

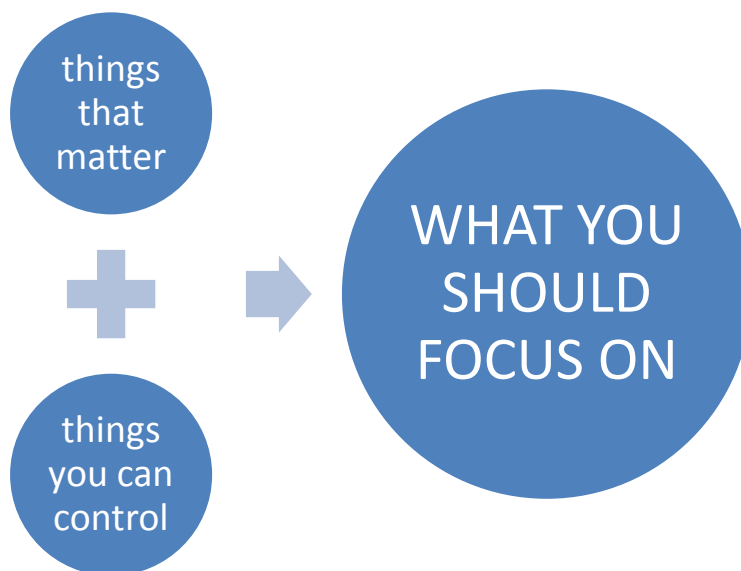
## Managing a Crisis

Wednesday  
March 26, 2014

*“Do what you can, with what you have, where you are.”*—Theodore Roosevelt

“After his humiliating election defeat in 1912, Roosevelt embarked on the most punishing physical challenge he could find, the first descent of an unmapped, treacherous, and extremely dangerous tributary of the Amazon. Together with his son Kermit and Brazil’s most famous explorer, Cândido Mariano da Silva Rondon, Roosevelt accomplished a feat so great that many at the time refused to believe it. In the process, he changed the map of the western hemisphere forever. Along the way, Roosevelt and his men faced an unbelievable series of hardships, losing their canoes and supplies to punishing whitewater rapids, enduring starvation, Indian attacks, disease, drowning, and a murder within their own ranks. Three men died, and Roosevelt was brought to the brink of suicide. “

So reads Amazon’s book review of Roosevelt’s dangerous expedition as chronicled in the NY Times bestseller *The River of Doubt*, by Candice Millard. I just finished reading this book, which I promise will keep you on the edge of your seat. It is a testament to the sheer power of the human spirit and the will to survive. In the account, Roosevelt sets out on a well planned, well supplied, and well manned journey with the mission of mapping one of the most daunting tributaries of the Amazon River. As the journey unfolded, the party began to encounter a series of events that were beyond their control, forcing them to abandon their pre-planned route. Each day demanded quick and crucial decision making, placing them in constant crisis mode as they attempted to survive the expedition. Turning back was no longer an option. However, by utilizing intellect, courage, stamina and resourcefulness, the former President survived what has been described as a descent into one of Earth’s strangest hells.



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Few of us will ever encounter such a harrowing experience, but the takeaway is a valuable lesson about a man who would never quit and never did. How can you survive a life altering event beyond your control? Death of a loved one, divorce, catastrophic illness, catastrophic events, financial upheaval,—Insert your crisis—(here). Unfortunately, most of us (if you have been around for awhile), have experienced one or multiple of these events. When faced with life's challenges, the following strategies can help to best handle a crisis head on.

### **Account for your Assets and Valuable Resources**

At the onset of the event, or as early as possible, make a list of your tangible assets and focus on what you want to protect i.e., think money, shelter, food, clothing, mode of transportation, etc. Depending on the crisis at hand, some of these may be more important than others. For example, if the roof blows off of your house after a hurricane, your main concern is going to be more about physical protection of your household belongings, than worrying about how to protect your bank accounts from creditors. Vice versa, in a situation where you've been out of work for six months and are struggling to avoid financial ruin. Conversely, if you have a child fighting terminal cancer, your food, shelter, or 401k account are not your main focuses.

Regardless, make a list of all the "things" you have, and want to protect. Things may include important assets used for your spouse, family members, and children that could change their lifestyle if lost. Non-tangible resources should also be accounted for, and these include valued relationships. Who are those around you who would take a proverbial bullet for you? It is important to form a protective circle around yourself during a crisis with those supportive and loving people who have no other agenda than listening, and helping you in any manner possible. Tap into these dear souls and bring them in close. If you don't have a few very close friends and/or a good relationship with your family, find a way to change that because it can make or break surviving a crisis. As illustrated above, these are the things that "matter."

### **Let Go What you Cannot Control and Hyper Control What You Can**

When you are in a situation where you find yourself at the intersection of Rock Drive and Hard Place Avenue, you have to make a decision. There is no moving forward in either direction because you are stuck, right? Rationally, you can't navigate through either a rock or a hard place because it is beyond your control to move unmovable objects. Then let that reality go, and don't lament it, because it takes away energy you are going to need to back the car up, turn it around, and head back down the highway you just travelled to find an alternate route, which is very much in your control. Worrying about what others think of you—insert negative thought—(here) is also beyond your control and an emotional drain as well. Save your energy to move forward and find the open doors and windows that lie ahead. In any given crisis situation, one of the best things you can do is find out as much information you can about your problem.

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Be it catastrophic illness or losing a loved one unexpectedly—research, research, research, your options. Arming yourself with choices gives you greater control over an uncontrollable event. Knowing your alternatives gives you the ability to somewhat steer your chaos.

In the instance of Teddy Roosevelt's ill fated excursion, because he had such a vast knowledge of big game hunting, and cooking hard to kill exotic animals, he was able to share that knowledge and skill with the group and prevented them from starving to death. They were able to live off of monkeys and reptiles, which are even harder to kill and consume than deer or antelope, which he normally hunted. So, laser focus on what you can control, as it will enable you to navigate situations you never knew you would be able to handle.

### Staying Power

Never underestimate the power of stamina. If you could take a 50,000 foot view of your crisis at hand, looking down on it, how big is the crisis on a world map? Is it Asia big, or Rhode Island big? Can you step back and clearly see solutions that would alleviate the problem, but would be painful or uncomfortable to implement? If so, remember that sometimes a pound of sacrifice, sweat, and tears can yield a significant amount of future strength and stamina. Going ahead and doing the uncomfortable, but necessary task, is extremely difficult but at the same time energizing. In a crisis, your best ally is stamina, so you need to be able to both generate and conserve as much energy as possible. Execution on tough but meaningful actions help to give you the momentum you need to carry on.

Inevitably, we will all go through some form of a crisis during our lifetimes, and it is at these times, the depth of our character is revealed by how deep we can dig into focusing on survival. Just remember that by utilizing your intellect, courage, resourcefulness, and stamina, you can move through anything.

As the old saying goes, when you are going through hell, keep going...but it *requires* a special kind of perseverance, all its own.

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