

## Do You Think in the Face of Fear?

Studies of emergency events, such as airplane crashes, show that only 15% of people stay calm in the face of great fear. 75% freeze and do not take appropriate action. Another 10% display completely counterproductive behaviors. It is no surprise that in times of fear, many people do not seem rational.

Brain studies are now revealing cognitive constraints that limit our ability to process information, particularly when afraid. Our brain needs to go through the steps of 1) perception, 2) comprehension, 3) decision, 4) implementation, and finally 5) movement. This cycle takes a minimum of 10 seconds and much longer under threat.

It is now clear why simulation of emergency exercises are so important for airlines, fire fighters and the military. Simulations build pre-structured responses that can be implemented in as little as 100 milliseconds. The coaching we do with clients builds a similar set of responses through simulation to increase the effectiveness of responses to events in the workplace situations.

### Fear for the business and the economy

The implications are significant for leading those in your company who are fearful. How you respond to a question or an issue has far greater impact when people are afraid. To lead like the 15% lead who are calm and unencumbered by fear under pressure:

- manage your own fear in a positive way
- find clear and honest answers that give hope and perspective
- be a very good listener when others express fear and frustration
- be open to new ideas and giving the tools and skills that your staff needs to keep perspective

Those that do are the ones mostly likely to survive in crisis.

## Are You Living in VUCA?

VUCA is a term that is starting to be tossed around with more frequency to describe challenging circumstances. It stands for Volatility, Uncertainty, Complexity and Ambiguity. There is no question we are in VUCA times, perhaps even double VUCA. However, as Air Force Colonel Will Gunn noted,

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*This is our 22nd year and there is much to be thankful for all year, but this is a special time of year to stop and count our blessings. So often the worries that never come to be and the immediate*

*problems blind us to all there is to be thankful for in life.*

*We are thankful for all those who help us live our mission of helping people be change masters in their world and impact so many people in their personal and business lives. We wish you a wonderful holiday season and a new year filled with joy, peace and good health.*

## Change Masters® Events

Upcoming events:

- Carol Keers and Tom Mungavan will be doing a one-hour teleconference with Allen Debes of Thrivent Financial, to members of the Corporate Executive Board's IT Practice, as part of their initiative on "Responding to the Economic Crisis."
- In early 2009, we will begin delivering a webinar series based on the book "Seeing Yourself as Others Do" that will include discussion guides for effective personal development and team building. Webinars will be scheduled for individual teams even if they are spread around the world. Let us know if you would like to be part of this cost effective training.

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## Are You Living in VUCA?

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"VUCA is where history happens."

These days, we all have our personal VUCA moments, when our own life becomes volatile, uncertain, complex, and ambiguous. A personal crisis hits everyone at some point. The VUCA world is all around us, with more or less intensity.

### What is the Anti-VUCA?

Clear, calm, consistent communication is the anti-VUCA for any leader. It is an opportunity for innovation. Anti-VUCA rewards authentic executive presence ... **the ability to listen well, set clear expectations with a vision for the future, and create clear and concise communication that provides perspective.**

Author Bob Johansen said in his book *Get There Early: Sensing the Future to Compete in the Present*, that if you can keep your wits about you, VUCA could be the opportunity for your finest leadership moment. Here's how Johansen sees that evolving:

**"Volatility yields to Vision.** Vision means having a clear intent, a clear direction for your actions. With clear vision, creative space opens for innovation within the parameters that you communicate. A bold vision sees beyond volatility, with a kind of calm perspective that is not trapped by the assumptions of the present.

**"Uncertainty yields to Understanding.** The VUCA world creates an urgency to act quickly, but sometimes it is a false sense of urgency. In the face of uncertainty, listening and understanding can help leaders discover new ways of thinking and acting. Listening leads to understanding, which is the basis for trust. In order to understand, you must learn to listen carefully without judging too soon. The best leaders have the presence and calm to listen before talking, to open an opportunity for deep understanding. Understanding is a prerequisite to trust, and trust is vital to rebuilding organizations.

**"Complexity yields to Clarity.** Leaders must help others make sense out of complexity. Clarity is usually possible, even when there is no control. The VUCA world rewards clarity because people are so confused that they grasp at anything that helps them make sense out of the chaos. **The thoughtful leader's quest is to be both clear and accurate, simple but not simplistic.**

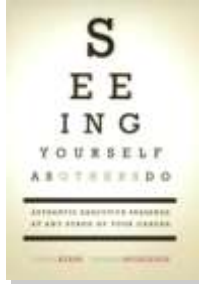
**"Ambiguity yields to Agility.** In an ambiguous world, leaders must be ready for surprises. Leaders can't surrender to ambiguity—that would lead to paralysis and confusion. Rather, leaders must learn how to be agile and responsive to attack. The VUCA world rewards networks because they are agile, while it punishes the rigidity and brittleness of hierarchies."

Leaders have the greatest opportunity and the greatest risk in a VUCA world. The power of fear is that it feels like it will last forever. It never does. Leaders who demonstrate a clear command of the room allow others to overcome fear and be more calm and thoughtful about finding the opportunities. Leaders help others find a way to master the changes that the VUCA world requires. Building the authentic executive presence attributes of CLEARLI (Command, Leverage, Expectations, Audience Connection, Relationships, Listening and Inspiration) creates the leadership communication that is the Anti-VUCA.

We hope you will find this newsletter helpful and interesting. We appreciate your comments or questions to [info@ChangeMasters.com](mailto:info@ChangeMasters.com). If you know of others that would like to be added to the newsletter subscription they may go to <http://www.changemasters.com>. If you would like to be removed from future newsletter messages, please reply to this message ([newsletter@ChangeMasters.com](mailto:newsletter@ChangeMasters.com)) with the word "REMOVE" in the subject line.

## Book Endorsement

*“Seeing Yourself as Others Do - Authentic Executive Presence at Any Stage of Your Career” is a very insightful book, which made me look more objectively at myself from the outside-in approach. I had some real “I didn’t realize that” moments when reading it and I loved the discussion on authentic and courageous leadership. We’ve used Change Masters successfully to enhance our high talent leaders. Reading this book helped me see that by using the techniques Change Masters is famous for, there is a great deal more to learn to continue enhancing my skills as a healthcare executive. I wholeheartedly recommend this book, filled with relevant “How to’s” for everyone with the challenge of leading hospitals and hospital systems today!”*



**Jone' Koford, Group President, LifePoint Hospitals**

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Upcoming magazine articles we have co-authored with our clients and sponsors include:

- *Executive Presence Under Pressure*, by Carol and Kevin Wilde, Chief Learning Officer, General Mills, to be published in Chief Learning Officer magazine (July 2009)
- *Increasing the Interpersonal Effectiveness of Top Technical Talent for Competitive Advantage* by Carol and Dean Junkans, Chief Investment Officer, Wells Fargo, to be published in the Minneapolis St Paul Business Journal (November 2008)
- *Success Doesn't Start At The Top - the Impact of Change Masters Coaching on Six Sigma Effort* by Carol Keers, Scott Goleman and John Underwood of Ameriprise Financial.

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