

## Modern Churchill // March 18 – May 8, 2020 By Scott Klososky, Founding Partner @ FPOV

Today, leaders are being asked to steer their organizations through an unprecedented period of uncertainty and anxiety thanks to the global situation. [Future Point of View \(FPOV\)](#) Founding Partner Scott Klososky found inspiration as he looked back at a leader who helped steer his people through an uncertain time. The following are a collection of messages from his "Modern Churchill" email series.

### March 18th

During this time, I want to be helpful and uplifting so temporarily, I am going to send a Modern Churchill email in the mornings to my friends and fellow leaders. I have always loved how Winston Churchill led his people through a desperately tough time. Ours is not that bad, but is unexpected and uncertain and that is where my email today will focus – uncertainty.

If you don't want me to send this to you, please respond and tell me and I will drop you from my list. I will make these as concise as possible and work to share thoughts that may help you. When this event is over, I will stop sending these!

I learned a couple years ago something that helped me tremendously in my life. I woke up every morning CRAVING certainty. I wanted people to drive the right way, I wanted planes to fly on time, I wanted all my appointments to go as planned and all my speeches to go off without a hitch. I expected my day to go perfectly and was disappointed every day.

I did not understand my desire for certainty until I read some wisdom and it was pointed out that our lives have little certainty. Once I embraced that every day and every moment was unpredictable and nothing would go according to my plans, I relaxed a bit. When I further realized that it was my massive ego that believed I deserved certainty, I relaxed even more. I am just a small piece of a huge picture that is ever changing and the aspects that change, or don't go the way I want, have nothing to do with me personally. No one is doing them to me specifically.

Today I embrace even the uncertainty of this black swan event. I am loving just waking up and seeing what the day brings.

However, our team members also hate uncertainty and many of them are very anxious and stressed worrying about the future and what it might be like. As modern Churchills, we need to be empathetic and although we cannot promise them certainty, we can give them work to do, be models for them of having a stiff upper lip and just rolling with the dynamics today. We can be calm and we can assure them this will pass and the sun will come out. In the meantime, let's go get some positive things done in the world.

A new thing to ask ourselves as leaders might be WWCD (on top of WWJD)

### March 19th

I got a wonderful response to this yesterday when I sent it out. Lots of people reached out to me I have not heard from for a while. A handful of comments about FPOV doing the right things and that it is refreshing we are not hunkering down.

Return to Normalcy. Adjust to the new normal, the faster we accept new conditions and create value, the faster we have meaning again. We have a choice, mourn what we are losing at the moment, or be grateful for all we have. Let's keep this in perspective. We have running water, we have electricity, we have plenty of food, we have all our friends and family still around us. There are no bombs dropping from the sky. We also know this is temporary – we just don't know the end date.

There are two kinds of responses to hard times – embrace, or degrade.

Early this week I created a new list of things for me to do over the next month. Mostly tasks I normally never have time to do and have always wanted to accomplish. I have been giving people at FPOV work we can do to help clients on the other side of this time. I want them to have work we can do we are proud of and feel good about our day. We were as busy this week as any normal time. It is a great idea to give your people new and different tasks to work on at this time. Help them to know they are contributing – even if they are home.

As leaders, it is our responsibility to help our teams, families and friends to quickly adjust to whatever conditions arise – whatever that takes. We lead – we go first. Get up every day and do your same routine. Work even harder on your health since we have some more time. Innovate and create even more than you normally do. Keep yourself in a great place. emotionally. Then infect others with all of this. Embrace or degrade, this is your choice...

By the way, it is really hard not to draw all the analogies of WW2 London for you. What Churchill and his team did to keep the moral up and survive – then rebuild. I trust you can see in what I am saying, the strategies that worked then and will work now! Carry on...

### March 20th

Social Distancing does not mean Social Isolation. There is a better way to get across the same idea to our people - Create Space. The problem with words can be the underlying feeling they

generate without us really meaning it. Telling people that “Social Distancing” is mandated has the wrong feel at many levels. The message I prefer is to deliver to people is to create space for themselves during this time. Being outside walking through the woods or a park is fantastic – nothing is transmitting out there.

When England and other European cities were being ruthlessly bombed (check out pictures of Rotterdam by the end of the war), it was not wise for people to cluster in one place where a single bomb could do damage. People needed to shelter and disperse – they needed to create space to limit the risk.

Let’s reword what is needed today and ask people to be conscious of proximity for a few weeks and leave six feet or more, and simply open up the space in their lives except with their close loved ones. Then let’s be intentional about connecting in some way with those who are more isolated due to their circumstances. People who live alone, people in retirement centers, people who are struggling with the conditions right now. I am not a turtle who is withdrawing in my shell – I am a dog that is helping everyone in my pack but not mingling with the other packs for a bit.

### March 21st

Oh, you thought I would rest on Saturday and Sunday? Winston did not stop on the weekends and neither will I! We have leadership to do...

Have a sense of humor – Winston’s was dry and could be dark at moments and he used it often. I am getting my sense of humor on this weekend because next week is going to be more uncertain than the last. Every day is a day closer to this thing being over but we are going to have a tough haul for a bit. As hard as it can be with all we are hearing and seeing, a sense of humor is important.

When we as leaders can still kid around about life it shows others that we are panicked, bowed or broken. It shows we have confidence without having to tell people we are confident. Be aware of the mood in the room when you are running meetings and if it starts to get dire, lighten the mood. Be conscious of setting the tone over the next couple of weeks. Know when to lighten things and know when to inspire people – even if you don’t feel like it! That is what leaders do!

If your sense of humor tank is running low then I prescribe two hours of Netflix comedians tonight for you – do some homework!

### March 22nd

I said Winston had a sense of humor, and this was sent to me from a reader yesterday “And the lady said to Winston if you were my husband I would poison your wine. And he replied ‘if you were my wife I would drink it!’”

An aspect of leadership we do not always regularly exercise is helping people adjust to a new reality quickly. Leading is a lot more fun when everything is going well and is stable. We set the vision and help the team reach it – not simple, but fairly easy. In a time such as this, leadership is very different. We must adjust our own lives, our work practices and how we impact those we lead. During a difficult and uncertain time, we must be strong with helping people to adjust to the facts of the new future. If we shirk this task, we are not leading.

Here is the new reality, we have no idea how long this will last. We know it will decimate the economy every week it goes on. Lots of people will get sick at some level, and even more will lose their jobs or make less money. Here is another reality, we need to quite blaming the government, our boss, God, the Chinese and any other scapegoat. This is disease that jumped from animals to humans and it is a part of biology that happens.

For the first time in history we are reacting differently as a human race to this war on an infectious disease. It is great we are closing things down to try and help each other. It is also not being done perfectly. What a shock – the first time millions of people try this technique we are not that good at it.

We will have to work differently for a while and this is going to hurt financially. For those of you on this email I care about and who I am talking to, we must quickly adjust our folks to the new reality and make the most of it. There is lots we can get done working from home. There are positive things we can do in the world. We do not need to shrink in the face of this challenge! Give your people new things to do so they can be valuable even from home if that is where they are. Be clear with them about the need to accept this reality and carry on – even if we are having to say this as we let them go for now.

Cities destroyed by bombs got rebuilt and a few generations have now lived without seeing a bomb dropped on their city. A disease bomb dropped on our world and we will rebuild and be better next time – of that I am sure...

**March 23rd**

Never, never, never surrender – one of my favorite quotes from a man who had no intention of letting a dark force win. We cannot weaken our resolve to not only get through this, but to come out better because of it – and we need our people to know that. We will be better at working from home from now which will help our staffing strategy. We will be better at adjusting to major events quickly because there will be more. We will be better at saving lives when infectious diseases come around because that is the right thing to do for an improving humanity.

I refuse to feel sorry for myself or my company. This is a black swan event and they happen out of nowhere – by definition. I will take this chance to learn and grow more than I would have without this challenge. I will never, never, never quit helping others because I refuse to capitulate to feeling defeated or tired.

Do not bow down to the chaos and uncertainty my friends, make this a time when you as a leader shine so others have a light to follow. We will lose money and traction on this deal by doing what we are asked by the government. I am fine with that, but we will not bow down to the challenge of building back stronger than ever – will we!!

### March 24th

“The power of man has grown in every sphere, except over himself.” Winston  
Win the battle of your own mind. When we wake up as leaders, we must start with our first thoughts. We are regular humans at the bottom of it all, so gearing up to lead is a mental process. That starts with getting ourselves in a good place, A confident place, a strong place, a caring place. Our first battle of the day is with the voices inside. Every morning, I wake up and immediately a voice tells me we are still in a virus lockdown and people are still losing jobs, and our companies clients are suffering, and the government is still struggling with what to do. Then I force myself to the second set of thoughts.

1. Get up and get some exercise
2. Think about what I need to do today and how I can do it with excellence
3. Focus on helping people around me today
4. What can I do to create, build, repair or maintain something today?
5. Remember, this too shall pass - it always has and always will
6. Now, carry on as if it is a normal day because to do otherwise is to bow down to chaos

The most difficult progress to make in life is moving ourselves forward to a new and better place. No one can do that for you (us). In order to lead in times of strife, the first and toughest battle is in your own head. Win that battle to today, then get up and do it again tomorrow. Thank you to those who are sending me Winston quotes and information and the good vibes for sending this. I so hope it helps you at this time!

### March 25th

Innovative problem solving – now more than ever. When confronted with any problem, a leader has three choices. 1) Fear and ignore it, 2) Approach it with the same thinking as in the past – sometimes those solutions will work. 3) Do the work to think innovatively and pioneer new solutions never before tried.

I have a friend who owns a store. He closed it last week to be a good citizen and not have lots of people in the same rooms. He is now thinking about doing a concierge service where he takes appointments to let just a few in at a time and makes the shopping experience unique. He is thinking differently than he ever has before.

We need Number 3 leaders at the moment because we are facing problems we have not seen before. Part of being a powerful leaders is being willing to think thoughts not thought

before. If you have tough decisions to make and hard problems to solve, move toward being creative and away from fear and paralysis. There are “illogical” solutions we have never thought of that could work right now – if we will just try them.

“We must beware of needless innovations, especially when guided by logic.” - Winston

### March 26th

Psychologically, we are wired to see the negative more than the positive. We have animal instincts deeply imbedded and one of the most powerful is the chemicals in our brain that focus our thoughts on threats are more powerful than the chemicals that offer reward and peace. I have heard it said simply that when it comes to the carrot and the stick, we are fine if we miss out on a carrot because another one will come along. We constantly fear and watch for the stick because if it hits us, there may be no tomorrow. For the species to survive, we are wired to invest more in being alert to danger and not always be grateful about the blessings. This creates a skewed perspective on the real levels of danger.

This is important now because our perspective on this time has everything to do with how we get through it as leaders. As thinking human beings, we get to choose what we focus on – the darkness or the light. In order to stay in a good place as a leader, I limit the amount of time and energy I spend reading the news. I spend at least that amount of time being grateful for the good things we all have. The perspective we choose is a powerful gift when we allow it. More than that, when we help the people who follow us to improve their perspective, we pass along this gift. If we allow those around us to wallow in defeatism, we are failing as leaders.

For perspective... I know it is a dark, uncertain and tough time for many people – it was worse when bombs were dropping and tanks were rolling every day and destroying everything Europeans new. We have no sense of this in the U.S. because we have not had that in our country. We have had a few terrorist attacks and we think that is horrible. The Russians lost approx.. 27 million people in WW2 and we don't teach that in our history books in most cases. So let's keep this time in perspective and muscle through it, pulling as much positive change and growth out of our new path on response to infectious disease as we can.

This is only the first time we are responding this way – it will happen again.

### March 27th

I have observed five different archetypes for leaders - a cheerleader, a coach, a mentor, a guru, or a guide. Read those slowly to yourself and think about what each of these means. During a Black Swan event like this, there are two of these more important than the others, can you guess which ones?

Winston was a Cheerleader and Guide, and had no time or stomach to be a mentor, coach or guru. Those are wonderful traits to have when you have the time and attention of people who

are not disrupted. When times get unpredictable, desperate and disconcerting, we need to inspire and show the way.

Inspiring (cheerleading), helps people be in a mental state where they have the will to make progress and fight to survive. As we lead, we must give people the will to get up every day and work hard without allowing the darkness swirling around them to degrade their optimism for the future. To make progress even when the news is darkening.

Guiding (showing the way) is our ability to go first – to lead by example. The people are many and the true leaders are few. Real leadership shows up when life is most difficult. You know this is true, leadership in good times is easy. Being a strong and confident Guide in the tough times is harder and that is what I expect of myself – and you.

Please take a moment and self-evaluate and see if you are providing people what they need at this time. You cannot fix all their problems and you cannot change how fast this goes by. You can go first and show them how to get out of the darkness with strength and grace. As Churchill said...

“If you’re going through hell, keep going.”

**March 28th**

Two thoughts for today.... Interrogate reality and disconnect from the chaos of the world.

I was asked the other day what one thing I would like the most to get through this event and I said the Truth. As a leader, it is difficult to make critical decisions without a clear vision of the Truth. The Truth is out there and it is our job to sort it out. That does not mean spending our entire day reading what is pushed to us. It means thinking clearly, being rational, being calm in the storm, and looking at your world from a big perspective. Winston was born in the 19<sup>th</sup> century and fought in WW1. He saw devastation and recovery. As bad as things got, he knew that he knew that he knew, his country just needed to survive the end of the war in some way, and they would rebuild. As will we – that is the reality.

Disconnecting from the chaos does not mean not caring about others who have it worse than us or do not live in our city. It means limiting the time we invest on listening to people “guess” at the outcome, having the leadership ability to eloquently handle the difficult tasks we must do to survive this in the best shape possible. It means taking action and working harder now than ever. We are not having snow days here my friends – we are fighting a Black Swan event. All while not allowing our minds to be mesmerized by the bombs dropping.

There is progress to be made today – find it and make it – and help others progress as well.

“The farther backward you can look, the farther forward you are likely to see.” - Winston

**March 29th**

“Employ your time in improving yourself by other’s writings so that you shall come easily by what others have labored hard for.” - Winston

I appreciate you reading this email. It shows you are willing invest time to improve your world view. Until we die, we have plenty of time to invest – even when we convince ourselves we do not. After loving and caring for each other, I would suggest one of the highest uses of our time is reading, listening, or watching something that helps us learn. As most of you know, I am a huge fan of the concept of consciously building Rivers of Information that I consume, while guarding the gates of my mind to let in what will move me forward.

Now is a time to amp this up for ourselves and our people. When you are thinking about new ways you can be a valuable leader over the next few weeks, please put together new learnings, trainings, and readings for you people. They have more time on their hands now and anything you can feed to them that will help personally, and professionally, will be appreciated. Even if you have never done this kind of thing before, start sending them lists of podcasts to listen to. Line up online video trainings – there are a ton of them, including the one I am doing every other day on Leading Home Based Workers. Give them lists of books to read, or send along white papers. Be the source of the River of Information for you team.

Strong leaders adjust to the new realities – quickly. Please adjust and help feed the brains of your folks so they can grow during this time...

The will of God will never take you where the grace of God does not protect you.

**March 30th**

Be grateful for this chance and all the mystery to come! “Every moment wears a robe with 10,000 pockets and each pocket has a million possibilities”.

There is a physical reality we need to be aware of as leaders – when any of us are confronted with danger, our body floods with adrenalin and our field of focus narrows to that which we fear – it is a primal response whether we understand this or not. We are not in caves fighting saber toothed tigers anymore, but we do run organizations that have to make payroll. We have people who depend on us for their jobs. We are responsible to investors, bankers, franchisees, partners, customers, etc. Fear of letting any of them down causes our focus to narrow to that possible outcome and we cannot even think about all the other possibilities for progress.

WWWD? He would never quit finding ways to survive and prosper. If need be, force yourself out of narrow view thinking and be expansive in your thoughts today. I attached a document that our team built that can help you record what your organization is learning through this



time. Before anyone forgets anything that could be improved for next time, let's get it recorded. When the smoke clears, we can all build a better playbook for handling this next time.



### March 31

Don't just set goals – Build systems. The goals set at the beginning of the year may be superfluous now. In truth, I really don't like setting goals as a way to drive myself or our business forward. I like focusing on building world class systems and processes and then letting it go where it goes. Focusing on the discrete financial goals as your only inspiration forward rarely results in long term sustainability – focusing on building the engines that create success and then letting them run is a wiser path.

Today is a great day to take an hour and think about the top five or ten processes that drive your organization and jot them down. Set up a meeting with your team and have a video chat about what could be done to improve the systems themselves. I love the concept of Systems Thinking and the reality is improving them is difficult when our whole focus must be on keeping them running. For many of us, this month is the perfect month to step back and make a list of upgrades. Build new systems that can get you to world class because the goals we set at the beginning of the year don't count now.

The system for finding, training, growing, upskilling and generally having the best talent in your space

The system for developing your products and rolling them out to market

The system for building customer relationships

The system for innovating constantly and better than your competition

The system for building employee relationships

The system for automating tasks with technology so you are more profitable

The list goes on – what can you re-architect [today](#)?

[Today](#) is the first day I am working from home all day. Although the room is different, the work will be the same and I am grateful I don't have to deal with the rations below. The tea, cheese and eggs I would miss!



April 1, 2020

Conscious Inclusion during Necessary Exclusion. My mother has been a spiritual leader for many years and she once made a great point by having a group play some games backwards in order to include everyone instead of making all but one the loser. For example, she had the team play musical chairs backwards and added a chair each time until everyone was sitting together in a circle. The impact was powerful as it reversed the lifelong pattern for all the folks but one being made losers. This was a wise and innovative way to make the point about how excluding life can be.

I have to say, I do not like the term "social distancing." I am fine with the concept, I just don't like the words. I also don't like the term "remote" teams. Words count and as a speaker, I have become more careful all the time about the exact words I use. During a time when we are

purposely separating, we need to find innovative ways to create inclusion. Thank God for technology because it gives us a platform for at least simulating proximity.

Here are some thoughts on how to maximize making people feel included from a distance.

Connect with your team randomly without an agenda other than to say hello and check in

Make people turn on their video so they can be seen when they speak

Make everyone talk on video meetings so they are participating

Speed up your communication rhythm so team members hear from you and each other more often

Watch for the lost people who are slipping away from being connected with you and the team

Winston was a master at using words to inspire his people. He did daily radio broadcasts to tell everyone in England they would get through the bombings together. The radio broadcasts were a touchpoint to create inclusion. Now it's our turn to help people feel included when everything in media is telling them to stay apart...

April 2, 2020

We are in a new arena today. Try not to think about it as being good or bad. Yes, there is devastation in the economy and with some of our people, and we wish this were not the case. The arena we are waking up in this month is unique and the opportunities it creates are also unique. I don't fear this arena nor the outcome. I simply exploit every day fully and adjust to the new conditions. In order to be helpful to you, I think a lot about what it takes to be a strong leader in today's arena, while also thinking about WWWD.

We chose leadership – we signed up to be strong and wise in this time, so we are called to improve our Mastery of the following

- Mastery of Awareness - be present and awake to what is around me even when it is no fun to look at it. Listen carefully to what people say and understand why they are saying it. Do not be blind and deaf to others and retreat into my own home and world.

- Mastery of Transformation – Change is always with us and speeding up in some areas. Never stop growing and learning and guiding the transformations you are responsible for – do not outsource this to others. We lead.

- Mastery of Intention/Action - Be conscious of why you take actions, do not do them out of habit or with ill intent to anyone or anything else. Be clear as to why you are behaving the way you are and in what you are investing your time with in the arena at the moment

- Mastery of Letting Go - The past can be an anchor. The arena we are in [today](#) is not positive as what it was a few months ago. We had an extended good economy and record market levels. That is gone for the moment. It will come back someday. Invest nothing in the way it was – we do not lead the past – we lead the present and we lead into the future – let’s do our jobs today

Winston Churchill wrote every word of his many speeches — he said he'd spend an hour working on a single minute of a speech.



April 3, 2020

There is a difference in the action of Being vs. the action of Becoming. What we thought we were “becoming” as an organization will be different now. What we seek to “be” as an organization should be intact – good times or bad.

Who we are and how we show up in the world as leaders right now is more important than who we hope to become one day. There is a huge difference between “being” and “becoming.” During this time, I am narrowing my focus to who I am [today](#), and who FPOV is being for clients. I am not thinking at all about what our revenue will look like the rest of the year or what our staff will look like. I just wake up every day and focus on being the right kind of leader every moment for the next ten hours.

As I continually study WC and his ways of getting through the days, I see that he woke up looking to survive and move forward one day at a time. He knew he had to win [today](#). Then one day the darkness would lift. There were days when he had to make brutally hard decisions – like attacking the French fleet to stop them from falling in the Germans hands, of withholding help to the French because he knew France would fall. Imagine what that must have felt like to look the French emissary in the eye who is pleading with you and tell them that even though you could help, you will not. Some of us are having to look team members in the eye and tell them news we would give anything not to say.

This is highly unnatural for me as a futurist. The reason I am focusing so much effort in who I am being moment to moment is that we need each other to be our best at this time. Loneliness is starting to set in for some folks. Fear is growing in some areas as the virus expands. Exhaustion will set in with the healthcare community, and the money will run out for some newly out of work. If you will reduce focus to your family, friends, co-workers, and the world [today](#), you will be more present for them.

We made it through another week. Focus on being a strong and sensitive leader – one day at a time. I will be doing the same!

April 4, 2020

There was very little of everything but love in London in the dark days of 1944, and still some people had joy. This proves the adage that Happiness depends on what happens: Joy is a choice...

Since it is [Saturday](#), I am willing to talk about The Modern Churchill view on joy. We need to watch for friends and co-workers slipping into depression and loneliness and lead them out. Here is my formula for being demonstratively Joyful during a pandemic:

1. Free my heart from hatred - flow love instead
2. Free my mind from worries - be peaceful instead
3. Live simply – embrace and enjoy the lack of options I now have
4. Give more – there are many people who need help I can give
5. Expect less – In fact, have no expectations and every day has some positives!
6. Slow down and be patient – I cannot speed up time to get through this so calm down

And always remember in a pandemic: A joyful person is NOT the one who has the most, but IS the one who needs the least

My New Normal Weekend – I did not think I would be writing these all through April, but here we are. Luckily I have content for a long time because I have been gathering it for years in a document I created to remind myself of the wisdom I need to follow! Seems a bit strange sharing it with all of you every day because I normally just say these things to myself...

April 5, 2020

What if you are the leader specifically for a time like this?

“There is someone looking after me besides you,” he said, confidently, to his rattled bodyguard after a near-miss explosion during the German blitz. “I have a mission to perform and that person intends to see it is performed.” Winston

He believed there was a higher power who put him in as Prime Minister, with all his life experience, to do what he did in that time.

You and I are also meant to be right where we are. This even is not some cosmic mistake. It is something that is explainable, was always known to be a threat, and is defeatable. [Tomorrow](#) we will get up and go back to work and will do what we can to survive and prosper through this. We will be one day closer to this being over. I also believe there is a higher power and I was raised to believe that everything in the world happens perfectly, we just don't always understand the larger picture.

What I do know is we accepted leadership and we need to be the right leader for our people at this time. When you wake up on [Monday](#), be what you agreed (and were meant) to be.

April 6, 2020

Welcome to [Monday](#)! Defiance and Resilience – Churchillian characteristics that are required during unstable times. Let's talk about why...

Resilience is the easy one. We must get up for every day even when our first thought of the day is, “oh yea, we are still in a pandemic.” We must start each [Monday](#) with getting our heads on straight and girding ourselves for what is to come. Another week of uncertainty and for some of us, really difficult decisions. Since I picked out a small list of people I know to get this, I know you have heard 1000 times that you have to get back up after getting knocked down so I let's just shake hands that as leaders, we have to be resilient and get the energy back every day – every day!

Defiance is a more interesting trait from Winston. If you know his history, you know he defied people in his own government and people on the outside. He has a singular goal, to lead England out of the darkness and devastation. He also had uncertainty, and a lot worse than ours. Allow me to share my list of what I believe we need to defy now:

1. Defy reading the news more than needed. I look at it once a day at night, other than that, I focus on my job, my team, and my family.
2. When you do read the news, think like a data scientist. There are so many conflicting pieces of information, defy what makes no sense. Like comparisons



between countries, states, cities, that make no sense. Or confirmed cases growing with no relative information on testing done. I got a text last night from a guy asking me if 5G was causing all this – I rest my point

3. Defy Anxiety – this is a big one. It creeps in when we least expect it – it crept in on me [this morning](#) when I woke up to be straight with you – I had to make it go away
4. Defy Being Impatient – There was a lot of wisdom in the posters they made that said Keep Calm and Carry On. Be patient and allow this to unfold as it will – as long as it does
5. The biggest one is to be defiant against the feeling of wanting to give up. As leaders, we are not allowed to give up 😊

I pray this is week of progress for you – even if it is small and on the edges.

April 7, 2020

What is your Pandemic Routine? For many of us, the routine of the day is a bit different now. Just for historical reference, I posted Winston's daily routine and we are going to use it as an example of what NOT to do. Habits and routines – schedules, it pains me to even write these words because I purposely try and stay out of doing the same things every day, yet there are some benefits to having healthy practices in our day in order to be a long lasting leader.

If I switch leadership examples for a minute, I remember reading the bio of Lee Iacocca years ago and he wrote one profound piece advice I never forgot. He said your number one priority as a leader is your health. Without your health you are no good to God, your family or your job. He learned that after a heart attack...

We do not need to have the same routines so I am not going to use mine as an example. I am only going to ask you these questions:

1. Are you getting physical exercise each day – in some form?
2. Are you spending time reading something other than the news – something that will help you learn and grow?
3. Are you spending time in solitude so you can think and process all the new information we are getting – to think through hard decisions?
4. Are you getting the same or more sleep than you normally do in standard times?
5. Are you doing something for fun or relaxation each day?
6. Are you connecting with people at a friendly level?
7. Are you eating healthy – the way you know is best for you?

No more than ever, in order to be a good leader in this time, we need to be healthy in mind, soul and body. Do not let this event take a toll on your emotional or physical health. Show the people around you how to personally excel while under duress. That is an elite level of leadership we all can shoot for!



Here is Churchill's daily routine:

8 A.M.: He would wake up but remain in bed to eat his breakfast and read the newspapers. He would then shave, bathe and get back into bed. From his bed, he continued working, while reading essential letters and dictating memos and his correspondence to government officials and private citizens.

11:00 A.M.: He would continue working while dictating his speeches at a pace faster than his secretary could keep up and sip on whiskey and soda.

1:15 P.M.: Lunchtime. Churchill loved good food, alcohol, and good company. He would have lunch with his guests while enjoying some champagne. After his midday meal, Churchill would walk to the goldfish pond and feed the ducks and swans. All meetings and visits were scheduled in the afternoon. Churchill rarely visited the war room near 10 Downing street before noon.

3 P.M.: He would change into a comfy silk vest and climb back into bed for his infamous afternoon nap. He loved his naps and attributed much of his productivity to it claiming that humans were not meant to work from morning to midnight.

5:00 P.M.: Played card games with his family.

7 P.M.: He would have another bath and get ready for dinner.

8:00 P.M.: Churchill had dinner with his guests. With plenty of drinks and his favorite Cuban cigars accompanied with the meal. Often they would stay up sharing stories till 10 or even past midnight. Afterward, Churchill would return to his study to start working again.

12:00 A.M.: Churchill would continue working dictating to his aides and would not stop until 2 or even 3 A.M. dictating as much as three to four thousand words.

2 A.M.: Retire and begin again at 8 A.M.

April 8, 2020

The long tail of recovery... [Yesterday](#) was the first day I started to hear the press deliver positive news about the virus being contained in some parts of the world. I also heard more news on rapid testing, vaccines, and what the recovery might look like. Eventually the momentum changes from the situation getting worse, to it is clearly getting better. Maybe that

happens this week, maybe next. Know this, there will be a months long recovery for life to get back to normal.

“It is no use saying ‘we are doing our best.’ You have got to succeed in doing what is necessary.” Winston

An event like this is a good chance to re-architect anything about our businesses or lives, that can be upgraded. It is a great chance to experiment with new processes and systems. When a pattern is broken, we can be open to creating a new pattern even when life goes back to a “normal” state. Some of us have lost large chunks of business, others were luckier. Some of us had to let team members go temporarily or permanently, so the team will never be like it was. During this long tail of recovery, we may lose more revenue and more people. We can talk about a “V” shaped recovery all we want and that will not resonate with some of the people in the economy whose organizations were permanently scarred by this.

We need to succeed in doing what is necessary to help each other and guide our teams through the rest of this event. That might mean helping a vendor with some business because you can. It might mean keeping some people on the team even though you will lose some money for months.

I will say the following to myself over and over through the long tail of this recovery:

1. Survive
2. Re-architect anything that needs it
3. Learn from this and plan for the next one
4. Work hard every day regardless of the business coming in the door
5. Lead our team to a new normal in the most elegant ways I can

April 9, 2020

Emotions are Infectious – especially yours.

“Success is the ability to go from one failure to another with no loss of enthusiasm.” Winston

I mentioned in one of these a couple weeks ago that there are leadership architypes and one that we need now is the “cheerleader.” I have been listening to a great podcast series called the Happiness Lab. One of them started off talking about the laugh track sitcoms have been using for years. The history of the laugh track is interesting, but the point was more about what the effect is. When we hear other people laughing, we are more likely to laugh. As an experiment, they played a few minutes of a comedy sitcom without the laugh track. Strangely enough, it was not funny at all. I never thought about the power of the laugh track and I cannot watch TV the same now that I know I am being manipulated.

There is a lesson to be learned here and that is Emotions are Infectious. Which goes with the category that leaders must lead by example. We know the way, show the way and go the way. When we are happy and confident, those who follow up are happy and confident. We are hitting the part of these event where the drudgery can be setting in. We are over the adrenaline rush of reorganizing our companies to operate in the environment. We are now calculating the damage potential. We are pondering how long this will last and what recovery might look like.

Be sure to check yourself [today](#) and be sure to wake up with confidence and in a joyful place – that others can see. Expand your dry Churchillian sense of humor. We got a ways to go so keep infecting people with your well-being because if you let down, that will ripple through everyone else. Set the tone you want by visibly being uplifted even when you don't feel like it.

April 10, 2020

Making Heart-Breaking Decisions...

As France was falling to the Germans in early 1940, the French prime minister begged that 10 squadrons from the Royal Air Force be sent to help. While at first inclined to do so, Churchill ultimately realized that they would not prevent the fall of France and would dangerously limit the RAF's ability to defend the homeland. He said no. And he made many more excruciating decisions throughout the war, including attacking the French fleet to prevent it from falling into German hands.

When I look in the mirror as a leader, there is no question I like the fun and easy parts much better than making the decisions that disappoint and anger people. I take leadership personally and it is not a big chess match for me. When I feel like I am letting anyone down, it sickens me. I don't pretend that my leadership decisions are on the scale of Winstons, yet they seem big to me – even when only one person is involved. Yet here we are as leaders, dealing with an event we did not really see coming and having to make excruciating decisions at times.

I could now preach about how this is our job, this is what makes us leaders, we should be able to handle this and not feel the pain. I will not.

I will offer this to each of you. I put this list together by hand and picked everyone on it because I have worked with you in some capacity as leaders. My good thoughts go with on every tough decision you have made and will make until we glide out of this. I know it sucks when we have to give bad news to people. It is painful to back off of projects and progress we were excited about at the beginning of the year. Retrenching plans is no fun. Breaking hearts is the worst.

It is [Friday](#) – another week closer to the recovery phase. My heart goes with each of you no matter how large or small your decisions are.

P.S. For those of you in the energy space, today's message goes double. Stay calm and hang on – this is all you can do at the moment!

April 11, 2020

The [Saturday](#) email theme is a little more light – because it is [Saturday](#) after all. In case you're wondering what I am starting to look like during this time, refer to the picture below.

No matter the current situation, A Great Life is Living with Abundance, Fullness, Abandonment. The first two are debatable when in lockdown but in truth, lockdown in the U.S. for most of us on this email, I am still abundant and mostly full. So let's talk about Abandonment. In order to have a great life, we must unchain from a few aspects of life – especially at this time AND THIS IS THE HARD ONE FOR MOST OF US. Here is my prescription for gaining abandonment:

1. Abandon expectations for the future. Should we plan for the future? Yes. Should we have expectations that disappoint us when it does not come true exactly? No. There is a difference between envisioning and planning for the future and having expectations
2. Abandon fear and anxiety. Easier to say than to do, yet this is a critical. If you allow it to seep in, you cannot have a great life. Do not fear failure, death, or change. Let go of each of these!
3. Abandon self-imposed limits. And self-limiting beliefs - No one limits you more than you. Unchain yourself from what you think you can and cannot do and just try to expand. In the trying is victory.
4. Abandon limiting conditioning. We have been conditioned to believe things in this world that are not true. Our parents, friends, media, education, etc. They all have conditioned us to believe facts that are not true. It is difficult to find and admit these, and essential that you de-condition yourself from what "others" told you was a fact.
5. Abandon the attachment to the things of this world. The attachment to our status, our material things, our very love of this life, all hold us back from a sense of freedom. As the Bible says, "be IN this world, not OF this world."

You will know you understand this message if you can internalize it and then have a wonderful sense of lightness and freedom. You will know abandonment is not in the cards if you refuse to consider what is written here.

Look at that face – you can see abandonment written all over it!



April 12, 2020

Shortly after Churchill's appointment, some bystanders near 10 Downing Street were elated to see him as he walked by. "Good luck, Winnie. God bless you," they shouted, reflecting the faith so many Britons had in him in those early days. Waiting until he got into the building, alone with his military chief of staff, Churchill wept, saying, "Poor people, poor people. They trust me, and I can give them nothing but disaster for quite a long time."

Three aspects stand out to me in this story, the first is that this happened in the early days when they still had faith in him. The second is that he wept knowing that there would be disaster for quite a long time. History showed in retrospect that they had good reason to have faith in him as a leader, even when disaster did last a long time. It could have been worse if they were occupied by the Germans. He also was accurate in his concern and weeping. Thankfully, we will not be in a disaster for a long time – just an unknown length of time.

The third is how much he must have cared about the people he was in charge of leading. A tough man weeping for what he knew would happen to many of them. I hope we care as much about the people around us!

Easter comes at an interesting time this year. Easter is the time of rebirth – the time of renewal. I believe God has a plan and that we just struggle to see the big picture. Maybe this pandemic is making sure we are prepared for one much worse to come. Maybe this is to drive us closer together within families and help us value relationships a bit more. This is above my pay grade as they say. What I do take comfort in is that everything happens perfectly in the world whether we understand it or not, and each year we have this time of renewal – this time of spring when everything turns green again and grows even more than last year.

Growing, improvement, and learning is in our control, we have agency over our ability to renew. Let's take this chance to upgrade ourselves as human beings. What happens the rest of the year will happen and most of it we will have little control over. Being a good human being and a great leader, we can make happen.

April 13, 2020

"Success is not final, failure is not fatal: it is the courage to continue that counts." - Winston Churchill

It is the start of another week. One more in a series of the not knowing what the long tail of recovery might look like. Trust me, Winston had no idea what the ending of the European conflict looked like. He reduced his focus to making it through one more day – then one more day. Then one more week. Then one more month. So it is with us.

When your name is Future Point of View, it is easy to fall into the trap of mentally living in the future. There is a difference between predicting the future and living there – or fearing it. None of us can accurately predict the endgame of this event. What we can control is being the leader that our people will comment on afterwards as the perfect picture of a cheerleader and guide in difficult times. Be what you need to be today to lead encouragingly and gracefully. Tomorrow will take care of itself.

There is only Monday to deal with today.

April 14, 2020

Little talked about fact – Churchill was half American. His mother was from the U.S. There is poetry to this in my opinion – the stiff upper lip of the English and the “never say die” attitude of an entrepreneurial American.

There is one thing I believe we are better at than most other countries - being entrepreneurial. We are great at looking for new opportunities, putting together the resources, and struggling to build something new from scratch. If we fail on the first try, we pull ourselves together and try again. Now is the time to remember our heritage and sort through the current economy and look for innovative ways to create value.

We are hitting a reset button in some ways so...

If you've been thinking about reorganizing your company, now is the time

If you've been thinking about developing a new product or service, now is the time

If you've known your team needs a specific new skill, now is the time

If you've been thinking about downsizing your building or moving, now is the time

If you have an untried way to deliver your product or service, now is the time

If you need to personally challenge yourself to grow, improve or add a new capability, now is the time

Know this, when the recovery begins, there will be a willingness to try new things, along with a general euphoria. This will not last forever. For a time, there will be fertile ground for change and entrepreneurial ideas. Great leaders will take advantage of this time by putting their entrepreneurial skill to work [today](#) – yes on [Tuesday April 14<sup>th</sup>](#)

I believe you can – if you will just try.

**April 15, 2020**

Moving from feelings of Unfairness, into Acceptance. [Yesterday](#) I had a client who hired me to give a speech this summer tell me they cancelled the event and wanted me to send their deposit back. It is one thing to lose revenue, a whole different element to send money back to people because they decided to cancel an event. To make it worse, they acted very formal, stating they were enforcing the Force Majeure clause on the contract. My initial feeling was rejection and annoyance about not just calling me and being nice about it. Then quickly accepted the fact that they have the right to do this and I let it go.

I have to think people in England must have thought that with each punishing bombing, life was very unfair. They had not personally picked a fight with Germany and yet their lives were being devastated by an unseen enemy from the air. There are times life when an outcome is unfair to us as individuals when compared to others – we were never guaranteed anything different.

We have a choice as to how we view this pandemic. We can feel victimized by the situation because it is degrading our lives and businesses – an unseen enemy. We can also choose to accept what is happening, do what we need to do, and look for the silver lining – there is always a silver lining. We choose how we see the world, the filters we look through. Not always easy, but very necessary. Change what we can, accept the rest and move on without burning energy on the inevitable.

The silver lining in my opening story is that although I am losing many speeches, and the money along with them, I am also getting to spend a lot of time at home with my wife. That is a good trade in my eyes!

**April 16, 2020**

“Kites rise highest against the wind - not with it.” Winston

I love this quote from Churchill and it reminds me this man, with all his flaws, was a quote machine. He worked hard to get the words just right when he had a point to make. A good lesson for us all.

In this case he is making the point eloquently that leaders shine the most in difficult times. When fortunes are good, leaders can surf the positivity without much struggle. When serious problems arise, we either step up or step down and this is really how we should measure our ability to lead.

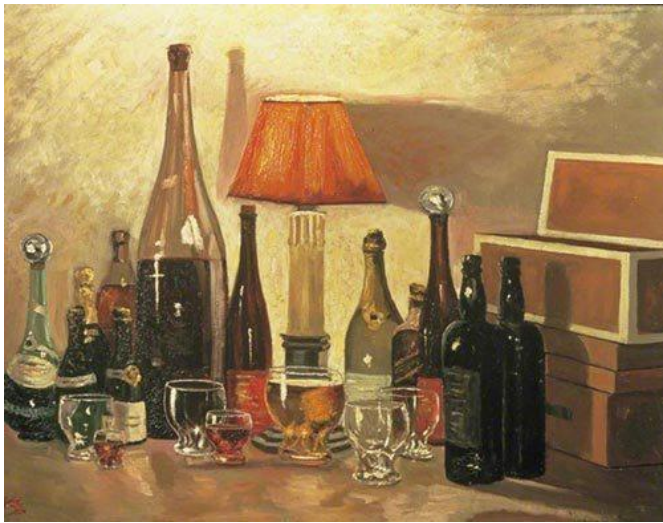
Ask yourself the following questions:

- Am I working on a plan for recovery and normalizing the moment we can start?
- Do I wake up with the same passion for life in the hard times, or is my first thought in the morning dread at the moment?
- Am I shrinking from working hard and innovating at this time, or developing more ideas than ever?
- Am I simply waiting this thing out without making progress or am I looking for new opportunities to upgrade the organization?
- Would I rather ride my bike against the wind or with it?

OK, I failed the last one, I would much rather ride with the wind! I am doing well with the first four questions though and I hope you can look in the mirror and say the same.

If not, [tomorrow](#) is a new day – step up and rise higher!!

April 17, 2020



This is a painting by Winston Churchill. Many people don't know he was an avid painter and it was this hobby that was his respite in life. I wish I had this skill!

It is [Friday today](#), made it through another week, and we are one step closer to the recovery phase! Time to think about what you will do for respite this weekend?



I would love to tell you I will let this all go and not think about it over the weekend but that would be a lie. I can't stop knowing there are two very different situations in times like these. As a metaphor, there were families whose homes were destroyed by bombs and they have nowhere to live, and there were families whose homes were spared and they are just had to deal with shortages. Very different impacts.

There are friends of mine like Stefan and Claus who own the Hofbrau House restaurant in Las Vegas who have been shut down since [March 17](#) – that means a month to this day of not doing what they love to do – serve German beer and food – the best in the country. Go see them when this is over! Or my friends at Great Clips who are facing continued shut down of thousands of locations. And talk about brutal, how about my friends in the energy space like Thomas H, Mims T, Rich D, Aric, Claus, and others. They have low oil prices and a pandemic to deal with!

It is a little hard for me to just go feel good this weekend when I know there are many more like them facing a steep climb back. I also know, they will all make that climb. They are wonderful and strong people who will do whatever they have to do to get back to work. Still, my heart aches for them and nothing I will do this weekend will make me any less sick to my stomach for them. The burden during this time is unevenly yoked

Let's recharge the best we can this weekend and send prayers to those leaders we know who have it tougher than we do.

**April 18**

"The empires of the future are the empires of the mind." Winston

I have been staring at this quote for three weeks. Since defining the future is a key to what I do in life, I have wanted to understand what someone 75 years ago might have meant by this. [Today](#) we are going to go a bit more modern on the Modern Churchill.

One of the key take away's you might understand from this unprecedented event is the importance of controlling our thoughts. I feel like my mind has been assaulted from both the inside and outside. This comes from the false information from overly confident talking heads, and dire concern from my own fears of the uncertainty of the rest of the year. I have had to muscle my mind into a short term headspace where I am grateful for all the good things right around me, while also speculating on how I might handle the rest of the year in ten different scenarios. This underscores the importance for all of us of actively managing the empire of our mind.

I spend a lot of time on Saturdays and Sundays listening to podcasts and reading content that is philosophical, spiritual, educational, and sometimes inspirational. Being a leader means going first. One of the ways I try to go first is to grow my understanding of the world. This helps me personally to be more joyful and content in the world, and helps others around me by example

or direct input. I believe what Churchill meant as he sat in his room and penned this is: The future belongs to those of us who master the empire of our own minds.

Don't think this is easy and don't believe any of us have accomplished this yet. This may be the hardest task we can take on as a leader and a human being – harder than layoffs, harder than making payrolls, harder than facing failures or working long hours. Changing and growing or own minds can be difficult when we hardly recognize why we even think the thoughts we think!

One question [today](#). What are you doing this weekend to grow and awaken the empire of your mind?

April 19

It took me a while to understand the concept of something being “meta.” Specifically, it happened when I was listening to a podcast about Meta Skills and how learning was the first of the meta skills. The concept is without the ability to learn, no other skill can be gained, so learning is a meta skill. There are four others by the way but that might be a Modern Churchill for another day. Winston also understood the concept of meta because the quote below makes that clear.

“Courage is rightly esteemed the first of human qualities... because it is the quality which guarantees all others.” Winston

Instead of preaching about courage, let me share a story. Some years back in my life I did a series of activities that forced me to face my lack of courage. I skydived on my own, I got stuck on the face of Crestone Mountain and had to free climb down to safety, I bungee jumped, I rode a bull in a rodeo, I went to the Soviet Union by myself without a Visa and got arrested there, and I went into, and back out of bankruptcy. In each case, there was a moment where everything inside of me screamed that I was going to die. In each case, I grabbed control of that voice and went ahead anyway. I remember those moments clearly – like hanging on the wing of a plane and the jump master telling me to let go. The moment before I told the stock contractor I was ready to go knowing the bull (named Terminator by the way) was likely to drill me in the ground.

What I learned is to have courage is to accept the possibility of death (or failure) and be OK with it. Only then are we free. I suppose that is why I was able to stand in front of thousands of people and speak even though that was never natural to me. I became unafraid to fail, or to completely mess up on stage. You are all on stage in these moments now.

I had not thought of courage as being a meta quality but I see it now. Without the courage to get up and face the day, no other quality will come out. Without the courage to try something new, we could hardly advance. Without the courage to admit something we hold true might be wrong, we will not move forward and find the Truth. Courage is indeed Meta.

It is [Monday tomorrow](#) – I promise you will not die 😊

## April 20

Some of you may have heard me say that the most difficult thing about dealing with this pandemic has been trying to understand what the Truth is about how serious it is and how fast it spreads. Much less, how long it will take to recover. The Governor of California has decreed that there will be no sporting events for the rest of 2020? Is that smart or just wanting to look safe by cancelling things long term? How fast will people go back to operating more normally? How long will it be before we are comfortable in crowds of people? We were driving home from a hike [yesterday](#) and saw a bunch of people out playing soccer – they did not seem worried. Will there be a fast V shaped rebound? Will we find an antidote in a few weeks and inoculate everyone who wants it – in other words, will our science save us? Or, will this recovery be very slow and take the rest of the year?

“The Truth is incontrovertible. Malice may attack it, ignorance may deride it, but in the end, there it is.” Winston

Although I normally feel good about predicting the future, in this case, I would rather not. There are too many variables at play to make big sweeping statements. I feel comfortable saying that the U.S. will not go back to exactly the way it was before this Great Pause. We will reset some of the aspects of our lives and that will change our behaviors. The economy will not be the same either, there will be people prospering more than before and some will prosper less.

That will call for a reset of our businesses as well, some forced, and some willingly. As we near the time of the recovery getting started, let's lock in what we are going to reset given this time to reflect. The worst outcome is we learn nothing from this!

## April 21

What do Churchill, the Buddha and the Bible all have in common when it comes to the topic of pain?

Interesting how little we want to talk about abject pain. It is like the proverbial third rail of life – fear is different than pain. Fear is a mental construct we allow to happen and can talk ourselves out of. Fear is concern that something bad might happen. Pain is the reality that it did happen. Pain is a reality that we cannot just make go away at will. So let's talk about pain.

Let's be real – there are situations happening all over the world right at this moment. A loved one dies alone in a hospital and you cannot stop it. You have zero resources for food and your family does not have enough to eat – and you are watching them cry. You had to look people you liked and who trusted you in the eye and tell them they have to leave the organization. You were six months into the dream job you loved and were just told they have

to let you go and cannot bring you back any time soon. You are watching the company you spent years building, bleeding money and you know it might not come back – ever. These are not situations you fear facing, these happened and you are now dealing with the pain of loss and separation – and as a bonus, have fear for the future to go with the pain.

One of the prime minister's most sobering pronouncements came during his first speech before the House of Commons: "I have nothing to offer but blood, toil, tears and sweat."

When the Buddha as a young adult first stepped out of the palace he had been raised in for the first time, he saw poverty, dead bodies and pain. He had not known this existed in his sheltered world up until then. This became one of the foundations of his teachings. Life has pain for all of us and we have to choose how we deal with that pain. It is unavoidable.

The Bible states in a few different passages that we are not meant to live a pain free life. It specifically says in Hebrews 12:11 "No discipline seems pleasant at the time, but painful. Later on, however, it produces a harvest of righteousness and peace for those who have been trained by it." We are taught to lean on God to get through the pain.

Yesterday the price of oil futures went negative! If you spend your life drilling for oil, that fact is pain. If you have been investing your career building a business to be proud of and you had to shut it down – completely – that is pain. When you let people go and it broke your heart, that is pain. I would give anything to wave a magic wand and take your pain away – I cannot. I can only offer this...

Churchill, the Buddha and the Bible all tell us that pain is manageable and temporary, if you do not let it break you. Pain will enhance your life if you will embrace and endure it. Pain can make us stronger, more durable and confident. With every situation that is brutally hard to live with, and through, we build the ability – the confidence – the resiliency, to survive and prosper. Now is such a time for many of us.

An exercise I did one day a few years ago was this – I listed all the most painful events in my life – in order. I wrote them down and stared at them. I have this list on my iPad to this day. I look at it every few months and the pain all flashes back. It is sobering and the memories often come rushing back in. It makes me want to cry, it makes me sad, and that quickly turns to pride and strength because I realize I have endured much pain and today the sun came out and I will have a great day. I know I can take a lot more pain when it comes, and it will.

Don't let pain break you my friend. I feel for you, I have empathy. Don't let it break you.

**April 22**

"There is no time for ease and comfort. It is time to dare and endure." Winston

My thoughts, like yours I'm sure, are turning to what the recovery will look like. The planning is in flight for how we return to what we call "normal." However, we all know there is no way, nor reason, to go back to the way the world operated before. This Great Pause has given us a chance to see our lives and businesses in a new light. The playing field is different now in that the economy will not go back to "normal" any time soon. We have a chance to be daring and make fast strides forward we might not have made as fast otherwise. As we have talked about, there will be leaders and organizations that will come out of this better than before and others who do not come out at all. I encourage you to be daring because the playing field will be different.

I have a working theory that many things in life and business will now change somewhere between 5% to 25% and they will never go back to being the same. Here is a list of just a few from a talk I am putting together to give next week in a video to Moscow.

Some industries will never return to what they were – restaurants, airlines, energy companies, health care, the fitness space, churches, commercial real estate, and the list goes on. The customers of these industries have now changed to some degree and that will reflect in the customer relationship with all of these going forward.

Our vocabulary has changed. We have added words like Social Distancing, Work From Home (WFH), Herd Immunity, Asymptomatic, Viral Spread Ratio, Zoom Bombing, N-95 masks, Co-morbidity, Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

Our response to pandemics will always be much more sophisticated, coordinated and triggering an emergency work from home model

How we spend our free time will now be altered as we have explored new options

The WFH model will increase in usage and effectiveness. This will be one of the largest changes we see

Technology usage has exploded and will not go back to the previous level. People have learned how to use video, collaboration tools, eCommerce, etc. This just boosted what we should have been doing five years ago. This is causing the ways we can connect to improve greatly as people learned how to use these tools now.

Tasks we can do on our own have increased. We have been forced to repair things, do haircuts, do our own nails, etc. Some people learned how to take care of themselves and will not go back to hiring out

Being germ and virus aware. We will never go back to being unaware of how disease spreads

And the list goes on... Much like the Great Depression changed my grandmother, the Great Pause will shape us for decades

April 23

I finished the content for the upcoming speeches on “What will never be the same.” The more I built it out, the more I realized there are a handful of events in human history that have altered our direction substantially over a short time. World War 2 had that impact on more than just England. It was the first time we had the technology to spread war quickly around the entire world. It was the planes, tanks, rockets, bombs, etc. that allowed that to happen – guided by truly misguided leaders. It was the first time a nuclear bomb was used to kill large amounts of people with one device. It was the first time early computing like devices were used to break codes. It was a devastating event that took millions lives and showed the best and worst of humanity.

Technology did the opposite in this event. It has helped us lower the impact of the disease while also staying connected at some level. It allowed part of the economy to keep functioning and for us to social isolate in a manageable way.

WW2 spawned many changes in the world and we were never the same. The endstory of this pandemic is not written. Even at this stage, we have already lost hundreds of thousands of people and shattered economies in a short time. We have also likely saved hundreds of thousands of lives. The Bubonic Plauge, the Fall of Rome, The Spanish Flu, The Great Depression, the Cold War, 9-11 and terrorism, the AIDS epidemic – each of these has caused a reset in humanity. We endured, learned and came out better as a species – we learned our lessons.

There is a lot to be learned from history because it foreshadows possible outcomes today. At the same time, the culture and environment is new for each event. Each of us has a responsibility to make decisions and commitments during this historical reset. What will we do differently from now on? As we seek to recover as fast as possible, I do not want to lose sight of what I can reset, change, improve because of the lessons I have learned the past two months. I hope you feel the same.

It does not benefit the world one iota to seek going back to normal as the metric for recovery. It benefits the world to create an improved path and set a new tone for future generations. Let's get that done the rest of the year!!

April 24

This picture below from war torn London sums up my weekends. While in the background of my mind I know life is not the same, I will always seek to create a sense of grounding to the Now. There isn't really a “new normal” by the way – that is just a trite phrase to describe this moment. The Now is always new and always different, and that should never surprise us no matter what state we are dealing with.

Here is a leadership trait not talked about enough, the importance of not being taken by surprise. Maybe I'm just getting older and have seen a lot. Maybe it's just the new way I look at the world these days. How many times have I heard, “anything can happen and probably will.” So true. Maybe we need to start being better prepared to lead during ANYTHING.

I have been helping organizations do disaster planner for 15 years or so. I have been singing from the rooftops the dangers of cybersecurity for the past 5 years. We have 27 different event response playbooks in our inventory now at FPOV. My observation is leaders minds are in one of three states:

1. They do not plan at all because it never dawns them that a tragedy will happen
2. They write up a document, check the box, but never practice response planning nor update the ideas within it
3. They have been through a disaster and are keenly aware that they need to be more ready next time – once bitten twice shy

Game of Thrones will be remembered for many things – the one that made an impression on me was “Winter is Coming.” We can all admit we were not expecting a pandemic response like this, but it was going to be something. Cyber-attacks are coming, health issues are coming, bad economies are coming, industry disruption is coming, wars happen whether we agree with them or not, and people who surprise you with their behavior happens regularly. The game ALWAYS gets hard at some point.

Stop being surprised and be more prepared. Have written response plans for every kind of event and practice them. Be mentally ready for trauma at all moments. Leaders are paid to be prepared. We are paid to elegantly handle the Now no matter what it looks like.



April 25

Although you will get [this Saturday morning](#), I am actually writing it from the FPOV office late on [Friday](#). I am alone here with two dogs who worked with me [today](#) – we are all exhausted



and I am not sure why. I have just been on Zoom and conference calls much of the day. For some reason doing that and thinking hard to solve digital and Covid problems wiped me out this week.

I am not going to lie, my mind is fried so let me just tell you a story with a moral I hope you understand...

There are times when writers and podcasters interview me and ask, "what is the best thing you ever accomplished in your career?" When I was 25 years old, I started my first company. Within five years I had built it into a chain of 11 computer sales stores in three states. We were doing about \$40million a year in revenue and many people talked about what a "whiz kid" I was. Then it all came crashing down.

I had started this company with no cash and all debt and continued to build it by borrowing lots of money – secured by my house and everything I owned. My accountant warned me I was out on the edge with receivables and payables but we were growing and making profit so I was not worried about risk. At some point the computer manufacturers were shipping me more inventory than we could sell and the backlog caused me to miss payments. One day a process server came to my house at dinner time and the banks and computer companies were suing me for millions of dollars. A dark moment to be sure, but not as dark as what was to come.

Having never been in this situation before in my young 30 years, I soon learned from lawyers that I could either fight them in court or go bankrupt. I also found out there were 17 other computer outfits like mine in the same situation because the computer suppliers had over shipped gear to all of us in order to inflate their end of quarter numbers. I tried to get all 17 to band together and fight but all of them filed personal bankruptcies in the face of large law firms coming after them. I chose to fight them on my own.

The rest of this story is 2 ½ years of court battles all over the country and me learning more about Chapter 11 and courts than I ever wanted to know. A law firm took my case on contingency because they believed in me. They made me promise I would not quit no matter how ugly it got. I had no idea what they meant, but I soon learned. Thank God for them by the way, they saved me and I still am not sure why they cared so much.

After a very painful and drawn out journey of depositions, courtrooms, shutting most of my stores, and bringing the remnants out of Chapter 11, we finally forced them to settle out of court with us. I did not get paid a ton, but I got out alive and sold the rest of the business. My private accomplishment that no one else could really appreciate, was fighting them off from taking my house and forcing me into personal bankruptcy. I also got to save parts of my company and sell it. I was the only one that got that done.

So, you want to know what the best thing I ever accomplished really is? Not all the businesses I built later in my career – cool stories, but not the best work I ever did. The best was spending 2

½ years fighting off two multi-billion-dollar organizations who channel stuffed me and did everything they could to drive me out of business.

Sometimes it is not the mountain climbed that is the most impressive, it is the exhausting ditch digging no one else would really appreciate.

I know this in my soul, and I appreciate what you are doing right now...

April 26

A follow on leadership moral to [yesterday's](#) story. When I filed Chapter 11 bankruptcy, a situation was created where I could not make a lot of promises to my employees about their future. Until the courts approve a plan, one never knows what the redacted company will look like. This means I could not guarantee people a job – I could not even promise we would make it out of Chapter 11. I learned a very interesting lesson in the few weeks after filing – who was loyal to the company and to me, and who only focused on themselves.

I was young and naïve at that age of course, so I believed that since I had employed these folks for a number of years, done a number of favors for people, and generally helped them have fun careers in technology, that they would rally behind the cause and help me through the dark days. Some of them did, some did not, and a few literally stole whatever they could from the company to help themselves out “in case they had to change jobs.” Lest you think I am bitter about this, I long ago learned that when people are under pressure, they sometimes make bad choices out of fear. It is reality that when times get tough, some people bow up and fight and others run to save themselves. Some will be loyal, and some do not understand the concept.

“One always measures friendships by how they show up in bad weather” Winston

This great reset is a time where many of us as leaders are getting to see who really stands up to support the organization when the future is uncertain. There are two kinds of team members to watch for – the first is your people who step up to a leadership role and help navigate this event even when they are not guaranteed a good future. The second are the ones who went to work from home and got even more done than they normally would – because they really want to help out.

There are some who are in the “other” category, those who have no loyalty and took this opportunity to take an extended snow day and just “rest.” They are self-first focused and showed you that. I only want to talk about those who showed their true colors in a positive light.

Remember who these team members are. You will need them again in the future. They are the ones you need to build and expand with when this pandemic is over. There is no benefit in focusing or burning energy on the people who cannot be counted on. All focus must be on those who have loyalty, strength and focus in difficult times. It is the same with vendors, partners, bankers, landlords, etc. This Great Reset will help you see where you have partnered with the right people, and where you need to make a change. Do not go back to the familiar when this is over if the familiar was not helpful and supportive. If any of these people or organizations first thoughts were for themselves and not for you, they made a choice. Surround yourself with friends who show up in bad weather – and appreciate that there are many who do!

April 27

“We shall not fail or falter. We shall not weaken or tire. Neither the sudden shock of battle nor the long-drawn trials of vigilance and exertion will wear us down. Give us the tools and we will finish the job.” Winston

Again, Winston being the cheerleader his people needed. It is [Monday](#) again and we are back to the grind. I underlined the middle piece of his quote, “the long-drawn trials of vigilance and exertion will wear us down.” He knew the battle would be long and he did not want his people to think it might be easy.

Although we will start the recovery process soon, or now, depending on where you are, the full recovery back to the progress we were making in 2019 will take a while. For some of you there has not been a drop off – you are blessed. For others, this has been devastating – especially if you are in the energy business. The smart predictors believe it will be 2<sup>nd</sup> quarter 2021 before we are back where we were and that is the optimistic view.

I am sure the rest of 2020 will be recovering and setting ourselves up to handle this better next time. That means there will be many more Mondays where we still have no idea what a stable environment looks like. It is a great sign of enlightenment and peace when one no longer seeks surety for the future (which we never have anyway). That means getting up each day and just leading one day at a time and being at peace with the job you did that day. If you are not there yet because you still want a comfortable feeling that everything will be better [tomorrow](#), please ponder the message [today](#). Fearing the future is a crippling thing to do to ourselves today.

For those of us with a tough road ahead (including my mother who is locked down alone for a while), let’s look at the beginning of the quote, “We shall not falter. We shall not weaken or tire.” Resiliency will be our code word. Hang on to that word and just keep going one day at a time – as long as this takes. I know you can do it – even you mom!

April 28

“There are a terrible lot of lies going about the world, and the worst of it is that half of them are true.” Winston

It is no different [today](#). I don’t remember a major event in my lifetime where the data being given out publicly is so poor. Between people on social media and the general media, it is difficult to glean any kind of truth. In an era where we act like we understand data science, the level of bad data being delivered is horrible. When many people tell me they don’t even listen, watch or read the news anymore because they cannot trust it, we have devolved on the whole purpose of the news services.

This brings up another unique leadership challenge of this pandemic: How to make decisions without knowledge of the facts

The military leaders in England worked very hard to gain insight into what the Germans were thinking. Spycraft and code breaking became an art form because any true piece of insight could save lives. There were many tragic leadership decisions being made based on that data with soldiers being sacrificed in the defense of the country. A brutal responsibility on Churchills shoulders.

We have much the responsibility today don't we... Do we open the economy and risk lives? Do we hunker down longer and drive up depression, isolation and even more damage to people financially – but save lives? Some say money before lives because we would lose some people every year anyway, while others see this as barbaric and that we should isolate for 18 months if we can save some people.

When there is a lack of the Truth, there are a few adjustments we need to make in leadership. Here is my formula:

1. Get careful about your sources. Only take in information that comes from people and organizations who have no motive other than to help you see the truth. Look to research firms, and information directly from experts or leader's mouths and even then, be careful about which ones you trust. I read about Covid around 15 min a day and that is all it takes to check sources I trust
2. Use your instincts where there is conflicting information that does not seem right. Don't be paralyzed waiting for better data if it's not coming – go with your gut and trust it.
3. Focus on short term planning. Plan a couple weeks ahead and that is it. Long term planning gets sketchy when the visibility is hazy. Don't risk making expensive long-term decisions until there is more clarity on direction

Some of the decisions we are making have large consequences for us and the people around us. Be careful and wise about the foundation of information you use to make crucial decisions.

April 29

I found the picture below while doing some research on the recovery of London after the bombings. Today for the first time I will do a new speech on "What Will Never Be the Same" to an international audience put together by AmCham in Russia. It has an interesting collection of speakers including one that will talk about what the U.S. learned about itself during the pandemic. The more I have pondered how we will be different after 2020, the more I see this current event as having sped up progress in a number of areas. Yes it is devastating to many people and organizations so I am not ignoring that. I am just looking at the larger picture at this point. We will use this Great Reset to improve, and reorganize ourselves and our organizations.

In some ways buildings are easier to reconstruct than a human being. We can build what you see below in a couple of years. It takes decades to make you, and we are never really done. We are far enough into this event and the changes it has brought to start the process of locking in the improvements we

want to make personally, and as leaders. I have no idea what you have learned, or need to learn, so I will not preach to you. If this helps, here is my list of take away's in no particular order...

- I won't be surprised by what happens in life, and will always be prepared for the next crazy thing – I won't resist intellectually, just deal with it eloquently
- Seek first to help other people in a difficult event – I will resist the urge to worry about myself and how my life might change
- I will capture any fear and make it go away. I will replace it with courage and hope (this is really important for me personally)
- When craziness happens, shorten my window of planning and thinking. Looking too far overwhelms me so just don't look that far
- I love not traveling and being on planes constantly. I love being home with my wife and family. I now have no concern about changing my lifestyle whenever I want to
- The work I do in digital strategy is important and I need to keep helping leaders move faster to digitally transform
- Under any pressure I have a choice – believe I am a victim, or believe there is a solution and way to grow myself and the business. NEVER NEVER fall into being a victim

Start doing your own work so that you can use this event for something positive – that is the way of life – meet a challenge and grow. The alternative is to breakdown and that is not helpful!

## Blitzed, rebuilt and built again: what became of London's bomb sites?



▲ The Ring at Blackfriars was destroyed in the blitz. Orbit House was built on the site in the 1960s before it too was demolished and replaced by Will Alsop's Palestra building. Photograph: Getty Images/Bryn Campbell/Rex

April 30

Four weeks of opportunity for you and your organization – don't waste it...

We will soon be leading a recovery phase where people come back to offices and business will smooth out with more predictability. We will get a chance to integrate what is great from the old ways with some new twists and improvements. Be thinking about what the new alchemy will look like. What do you want to mix from the old ways with new possibilities. Your chance to remold operations, policies, practices and relationships is nigh. Do it thoughtfully because this is a rare chance when we have fertile ground to get people to accept change.

“Do not let spacious plans for a new world divert your energies from saving what is left of the old.” Winston

I ask myself, what of my old life do I want to retain? What am I in a hurry to go back to? My old life was not so bad. Still, by comparison, I see some issues...

I was more of a slave to the clock with all the travel, then rushing around when I got home to get things done in a compressed timeframe. I did not appreciate all the connections I have with people face to face. I took handshakes, hugs, and the ability to just get a chai at the coffee shop for granted. I became used to giving speeches to audiences sitting right in front of me. I did not really value meetings in lots of different ways and not just staring at people on a screen all day. I will be more grateful for parts of my old life now.

I saw an interview with Julie Andrews last night. She told a story about being 7 to 10 years old during WW2. She talked with a smile about how close everyone was because they had to support each other. She started her singing at age 7 during the war. Times of struggle shape us. How has this one shaped you? How will it shape your organization? What are you doing to consciously help it take a positive shape? You have a window – then it will be gone.

May 1

“Courage is what it takes to stand up and speak, it's also what it takes to sit down and listen.” Winston

I promised to write these until the threat was past, not knowing it would be a couple months! I think we are close enough to a recovery that I am going to wind ModernChurchill down over the next 7 days. If Covid comes back and people want me to write something to help out, I will change to Modern Plato, Modern Paul (Saul), Modern Lincoln or some other mash-up from history.

So, to kick off the countdown and to do something different [today](#), I want to listen instead of talk. Plus, your answers will give me something to think about over the weekend.

Please answer this one question for me... What is a meaningful observation you learned about yourself as a leader the past eight weeks? (for bonus points, how will this change you going forward?)

May 2

Thank you to all of you who answered [yesterday](#)'s question. I was really touched by the honesty and transparency and some of you inspired today's topic – [the Cost of Leadership](#).

"One ought never to turn one's back on a threatened danger and try to run away from it. If you do that, you will double the danger. But if you meet it promptly and without flinching, you will reduce the danger by half." Winston

I love this quote because as leaders we get the chance many times over to stand and face danger, or run from it. We don't run physically of course, we just pretend everything will be OK when it clearly will not be without action. Some people will delay action, or try and get someone else to deal with the dirty work. Just facing difficult tasks and getting them done is what we committed to do when we took leadership. We must do our jobs as leaders – we must.

The well worded quotes and self-help leadership books tell us to make the tough decisions and do the hard actions, just like I did above. [What we rarely talk about is the physical and emotional toll it takes](#). I wish I could share what people said in their answers [yesterday](#). So many of them said, "I learned I can do the tough things that need to be done. And, I learned it took a toll on me." Or, "I learned I can survive this, although I will never be the same."

I have always used an analogy that seems to fit well. Leading a company is not like playing golf, it is like bull riding or rugby. The difference is that when you play rugby and ride a bull, you get hurt even when you win. We think leadership will be like golf, and it is not. There is a cost to doing the hard things we must do. Laying off people, cutting budgets, stopping projects we were passionate about, closing off parts of the business, cutting pay rates, etc. Every time we have to do things like this, we disappoint people and some will let us know that. You might feel like this is unfair – that you are doing what you have to do to save the company and people should understand that. The reality is a few people will get that, and many just care about their own problems – not ours. They will lash out like we are horrible for doing what we did – you know this because it has happened to you before.

I cannot give you a magic answer to avoid the pain and costs of leadership. I can share this one thing. Leadership is hard and that is why only a few take it on. [We marry it for better or for](#)



worse. We will never get to lead in only good times. Sooner or later there will be struggles for all of us. When that time comes, face the danger without flinching, feel the pain of leadership, give yourself a chance to mourn what you had to do. Take a few days and get through that mourning process. Then get up, see the sun rise again, and build it back. Let the pain, frustration and fear go. It is human to feel the pain of leadership, it is wise to let it go as quickly as you can so you can move on.

My love goes with each of you who told me what this time has cost you. I respect you for being a leader and taking the slings and arrows.

May 3

After the devastation of WW2, the world spent years evaluating what happened. The scope was devastating, just to pick three areas, 28 million Russians killed, over 3 million Jews, and Japan was hit with two nuclear bombs for the first time. Many of the people killed in these three numbers were women and children which is barbaric on so many levels. No country was innocent when it came to the levelling of cities that had taken hundreds of years to build. The impact when we looked back was something no one ever wanted to see again. We made changes in world diplomacy and vigilance for tyrants and I believe we will never see that type of conflict again – we reset how most of us feel about war.

This pandemic once again gives us a chance at a Great Reset. The battle this time is not a conflict of countries against one another, it is a battle we all face on our own – a struggle between connection and disconnection. We have slowly valued connection with others less and less. As often happens when we don't value something, it gets taken away and we get to learn a lesson we could have avoided (that I need to learn again).

“It is for freedom that Christ has set us free. Stand firm, then, and do not let yourselves be burdened again by a yoke of slavery.”

Galatians 5:1 NIV

I read this passage and I asked myself, what am I a slave to? What has this Great Reset showed me I am a slave to? What will I learn and never be enslaved to again? There is a saying in business, “a slave to the grind.” We also say things like, “Rise and Grind.” On Mondays I think to myself, “back to the grind.” I see more clearly that I have been a slave to the grind. I love what I do and feel very blessed to do it by the way. I have a very cool career! I also can see that I do not always value the connections I get to have. The moments that are special, versus the moments that are frustrating.

Humanity learned after 1945 to never go back to the brutality we did to each other and we have been trying ever since to keep world peace – which is not an easy thing with the radicalism we still have in the world. But, we are trying.



I hope those of us who lead companies on this email will learn after 2020 to not be slaves to the grind and to appreciate the connections we have with others. That includes our families and friends who have nothing to do with work. I hope we gained in our gratefulness for the wonderful responsibility we have for leading organizations – even in the hard times...

What have you been a slave to that you can now set yourself free from?

May 4

And so it begins... Another week – the first full week with testing the unwinding of our social distancing experiment. Four Modern Churchills to go and then we set sail into the rest of 2020, a year we are fated to remember.

“Every day you may make progress. Every step may be fruitful. Yet there will stretch out before you an ever-lengthening, ever-ascending, ever-improving path. You know you will never get to the end of the journey. But this, so far from discouraging, only adds to the joy and glory of the climb.” Winston

Most of you will read this [today, Monday](#), and I wonder how many of us woke up thinking, “I can’t wait for the Joy and Glory of the climb.” I did not. However, by the time I got to the office [this morning](#), I was ready to write this and get the day started. I have to disagree with Winston on one part of that quote, we will get to the end of the journey. All journey’s on this world end at some point, some sooner than later. It is because of the ending that I have joy and glory in the climb. There will come a day when we are no longer leaders and as you will see on [Friday this week](#), Winston did not appear to enjoy life without being a leader. I intend to!

For now, we are leaders and we need to appreciate we get this honor. We will make decisions [today](#) that will impact others. We will sit in meetings and our sense of humor and lightness of being can infect others to lighten up. We can give energy to people who might badly need it at this point. Do a heat check [today](#) and see where your heart is because if we do not enjoy the climb, those around us will struggle as well.

Pro Tip: Fake it till you make it. Don’t laugh. It has been scientifically proven that if you just choose to act joyful, it will help drag you to the real thing.

It is time to rally for another week my friends! Get your joy on!!

May 5

We only have a few days left to finish exploring Churchill’s thoughts on dealing with crisis – and ours. I touched on fear early in these writings and it is time to go there again, as Winston said, “If you have an important point to make, don’t try to be subtle or clever. Use a pile driver. Hit the point once. Then come back and hit it again. Then hit it a third time - a tremendous whack.”

Allow me to share transparently in case you can relate, I hate saying this out loud. As a leader, I have battled with fear my entire journey of being out front. From the day my soccer coach made me the captain of the team (the first real leadership I remember) I have been wracked with fear and anxiety. It is only in the past couple of years that I have been able to quell my [Monday](#) panic's, or concern about walking on a stage with thousands of people in the audience. Or the never ending fear that I will disappoint someone or fail at some task I take on. Fear has been like demon with its claws in me that I can never really detach for long.

Did famous leaders from history like Churchill, Harriet Tubman or Abraham Lincoln, feel this same kind of fear? I have been thinking about this for a long time and have come to the conclusion they were also wracked with fears of failure, pain, and embarrassment. This is partly what drove them to work so hard to accomplish their goals. They feared how they would feel about themselves if they failed to achieve what they were so passionate about – the thought was probably almost unthinkable to them. Especially Lincoln and Tubman I suspect. When they did look into the abyss of failing, I bet it drove them to despair.

Fear is self inflicted – we choose to look into the abyss. We choose to imagine failure or embarrassment. We choose to allow fear to touch us and we can choose differently – this is just easier said than done. We could choose to be free to fail, to never be embarrassed by having tried and not made it this time. I would rather be the person in the arena giving my best regardless the outcome than the person in the stands. What about you, do you let fear stop you from doing what you could do in the arena if you just did not hold yourself back? (as an aside, the Teddy Roosevelt quote about The Man in the Arena is the best set of words I have ever seen to help ease leadership fears)

Fear is a natural feeling in life. Own it, and lean into it. Do not let it control or define you. A fearful leader is one who is hesitant and demagnetized from their potential. Now that you have a chance to reset your life and your organization, do it boldly and do not look into the abyss of fear and let that stop you from the progress you could be creating!

May 6

This is from the Churchill heritage site “He was a willful and rebellious child, who clashed with school discipline, and who was not thought clever enough to go to university. He only passed the entrance exam for the officer training school at Sandhurst on his third attempt.”

Surprised? I am right in line with this start in life – I did not go to college, had a 2.5 GPA in high school and was told a few times I would not amount to much in life – including by my third grade teacher Mrs. Kleinman.

The learning from this is that it does not matter where we start, it matters where we finish. I NEVER imagined I would stand up in front of thousands of people and speak, in fact would not have believed I would have anything that important to say. I was not a born leader in any sense – I became one. Many of you might relate to this. What I take away from that information on Winston is this: He never stopped learning and adding wisdom. He was flawed in some ways as he was not the healthiest fellow and he could tend to be racist. In other words, he was always a work in process. So are you...

And so am I. I believe that one of my jobs as a leader is to go first in everything I can. That includes improving myself as a human being. Let's call it becoming awakened or enlightened. Having a good balance of knowledge about technology, business, life, spirituality, health, etc. To be a Modern Leader, we need to go first in all these areas so that others can see that in us. Business is more than business today. Check in with yourself the rest of this week and examine what you are reading or listening to. How are you growing? How are you going first so you are setting a great model for your team. Every area of immaturity we exhibit they will see.

I have a ton of respect for Churchill as a tough leader who cheered his country on to survival and rebuilding during a tragic time. At the same time, he had some flaws he could have grown out of. This why I respect what he did, but do not idolize him.

My dream for all of you (and me) is that we progress far past WC as amazing leaders. Forget how you started and focus solely on how you will finish by growing in all areas of your life – forgetting none of them. Please do not leave flaws in who you are because you just don't see them or want to face them!!

**May 7**

I fun (and critical) aspect of leadership that is more important than it seems on the face – is a sense of humor. Winston had a dry sense of humor that was loved by the English

Winston once said of a rival John Foster Dulles “Dull, Duller, Dulles.” Not to mention all the other quips he is credited with when someone asked about his drinking or told him they would put poison in his coffee – look these up if you are not familiar with them.

There are flavors of a sense of humor: Dark, dry, jovial, friendly, clever, etc. Why is it important for us to have a sense of humor, especially when life has difficult moments?

Think about this psychologically. Every room of people, every meeting, every discussion has a mood. That mood is a palpable energy we are all aware of at some level. This is why we might say the “vibe” in the room was off or not good. As a speaker, I can sense the vibe of an audience within a few minutes of getting on stage. What's more, I can change it at some level with how I interface with the audience. If they are low energy, I can bring energy to them. If they are already in an uplifted place, I can be sure to keep them there. It is a critical leadership skill to be able to read a room and give it the energy it needs to be in a good place – the best you can under the circumstances.

In a crisis, a sense of humor is even more important. It is a way to subtly get across to people that we will be OK. It is a pressure relief valve for the mind. Here is my ask of you.... Please do not be tone deaf to how your people are feeling. We have a ways to go. Most of us are still bringing people back to the office slowly. There is still a lot of uncertainty about the future. For

example, the most critical aspect of all is when are we going to get sports back!!!! You see what I did there? I lightened your mood 😊

You do not have to be a comedian – Lord knows I am not. All of us can have some flavor of a sense of humor and use it at the right times. Winston was known for his ability to throw out clever lines at the right time. Please experiment a little with your humor style over the next week – let it shine. The world needs a little comedy at the moment!

May 8

All things must eventually come to an end and so it is with Modern Churchill. In a strange quirk of fate, [yesterday](#) was the 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Germany's surrender in WW2. [Today](#) would have been the first day of England's recovery. We know the end of Winston's story – England moved on with him for a while, then chose new leaders for their next era. Winston faded from the limelight slowly and regretfully it seemed. Winston's final words before he died in 1965 were, "I'm so bored with it all."

My take on what he might have meant is that after decades of being a leader during a few eras of serious disruption, he was like a fish out of water in his later years. I believe he was bored of being sick and useless to the world in his way of thinking. There is a lesson there for us to avoid.

Someday you may look back at your leadership through this event and realize it was some of the best work you ever did. After the adrenaline of the first half of 2020 wears off, the recovery of the rest of the year may seem strangely uneventful. It is not healthy to be a leadership adrenaline junky – in other words, to create and live in an environment of chaos – either created by the world, or your own hand. Sometimes it is better to be steady and just work hard and smart every day.

I will miss getting up every morning and writing this before starting my day. Modern Churchill has gave me an hour to reflect on what I am doing as a leader. I also will miss your emails back because so many of them were kind and informative. Thank you for that. I will not be resting as you can probably guess.

I built a pretty cool live interactive video presentation called The Great Reset: What Will Never Be the Same. I started to deliver this for a few events that asked for it . Starting next week, I will do it a dozen times on YouTube live for general audiences. More of my mission to help the world! If you want to attend, or have some of your people sit in, please go to this link and sign up for whatever session works for you. See you there, or see you soon!

[https://mailchi.mp/fpov/great\\_reset](https://mailchi.mp/fpov/great_reset)

[Today](#), and all days, I wish for you peace my friends. Peace is elusive in our modern world, and precious. Take a deep breath, you and your organization will be OK. Peace is a choice after all.

