

ACS Reading Guide: *The Prepared Leader*

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ACS Summer 2023 Reading Group

Pre-Reading:

1. Why are you reading a book with the title *The Prepared Leader: Emerge from any Crisis More Resilient than Before*? What do you hope to gain?
2. Identify three qualities of a leader that you admire and respect.

Introduction

1. What leadership roles do you currently hold? What leadership roles do you hope to someday hold?
2. Think of a crisis that arose while you were in a leadership position. How might you reframe this as an opportunity?
3. How can a leader prepare for a crisis that has not yet unfolded?

Chapter 1: Prepared Leadership as Your Fourth Bottom Line

1. What cycles of panic and neglect might you be in right now?
2. In your role as a leader, has there been a time when you could have (or should have) asked for help but didn't? Why do you suppose that is?

Chapter 2: The Five Phases of Crisis Management

1. Can you think of a time when you were a defensive leader? If so, what habits could you create to break this cycle?
2. James and Wooten stress the importance of “developing both attentiveness that pervades your routines and processes and a set of skills, attitudes, behaviors, and cultural norms that will help you make good decisions and respond with agility at each stage or step of crisis management” (19). Given that the book’s main focus is crisis, we are perhaps more likely to focus on crisis management. Spend some time now thinking about the routines and processes that are integral to your role/department/job/etc. Ask yourself: how attentive to these processes and routines have you been? How might keener awareness and attentiveness to processes and routines help to prepare you for a crisis?

Chapter 3: The Nine Skills of Crisis Management

1. Thinking about the nine skills highlighted in this chapter, which of them seems most “natural” to you? Why? And on the flip side, which of them do you think you need to work on developing more? How do you think you would go about doing so?
2. In what ways do you empower those around you to learn, grow, and respond to crises?

Chapter 4: Making Decisions Under Pressure

1. How can you tell when you are in an echo chamber, and what can you do to move beyond it? What are some ways we can build in reminders to pay attention to this even in the midst of busyness or crisis?

Chapter 5: Building the Crisis Team

1. How do you seek out different and new perspectives?
2. In the spaces where you lead and/or have influence, how do you go about creating “safety” for others to take risks and share their ideas and insights?

Chapter 6: Inheriting a Team in the Middle of a Crisis

1. The authors discuss the importance of each of us “modeling the way forward.” What does this look like for you?
2. Transitions involve building trust. How do you go about doing this when you take on a new leadership role - whether on a committee or otherwise at your institution, or in the first days of teaching a new class of students? How do you work to sustain trust?
3. How might “The Three C’s of Trust” be understood differently by different members of your team? Connecting this to Chapter 7, how might global perspectives/intersectional identities shape these “C’s”?

Chapter 7: Managing a global crisis?

1. Do you identify with any of the frames proposed in this chapter? If so, which, and if not, why?
2. Now, take some time to investigate intersections between these frames. How might your generational frame interact with your socio-cultural frame? Imagine other frames—for your teammates, your audience, etc. How might their frames intersect?

Chapter 8: Technology and Crises

1. How do you use technology in your classrooms?
2. As we think about incorporating technologies into the learning experiences that we are crafting for students, what are the important ideas and skills we want our students to learn and develop? And how will we enable that to happen? How will technologies facilitate achieving our goals?
3. What role will AI play in the future of our classrooms?
4. What technology tools do you have available to connect with people during a crisis? What gaps are there in your technology and social media crisis platform?

Chapter 9: Learning and the prepared leader

1. What are ways that you continue to learn? Identify one specific step you will take to learn about xx in the next month. Consider engaging a colleague as an “accountability” partner to either join in your pursuit or discuss your insights along the way.

Conclusion: What’s next?

1. Sometimes people avoid going to see their primary care physician and wait until treatment is crucial before seeking healthcare. Being a “Prepared Leader” is like engaging in preventive care. We can learn to keep an eye out for possible difficulties that could arise and hope to catch them before such problems become unmanageable. Reflect on ways you can practice “preventive care” in your workplace.
2. Revisit your list of three qualities of a leader that you admire and respect from the pre-reading question. Has anything changed? Is there something else you would add or that you would amplify?