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We live in unprecedented times. A series of local and international crises have caught us by storm. Tremendous uncertainty is in the air. In the midst of the challenge, the call for Leadership has never been stronger. It has been missing for a long time, so much so that all four corners of the world are aching. It's easy to point fingers and say it's his, her or their fault. People appointed to be in charge are put under extreme scrutiny; perhaps for good reasons. But truth be told, if we are looking for those responsible, we first need to look into a mirror.

Yes, I hate to break it to you: you are a Leader. If you are thinking “Me?!”, then the below is specially dedicated to you. Contrary to popular beliefs, Leadership is not appointed, it is inherent. It has nothing to do with being a president, a director, a teacher... these are managerial roles, hopefully held by individuals who have refined their Leadership potential. In some of us, Leadership is dormant, in others it's being nurtured. For most of us though, it has willingly been given away.

Jesus Christ preached “*The kingdom of God is within you*”. Buddha taught to “*Find the light within yourself*”. The Prophet Mohammed claimed, “*The greatest Jihad is the conquest of oneself*”. These great beings urged us to look within. To find our own answers. Many of us still hide under a velvet of excuses and blames to avoid doing what is necessary to fulfill our aspirations. By relinquishing that responsibility, we give away our greatest power. Although we can avoid that reality, we cannot escape its consequences.

Does that mean that we are all to blame? That is beside the point. The past is made of billions of reasons. What matters is: what are we going to do about today? We need to stand strong in the face of this crisis...and the next one. Looking ahead with ideals, committed to getting on the other side not only alive, but evolved.

In doing my part, I thought I'd share with you my three maxims for Leading through crisis. Please do not take them as commands, my intention is to support you in finding your natural way to lead.

First, **“I will not give in to fear and anger”**. In high pressure environments, it is important to tame our emotions to our advantage. How do we do that? First by being aware. Then, nurturing a mindset of Gratitude and Faith, replacing the complaining and pointing fingers with empowering perspectives.

Here's an example: pause for a second, breathe deeply, and repeat four times *"I am so grateful for what I still have left in my life. I am so grateful for what I still have left in my life..."*. Now repeat: *"This crisis is a gift and opportunity. This crisis is a gift and opportunity...(four times)"*

What happened? Has your energy shifted? Has your mind conformed to those claims? For better or worse, our minds **create** reality. Leadership is using that power to your advantage.

Second, **"I will commit to a larger vision"**. Whatever the situation is, our commitments shape our lives. A crisis is not the time to be right. It is the time to adapt. It is the time to focus all our energy on what we can control. Wrestling with the new reality is a waste of time which will only cause suffering. Powerful reflections such as *"what do I want my life to look like at the end of this? what am I committed to? what do I want for myself and my family? my community? my country? my planet?!"* will help us commit to how we want to "be" and act along the journey. What we focus on expands, so let every cell in your body work towards your vision. Take an honest look at yourself and stop all activities that are not serving your commitments. May "God grant us the courage to change the things we can change, the serenity to accept the things we cannot change and the wisdom to know the difference" \*

Which leads me to my third maxim, **"I will aim to make a difference"**. Crises are an important part of our lives. The only way we will look back on them satisfied is if we do what we believe is great work and do it with Love. You hold power within yourself far beyond what you imagine. Do not give in to your victim stories. Do not sell out on your dreams. Instead, get involved. Find your optimal way to contribute. It could take multiple forms such as working harder and covering up for your colleagues; or staying at home and resting; or running web conferences. It could look like volunteering, protesting, lobbying, mentoring, requesting international support...or even playing music on your balcony for all your neighbors to hear! Whatever it looks like, please, step up and contribute. Take daily action, no matter how small. Leaders knows that an ocean is nothing but a multitude of drops, that just like a virus can spread from one person to the whole wild world, so can simple acts of service.

People of my nation, for a long time I looked into a mirror without seeing a Leader. Up until my back was against the wall. That is the gift of our darkest hours: being forced to make the changes we have been avoiding. The rewards, if we choose to meet the challenge, are immense. I know you care about playing your part in the creation of a better world. It's not too late. In fact, it's never been more essential for each and every one of us to take charge. For the tide to rise. For universal Leadership! Nothing trumps Meaning in the pursuit of fulfillment. All else is volatile. Simple spikes of dopamine. When you make a difference however, it reaches deep. It touches your core, forever...With that, I leave you with the beautiful words of St Francis of Assisi "Start by doing the necessary, then do what's possible and suddenly you are doing the impossible".

*Truly yours,*

*Elie Dagher*