

# Stewardship and Leadership for a Disrupted World

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“TELL ME ABOUT EXHAUSTION...”



"YOU KNOW THAT THE ANTIDOTE TO  
EXHAUSTION IS  
NOT NECESSARILY REST?"

"WHAT IS IT, THEN?"

**"THE ANTIDOTE TO EXHAUSTION IS  
WHOLEHEARTEDNESS."**

David Whyte, *Crossing the Unknown Sea*, p. 132



“HALF HERE WILL KILL YOU AFTER A  
WHILE”

"You are so tired through and through because...you are only half here, and half here will kill you after a while.

*You need something to which you can give your full powers... ...You must do something heartfelt, and you must do it soon.”*

*Brother David Steindl-Rast*



**“LEADERSHIP IS DISAPPOINTING  
YOUR OWN PEOPLE AT A RATE  
THEY CAN ABSORB.”**

**RONALD HEIFETZ**



# STEWARDSHIP AND LEADERSHIP

- Stewardship is about caring for those things **entrusted to our care.**

Leadership is about the **transformation necessary** for our stewardship to make an impact in the world.

- Stewardship is about ensuring that there are vision and resources **for the future.**

Leadership is about energizing the changes necessary for vision and resources to **make an impact on the future.**

THE TWO WHISPERS THAT  
CHANGED MY LIFE



*They had become so focused on the aches and pains in the system that they had been thrown off course by the complaints. They had stopped supplying vision, or had burned out fighting the resistance; they had ceased to be the strength in the system.*

*In short, they had forgotten to lead.*

Edwin Friedman



EMBARRASSED IN A SILICON VALLEY  
BOARDROOM

“NOBODY CARES WHETHER YOUR  
INSTITUTION SURVIVES, THEY ONLY CARE  
IF YOUR INSTITUTION CARES ABOUT  
THEM.”

# THREE CRISES AT ONCE



## HEIFETZ ON HOW NOT TO WASTE A CRISIS...

**Acute Phase:** stabilize, protect, buy time. “Blizzard mentality.”

**Adaptive Phase:** address *the underlying issues* that we have not had the will to confront before the crisis. “Ice age mentality.”

“Adaptive leadership...seizes the opportunity of moments like this to hit the organizational reset button.” (Heifetz, et. al. *Leadership in a (Permanent) Crisis*)



## FROM SURVIVING TO THRIVING IN A CRISIS

- Surviving the **Acute Phase** comes mostly through *wise relational support* to help leaders address the emotional, spiritual, and organizational challenges of the moment.
- Thriving in the **Adaptive Phase** comes through developing the capacity to *learn, faces losses, and navigate competing values to address the underlying issues* keeping your congregation or organization's from fulfilling its mission in a changing world.



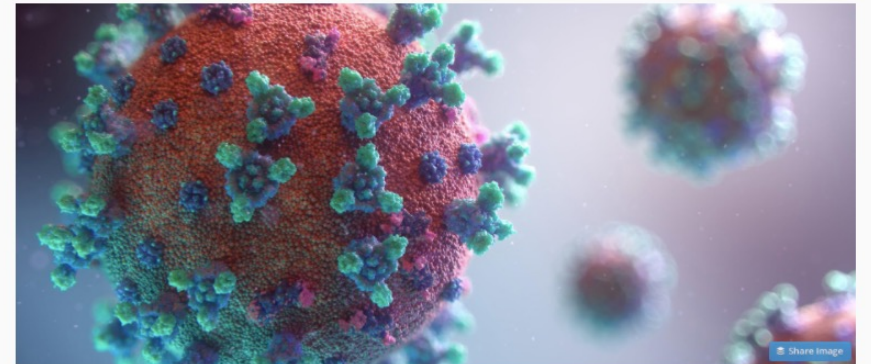
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## CONSIDER:

- What “underlying conditions” are being revealed in your organization?



### *Guiding Your Church Through the Pandemic*

What do you do when you can't bring people together to worship, learn, and care for each other? The social distancing ordered to stem the spread of COVID-19 presents church leaders with challenges that they have not been trained to address. In this material, you'll gain adaptive leadership skills that will help you build trust with your congregation, experiment with fresh expressions of ministry, and implement new habits of learning and innovation.

We estimate that this will take you **23 hours** to complete (but not all in one sitting!).



**Tod Bolsinger**



# UNDERLYING CONDITIONS

- The lack of deep, pervasive **discipleship** for a persevering church.
- The lack of **community** for keeping relational connections amidst turmoil and change.
- The lack of **cross-generational engagement** that will pass the faith on into the future.
- The lack of extensive **leadership** capacity for a distributed church.
- The lack of **prophetic wisdom** for addressing and becoming allies for social justice.



“...when any relationship system is imaginatively gridlocked, it cannot get free simply through more thinking about the problem. Conceptually stuck systems cannot become unstuck simply by trying harder.

For a fundamental reorientation to occur, *that spirit of adventure* which optimizes serendipity and which enables new perceptions beyond the control of our thinking processes must happen first.”

Edwin Friedman



## “SPIRIT OF ADVENTURE”

- Requires learning
- Results in facing loss



THE THREE HARDEST WORDS TO SAY

"In times of great change, learners inherit the earth, while the learned find themselves beautifully equipped for a world that no longer exists."

Eric Hoffer



“IF YOU ARE A LEADER, EXPECT SABOTAGE.”  
ED FRIEDMAN

**“PEOPLE DON’T RESIST  
CHANGE,  
THEY RESIST LOSS.”**

**RONALD HEIFETZ**



## THE MOST IMPORTANT ASPECT OF LEADERSHIP

“The capacity of a leader to be prepared for, to be aware of, and to learn how to skillfully deal with (sabotage) may be the most important aspect of leadership. It is literally the key to the kingdom.”

Edwin Friedman





The important thing to remember about the phenomenon of sabotage is that it is **a systemic part of leadership**— part and parcel of the leadership process. Another way of putting this is that a leader can never assume success because he or she has brought about a change. *It is only after having first brought about a change and then subsequently endured the resultant sabotage that the leader can feel truly successful.*

Edwin Friedman. *A Failure of Nerve: Leadership in the Age of the Quick Fix*



- Sabotage is normal, natural, and to be expected
- Sabotage is not the bad things that evil people do, but the human things that anxious people do.



## MOSES IN THE FACE OF RESISTANCE

Exodus 14:11: "...it would have been better for us to serve the Egyptians than to die in the wilderness."

Exodus 14:31: "So the people...believed in the LORD and in his servant Moses."

Exodus 16:3: "The whole congregation of the Israelites complained against Moses..."



NUMBERS 11 AND  
MOSES' FAILURE OF HEART



## A FAILURE OF NERVE AND A FAILURE OF HEART

*Failure of Nerve: “Returning Egypt”:* Caving to the pressure of the anxiety of the group to return to the status quo. A failure of nerve is a loss of courage to further the mission.

*Failure of Heart: “Put me to death”.* When the leader’s own discouragement leads them to abandon their people and the charge they have been given.

Sabotage is often the cause for a change leader’s failure of nerve or failure of heart.



...YOU MUST DO SOMETHING HEARTFELT,  
AND YOU MUST DO IT SOON.”

*BROTHER DAVID STEINDL-RAST*