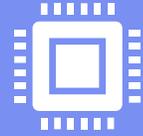


BECOMING GOOD AT CRISES: BUILDING CAPABILITIES FOR TIMES OF DISRUPTION

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IPMA HOPE SUMMIT
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THE BAD NEWS – AND THE OPPORTUNITY



We are moving into a world where your organisation will **spend less time in peacetime** and more time in turbulence.



That's a threat. But it's also an opportunity – **FOR YOU.**



In turbulence project managers don't become less important; they become **central to survival.**

WHAT A CRISIS ACTUALLY IS



A crisis is the moment when a complex system simply *cannot keep functioning as before*. It can't hold its stable state. Change becomes essential and urgent, and if that change doesn't happen, the system risks real damage or collapse.



The combination – high stakes, high uncertainty, and sustained pressure – is what makes crisis leadership so demanding.



Crisis don't arrive neatly labelled. They show up as weak, early signals



As project managers we have a choice:

Treat those signals as background noise,

OR

Get curious, organise the data, and ask, "What if this *is* the start of something big?"

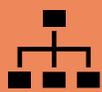
LEADERSHIP IN CRISIS: IT STARTS WITH YOU



In a crisis, the people around you experience you through **Your Words, Your Actions and the quality of your being**



In normal times, you can often get by with your surface skills and experience. In a crisis, those deeper layers are stress-tested.



This has two consequences for you as project managers:

Your technical competence is necessary, but it's not sufficient.

Investing in your own self-awareness, resilience, and emotional maturity is not “soft stuff”. It's a core risk mitigator for your organisation.



PHASE 1:
BEFORE THE
CRISIS

Build and maintain the core capabilities, relationships, and culture that you will lean on in the next crisis.

There are
six
capabilities
you want
to nurture:

ICT infrastructure

Data management

Supply chain adaptability

Project execution skills

Communication systems and protocols

Partnerships and collaboration

PHASE 2: THE WAVE BEGINS TO BREAK

- Organise the Data
- Declare the crisis – and own it
- Build the crisis team and the initial strategy

When the wave breaks, you need a *purpose-built* crisis programme structure, not just your normal hierarchy with the word “crisis” added.



PHASE 3: THE TURBULENCE

This is the **long haul**, and it's where many leaders – and many projects – start to fray.

1

Keep
executing and
adapting

2

Look for crises
within the
crisis

3

Communicate
in a way that
builds trust

4

Collaborate
with partners

5

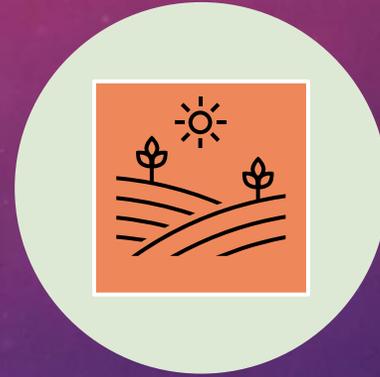
Lead your
team through
the grind

PHASE 4: RECOVERY, LEARNING & TRANSFORMATION

You have two crucial jobs



DELIBERATELY CLOSE THE
CRISIS



BANK THE LESSONS WHILE
THEY'RE STILL WARM

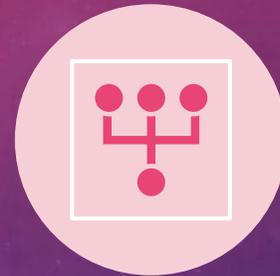
Each crisis becomes a **launchpad for transformation**, not just a trauma to be endured.

WHAT DOES THIS MEAN FOR PROJECT MANAGERS

Some questions for you



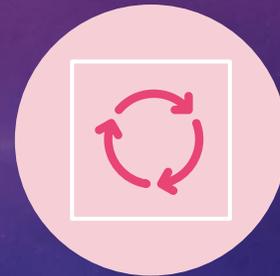
On every project, how does this increase or decrease our crisis-readiness



In your PMO, are we explicitly cultivating project managers who can operate under high uncertainty and pressure?



In your leadership conversations are you the person who spots the weak early signals?

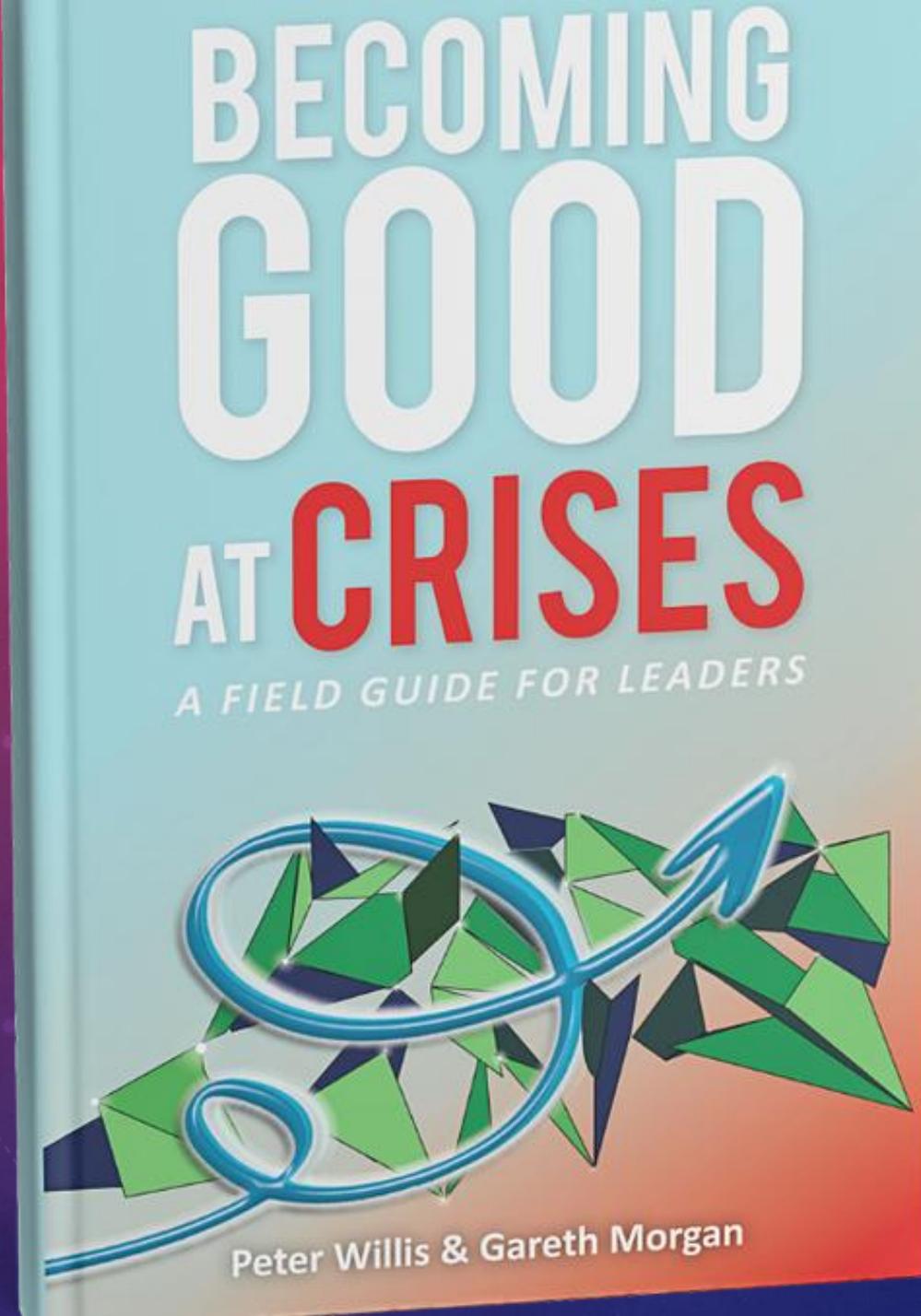


In your own development what do you know about your own patterns under stress?

AN INVITATION

Do it deliberately

Build	Build the six capabilities
Strengthen	Strengthen the quality of your own leadership being
Recognise	Recognise the four phases of crisis
Use	Use every crisis as an opportunity to leave your organisation more resilient



BECOMING GOOD

AT CRISES

A FIELD GUIDE FOR LEADERS



Peter Willis & Gareth Morgan

THANK YOU

• Available as an e-book from
Amazon Kindle

• Available at the Book Lounge, 71
Roeland Street, Cape Town