‘Discovering Opportunities in Crisis: Implications for individuals, leaders, and organizations:

Leading in Challenging Times

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Begin with the end in mind … let’s stay connected

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https://michiganross.umich.edu/programs/executive-education/online-learning

Please follow Dave Ulrich on LinkedIn to view my regular posts with insights and tips And Michigan Ross for powerful ideas to help purpose-driven leaders create positive impact.
A crisis is a terrible thing to waste

In the midst of every crisis, lies great opportunity.
— Albert Einstein —

Every crisis has both its dangers and its opportunities. Each can spell either salvation or doom.
— Martin Luther King —

CRISIS CAN BE A UNIQUE OPPORTUNITY TO CHANGE YOUR PATH. TO EXPLORE NEW OPPORTUNITIES, THE HELP YOU BECOME THE PERSON YOU WERE MEANT TO BE.

f/b women’s tea time

“Never let a good crisis go to waste.”
A deadly virus has killed thousands in a global pandemic, leading to sweeping changes in our way of life as the world tries to slow its spread.
Coronavirus: New terms and ideas

- Global pandemic
- Social distancing
- Ventilator
- Epidemic
- COVID-19
- Quarantine
- Drive Through Testing
- Personal protective equipment
- Shelter-in-place
- Incubation period
- N95 masks
- Self quarantine
- Stay at home order
- Virtual work
- Essential businesses
- Close contact (6 feet)
- Lockdown
- Herd immunity
- Community spread
- Coronavirus tests
- Coronavirus tests
- Flattening the curve
Response to the Context

Context:
Content is king; Context is kingdom

How do we respond to the Corona (or other) crisis, as individuals, leaders, and organizations?

THREAT
Focus on weakness and what’s wrong
- **Individual emotions** of fear, anxiety, hopelessness, despair, cynicism, loss
- **Organizational conditions** of psychological risk/low morale, strategic haze, cultural malaise, brand ambiguity, financial freefall
- **Leadership actions** of disorientation, agitation, desperation, frustration

OPPORTUNITY
Focus on strengths and what’s right
- **Individual emotions** of hope, control, anticipation, optimism, resilience,
- **Organizational conditions** of emotional well being, strategic focus, “right” culture/brand, financial discipline
- **Leadership actions** of empowering others, offering guidance, getting things done, instilling confidence
Overall Goals and Agenda

A Crisis Is a Terrible Thing to Waste

10 Opportunities for Discovery

Four Assumptions: How we think

1. Learn always; Create learning agility
2. Look back for resilience; Move forward towards success
3. Redefine work boundaries; Move from place to values
4. Navigate paradox; Handle tension and duality

Six Actions: What we do

5. Tailor offerings; Customize/personalize work
6. Distance socially, but don’t isolate; Build relationships
7. Live the right values/culture; Model the right behaviors
8. Tolerate uncertainty; Focus on what can be done
9. Seek guidance on talent, leadership, organization, and HR
10. Take care of yourself so you can take care of others
Discovering Opportunity in a Crisis

AGENCY
Act rather than be acted upon

TODAY'S MENU
CHOICES
Menu of Insights

Assumptions (How we think)

1. Learn always; Create learning agility
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4. Navigate paradox; Handle tension and duality

Actions (What we do)

5. Tailor offerings; Customize/personalize work
6. Distance socially, but don’t isolate; Build relationships
7. Live the right values/culture; Model the right behaviors
8. Tolerate (harness) uncertainty; Focus on what can be done
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### 10 Insights to Discover Opportunity in a Crisis

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Opportunity 1: 
Learn always; Create learning agility

“We’re not failing. We’re learning.”

Carole Dweck
Opportunity 1: Learn always; Create learning agility

• What has been your biggest failure or trial?

• What did you learn from it?

• How have those learnings shaped your life since then?
Opportunity 2:
Look back for resilience: Move forward towards success

Look Back: Resilience
• What did I try?
• What worked? What did not work? Why?

Look forward: Success
• What do I want?
• Who do I serve?
• How do I build?
• Where am I?
Opportunity 3: Redefine work boundaries; Move from place to values

Can I connect my work to a vision and values I care about?

Laying bricks               Putting up a wall              Building a cathedral
Opportunity 4: Navigate paradox: Handle tension and duality

Paradox can be seen as oxymorons (big baby, bittersweet, deafening silence, jumbo shrimp, open secret, passively aggressive, sweet sorry, tough love) or things that seem to oppose to each other. In life, we live with paradoxes.

Some paradoxical statements:
1. Modern dancing is so old fashioned. - Samuel Goldwyn
2. No one goes to that restaurant anymore - It's always too crowded." - Yogi Berra
3. A joke is actually an extremely really serious issue." - Winston Churchill
4. You'd be surprised how much it costs to look this cheap. - Dolly Parton
5. It usually takes more than three weeks to prepare a good impromptu speech. - Mark Twain
Opportunity 4: Navigate paradox: Handle tension and duality

"You can't control the wind
But you can adjust your sails"
Paradoxes in The Coronavirus Crisis

- Care for the Individual vs Attend to the Organization
- Bold, short term actions vs Enduring long term values
- Convergence for Focus vs Divergence for Variety
- Resilience: Learn from the Past vs Aspiration: Celebrate the Future

Others?
Polling Question

Which of the paradoxes is most relevant for your organization?

Please select one:

1. Employee care AND organization competitiveness
2. Bold, short term actions AND enduring long term values
3. Convergence for focus AND divergence for variety
4. Resilience (learn from the past) AND Aspiration (celebrate the future)
5. Other
# Personal Skills of Paradox Navigator

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<th>Definition/behavior</th>
<th>Rate (1 to 10)</th>
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<td>1</td>
<td><strong>Deal with cognitive complexity</strong>&lt;br&gt;• See different sides of an issue&lt;br&gt;• Respect someone else’s point of view&lt;br&gt;• Learn new ideas (20 to 25% every 2 years)&lt;br&gt;• See patterns in events</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td><strong>Be socially endearing</strong>&lt;br&gt;• Disagree without being disagreeable&lt;br&gt;• Allow for tension without having contention&lt;br&gt;• Listen to understand&lt;br&gt;• Help others feel better about themselves after meeting with me</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td><strong>Be socially connected</strong>&lt;br&gt;• Spend time with people who are not like me (e.g., visit shop floor)&lt;br&gt;• Observe and learn from those not in your zone of influence (competitors, customers, leading players)</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td><strong>Be personally aware</strong>&lt;br&gt;• Know my predispositions (e.g., introvert vs. extrovert; judging vs. perceiving) or style&lt;br&gt;• Not be bound by my predispositions and see beyond my biases&lt;br&gt;• Judge myself less by intent and more by my behavior</td>
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<td>5</td>
<td><strong>Be grounded in a strong set of values</strong>&lt;br&gt;• Know my core values and act consistently with them even if behaviors vary&lt;br&gt;• Avoid pandering to different groups, while respecting their requirements</td>
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Menu of Insights

Assumptions (How we think)

1. Learn always; Create learning agility
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Actions (What we do)

5. Tailor offerings; Customize/personalize work
6. Distance socially, but don’t isolate; Build relationships
7. Live the right values/culture; Model the right behaviors
8. Tolerate (harness) uncertainty; Focus on what can be done
9. Seek guidance on talent, leadership, organization, and HR
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Opportunity 5: Tailor offerings: Customize/personalize work
Opportunity 6: Distance socially, but don’t isolate: Build relationships

Polling Question
Which of the following is the leading cause of mortality?

1. High blood pressure (stress)
2. High cholesterol (fatty food)
3. Social isolation (loneliness)
4. Obesity (eating too much)
5. Drinking and smoking

Reference: Tim Smith and Devin Peterson, Social Isolation, Physical health, and Well-being, BYU
Long Spoons Metaphor
Building Relationships

Befriend:

Relationship skills to model, support, and teach

- Make / respond to “bids”
- Be curious about others
- Share yourself
- Celebrate good news
- Serve someone every day
Opportunity 7:
Live the right values/culture: Model the right behaviors
What is culture?
What is the “right” culture?

When you think of a company “culture”, what comes to mind?
What is the “right” culture?

_Culture pivots from an event to a pattern and ultimately, to an identity_

**Event**
- Symbols
- Rituals
- Stories
- Physical setting

**Pattern**
- Values (what we believe)
- Norms (our expected behaviors; unwritten rules; rituals)
- Ways we make decisions, manage information, treat people, handle conflict/differences

**Identity**
- Customer: What are our customer buying criteria/value proposition?
- Brand: What is our desired brand?
- Identity: what are we known for?
- Reputation: what is our community image?
Key concepts related to right culture

Purpose
(mission, vision)
Our reason for being

Values or Beliefs
Who we are, and what we believe

Culture
What we are known for by our key stakeholders made real to employees

Brand or Identity
Promises to the market, what resonates with our customers or other stakeholders,
Opportunity 8: Tolerate (Harness) uncertainty; Focus on what can be done

How much can you control?

- Biology
- Circumstances
- Controllable
Opportunity 8:
Harness uncertainty; Focus on what can be done

Harnessing uncertainty

• Turn threat into opportunity by running into and facing fears, vulnerabilities, and doubts and by acknowledging risk, seeing opportunity, and having confidence
• Take simple steps/experiments on what you can control; fail forward; learn fast; use humor; celebrate what is right
• Be mindful and hopeful by being calm, curious, and courageous
• Define success from within not through others
Opportunity 9: Seek guidance on talent, leadership, organization, and HR
Value of the guidance system for you

- **Describe** how we are doing
- **Recognize** choices
- **Do intervention with** data
- **Improve what we do** (measure activity)

Next:

- **Prescribe** what we should do
- **Invest in the** right choices
- **Act fast with data solutions**
- **Deliver value from what we do** (measure value)

OTHERS?
Where organization guidance occurs? Four pathways

In any business, what do we have to do to be competitive?

- **FINANCIAL**
  - Creating profit, managing risk, investor value

- **STRATEGIC**
  - Business mix, where we play, how we win

- **TECHNOLOGY / OPERATIONS**
  - Digital agenda, operating processes infrastructure

- **ORGANIZATION**
  - Talent, Leadership, Capability, HR

- **TALENT**
  - Competence
  - Workforce
  - People

- **LEADERSHIP BRAND**
  - Individual Leaders
  - Leadership Pipeline

- **ORGANIZATION**
  - Capability
  - Workplace
  - Process

**HUMAN RESOURCES EFFECTIVENESS**
Opportunity 10:
Take care of yourself so that you can take care of others

- Do you find meaning in life?
- Do you bring meaning to others?
Take care of yourself

Ask yourself and others *nightly* one of these:

1. What was a happy surprise today?
   
   Who helped it happen?

2. What are three things you were grateful for today?
   
   How did you savor them?

3. What problem came up? How did you solve it?

4. What did you experiment with or risk today? What did you learn?
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## Final Polling Question

Which of these 10 Insights will have the most impact going forward? *(pick 2)*

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Final Message
For more information …

HR is not about HR. It’s about the business.

Establish HR as a true partner in advancing and driving business goals, and enhance your value as both a member of your senior management team and a leader of the human resource function.
Let’s stay connected!!!

For more information about…

“AHREP”: Advanced HR Executive Program

RBL: www.rbl.net

Please follow Michigan Ross and Dave on LinkedIn

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Dave Ulrich on LinkedIn

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