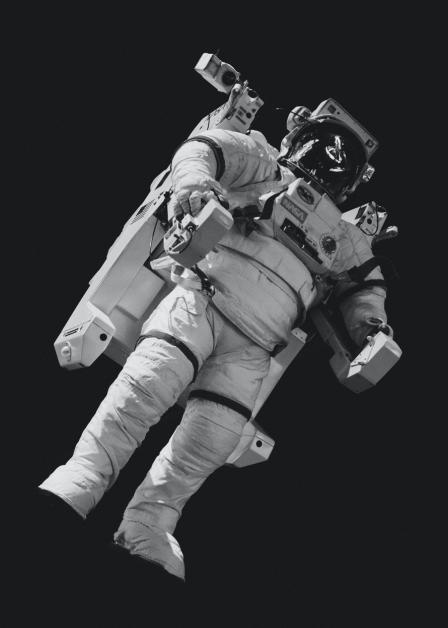
A Resource for Mission-Driven Leaders

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When everything seems to be going against you, remember that the airplane takes off against the wind, not with it.

-- Henry Ford



The Opportunity

To have a mission is a privilege, Rachael Carson, the writer who inspired the modern environmental movement, once observed. Yet, being a mission-driven leader in today's uncertain world can also feel daunting—as if you're struggling to stand upright against ever-shifting hurricane winds.



We are living, after all, in unprecedented times.

Every day seems to bring news of another crisis or seismic threat to what used to be called world order. The same appears true on the national front—and, of course, the ecological.

From the economy to politics, technology to the environment, order is out. Disorder is in.

Some call it a "polycrisis," others a "permacrisis," and many say it's a "s*hitshow."

Add in the complexity and interconnectedness of modernilife, and it can all feel a bit much to wrap one's mind—let alone one's mission—around.



AND YET...

We tend to grow from difficulties and wilt from too much ease.

Dr. Richard Tedeschi coined a term for this in 1998. He called it "adversarial growth." Dr. Mark D. Seery's research into "stress-induced growth" has also found overcoming challenges can foster well-being.



Stories of great leaders—and ordinary people—throughout history also attest to this dynamic.

Consider the **resourcefulness**cultivated during the Great
Depression, the sacrifice and **unity**demonstrated during World War II,
and the **adaptability** we more
recently learned during the height of
the COVID-19 pandemic.

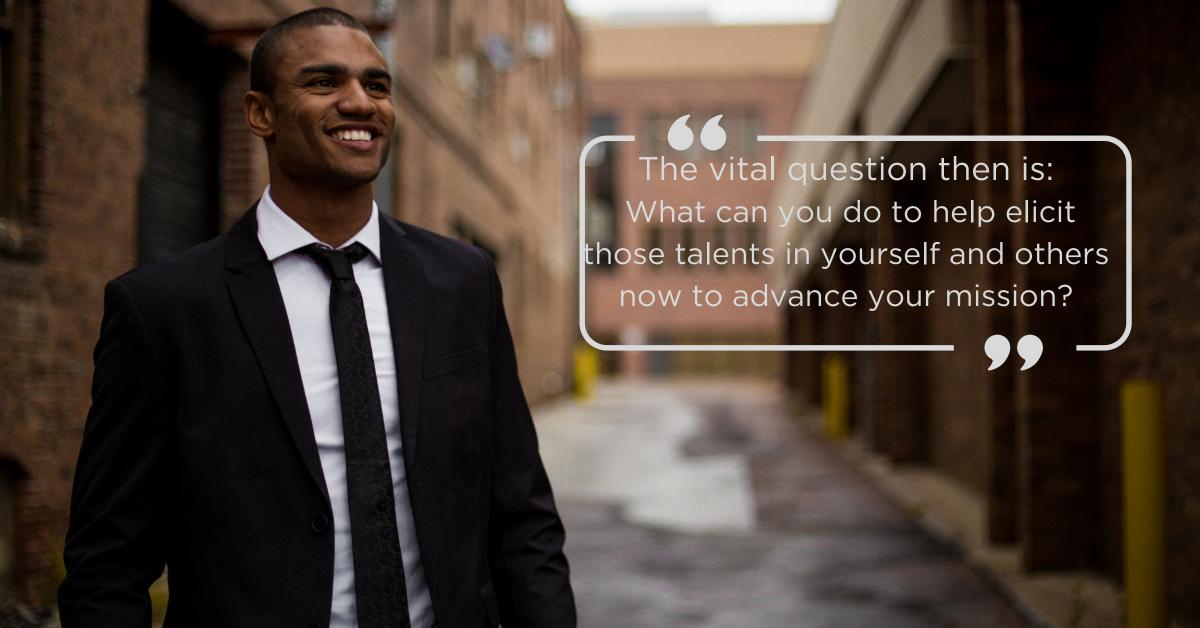
This is not to suggest that difficulties always lead to positive growth. There are many variables.

There is also a point at which stress, ill-managed, becomes unproductive.

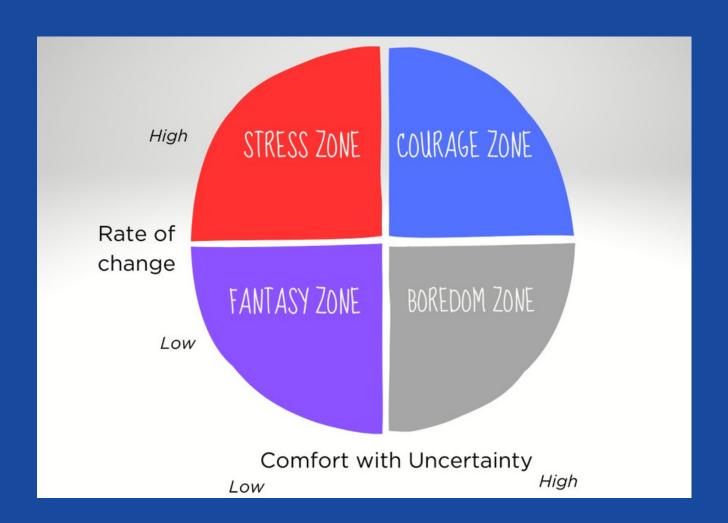


As the poet Horace put it 2,000 years ago: Adversity has the effect of eliciting talents which, in prosperous circumstances, would have lain dormant.

Yet it is generally true that, like a diamond formed under pressure and heat, humans are more likely to discover what they can do when put to the test.



A Key Variable: How we relate to uncertainty



Of course, we all spend time in each of the zones in the model above. But consider it an exercise in highlighting core dynamics. To this end, when the rate of change is low, you are likely either bored or -- these days -- living in a bit of a fantasy zone (or both.) The reason:

We are living in the first "Exponential Age."

In his 2021 book, *The*Exponential Age, Azheem

Azhar writes:

"It's tempting to assume that people always feel technological social change is going too fast...But the argument of this book is that we are indeed living through a time of unusually fast social change..."





So, what is your relationship to uncertainty during this time of unprecedented change?

If it is LOW, you are likely in the stress zone—or, more accurately, the high-stress zone, it's understandable. But it also can lead to many negative consequences.

But there's **good news**:

There are ways for you and your team to develop HIGH comfort with uncertainty that can help you advance your mission.

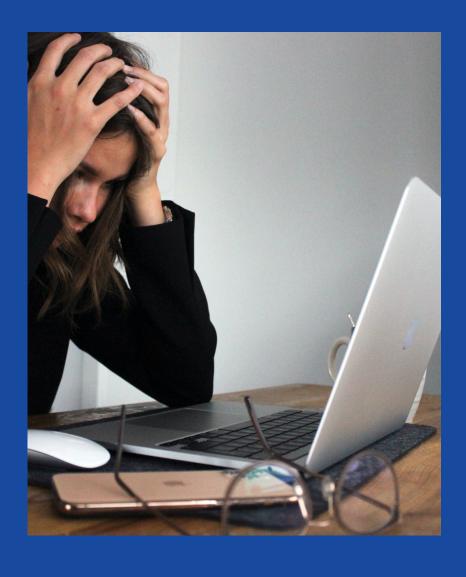
How? Through the widely admired but relatively little understood matter of **COURAGE**.



1. Disengagement is high, costly, and damning.

- Slightly more than 1 out of 3, or 34 percent of, employees are disengaged <u>Gallup survey</u>.)
- \$8.8 trillion cost worldwide. That's an average of \$3,400 for every \$10,000 of salary paid. Gallup.
- "Damning" is clear more subjective. But if 1 out of 3 employees are disengaged, and \$3,400 is lost for every \$10,000 in salary paid, that is an indisputable drag on progress.





2. Stress is at epidemic levels (not the good kind.)

- Stress is "the epidemic of the 21st century."
 (WHO)
- 1 out of 3 Americans are so stressed they are unproductive. (2022 APA study)
- Annual employer price tag: \$300 billion.
 (American Institute of Stress.)

Chronic and ill-managed stress undermines physical and mental health and productivity. It can also interfere with attention, decision-making, adaptation, creative thinking, and communication.





There's a word for what it requires to meet difficulties, small or great, few or many. The ancient Greeks considered it the most important virtue-the one on all others depend.

Plato described it as the ability to persevere in the face of difficulty.

COURAGE

"The mental or moral strength to venture, persevere, and withstand danger, fear, or difficulty."

-Merriam-Webster

How Developing Courage Pays Off

Saves time and money wasted on indecision, avoidance or procrastination, and anxiety

Improves decision-making, innovative problem-solving, and adaptation

Supports positive mental health.

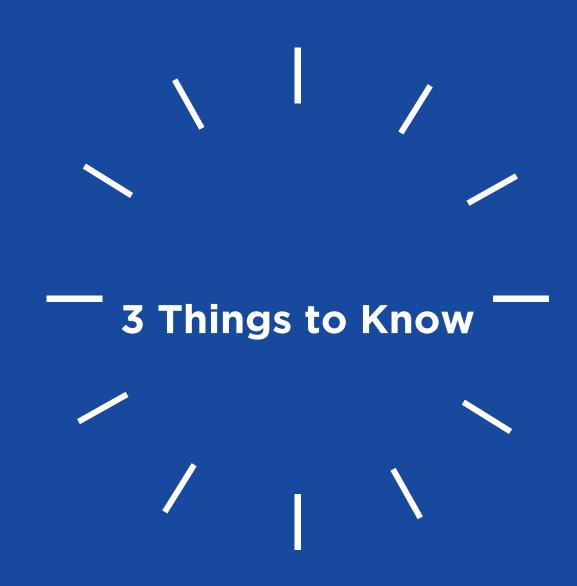


How to Get From Here to There

HERE ----THERE

Disengagement
Stress
Lack of Clarity

Mission Clarity
Mission Alignment
Mission Driven





The Bottom Line

To achieve mission-driven goals amid today's unprecedented uncertainty and change, it is vital that we normalize courage in the workplace by making it a cornerstone of leadership and other professional development workshops.

After all, activating courage benefits employers and employees, according to a 2022 study in *The European Journal of Investigation in Health, Psychology, and Education.*

And it just might provide the fog lights we need to see through the current clouds of uncertainty.

How Can You Develop Courageous Leadership and a Courageous Culture?

Solve Your Toughest Problems Faster

The Courageous Leaders, Courageous Culture **Program**



The Courageous Leaders, Courageous Culture Program

Mission- and purpose-driven leaders love big challenges. But chasing important goals in today's uncertain climate (and the high anxiety and low engagement that result) can undermine the capacities of the most well-intentioned teams.

This program is designed to boost performance, productivity, and problem-solving by:

- 1. Identifying unspoken obstacles
- 2. Facilitating transformative conversations
- 3. Developing the perspective, emotional intelligence, and behaviors needed to succeed in uncertain times.

YOUR GUIDE:

AUTHOR, COACH, TRAINER, FACILITATOR, SPEAKER, AND AWARD-WINNING JOURNALIST LISA BENNETT

Lisa has learned first-hand from Nobel Prize-winning scientists, Pulitzer Prize-winning authors, top civil rights leaders, Ivy League University presidents, leaders of major foundations, nonprofits heads, CEOs, everyday changemakers, and other highly respected leaders of our time.

She also has been a leader in national organizations advancing equality, education, and the environment.



A former Harvard University fellow and New York University faculty member, Lisa Bennett is the author of *Mission-Driven: Leading With Courage in an Uncertain World* (forthcoming) and co-author of *Ecoliterate* with emotional intelligence expert Daniel Goleman.

Clients have included the MacArthur Award-winning FrameWorks Institute, Human Rights Campaign, Southern Poverty Law Center, Chambers for Innovation & Clean Energy, and Protect Our Winters.

"Lisa is a great collaborator."

DANIEL GOLEMAN, New York Times bestselling author of Emotional Intelligence.

"Lisa is a gifted speaker and writer."

ELIZABETH BIRCH, former Executive Director

of the Human Rights Campaign

Ecoliterate is a"powerful and persuasive book" SIR KEN ROBINSON, creativity expert and #1-watched speaker on TED

To learn how the Courageous Leaders, Courageous Culture Program can help you, let's connect.

Book a chat now.

Or drop me a line.



www.LisaBennettWrites.com



Lisa@LisaBennettWrites.com

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