# RESILIENT EFFECTIVE ADAPTABLE LEADERSHIP

## By Jonathan D. Sawtelle
### With Dr. James Young and Brent Chisholm

**Resilient
Effective
Adaptable
Leadership**

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With James Young, PhD, and Brent Chisholm

**Disclaimer**

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*"Major Sawtelle tackles a wide array of leadership challenges in this wide-ranging monograph; he does so in more than simply descriptive terms, however. In his work on Resilient Effective Adaptable Leadership he brings together insights from a disparate set of sources and fields of study in a way that challenges leaders to ask themselves six deceptively simple questions. The self-reflection generated by these questions is sure to improve the mindfulness with which leaders approach the challenges they face."*

Maj Gen James C. Slife, USAF

*"Jonathan Sawtelle asks questions that leaders of all levels should ask. This book is a valuable tool for self-analysis of your vector as a leader, which will enable you to take your organization to the next level."*

Brig Gen R. Gwyn Armfield, USAF

*"All too often, leaders either establish a repressive risk culture causing skill-set atrophy, or they apply a rogue mentality and overlook trip wires by confusing enthusiasm for know-how. Either path leads to fragile and unprepared organizations. To counter this, pay attention to Jonathan's careful argument: cultivate a risk culture built on consistent trust and capability at every level of the chain of command."*

Lt Col Joseph T. Benson, USAF, Retired

*"If you want to know what the Next Generation Airman may look like, or want to begin your journey to become one, answer Sawtelle's six questions."*

Col Larry Broadwell, USAF

*"Major Sawtelle's work in leadership and resilience is both distinctive and insightful; truly a valuable resource for any leaders. He masterfully connects the dots between a leader's focus on resiliency and organizational effectiveness."*

Lt Col James A. Young, PhD, USAF

*In memory of Bill, and to Abby, Noah and Mason. Resilient leaders whom I will always follow.*

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## About the Author and Collaborators

**Jonathan D. Sawtelle** is an active duty Air Force officer with numerous deployments to Southwest Asia, Africa, and other undisclosed locations. He has prosecuted the mission as a leader, special operator, problem solver, and as a risk advisor to senior military commanders and government leaders. This monograph was written while he was a Blue Horizons researcher for the Chief of Staff of the Air Force and a resident student at the Air Command and Staff College.

Jonathan has also served as aide-de-camp to the Air Force Special Operations Command (AFSOC) commander and executive officer to the Headquarters Air Force deputy chief of staff for Operations (A3). He has been selected for the 2017 Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency (DARPA) Service Chief's Fellowship and continues to study the relationships between strategy, technology, and culture. Connect with him now at Resilient.Effective.Adaptable@gmail.com.

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## Foreword

Leadership traits paired with technical expertise can be honed to thrive in a known setting. Now change the context—change the environment—change everything. How rapidly can a leader adapt? Is the organization resilient enough to respond effectively?

Resilience is cultivated over time by leaders at every levels who, as learners, mentors, collaborators, and innovators, seek to master their environment while preparing for the unexpected. Sawtelle masterfully addresses six questions every leader must ask themselves to succeed in this environment. Reflect on the unique angles and themes you might glean from his keen insight.

The answers may surprise you. They will certainly impact your career and ability to cultivate and lead a rapidly adaptive organization!

Maj Gen Scott A. Vander Hamm, USAF

# Acknowledgements

# Abstract

Perhaps the most challenging environment a military leader operates within occurs when foundational technologies are suddenly denied use, degraded in capability, or destroyed.

The US military leadership culture must evolve to embody, enable, and achieve resilience of intent at a time, tempo, and level of effectiveness better than any adversary. This evolved leadership style acknowledges that it cannot prepare for everything, but through collaboration and rapid adaptation it will find solutions, maintain the advantage, and be able to effectively respond to almost anything.

In many studies, the measure of organizational resilience is tied to its ability to continue without its established leader(s). What is more effective, more challenging, and more relevant is the capacity to continue resiliently toward mission accomplishment when resources and technology are suddenly disrupted, rendered ineffective, or removed from well-established processes altogether. Resilient intent provides

an interesting and uncommon lens through which leaders can begin to view their organization.

There are six common blind spots in modern military culture inhibiting the development of more effective leaders to achieve resiliency: trust, risk, investment of time, ownership, technology dependence, and personal adaptability. Appropriately, six primary questions can serve as catalysts for reflection and dialogue to aid the evolution of modern leadership culture to best prepare for surprise, disruption, and crisis.

# An Evolved Leadership Culture

*Every day, in every task, our men and women in uniform deliver. But we should expect no credit tomorrow for what we did yesterday. We must continually adapt to meet current challenges and innovate to develop the capabilities we will need to win future fights.*

—Gen Joseph F. Dunford Jr.
Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff

*We must commit to changing those things that stand between us and our ability to rapidly adapt. We owe our Airmen and our nation an institution that can unlock our potential to thrive in the environment ahead.*

—America's Air Force: A Call to the Future

A government's most significant investment is in securing its national interests. Often, this requires tremendous military resources to decrease vulnerabilities, deter attacks, and provide the greatest advantage over potential adversaries. Historically, militaries have prepared for emerging threats and surprises by investing in (1) capability, (2) capacity, (3) technological innovation, (4) organizational design, (5) training, and (6) planning.[1] However, as the scope of pressures on national security

expands—macroeconomic cycles, political volatility, natural disasters, and cunning adversaries with nontraditional tactics—military leaders are in increasingly demanding roles as they strive to manage expertly surprises, crises, and disruptions. These pressures can undermine the effectiveness of the very technologies, systems, and organizational structures upon which they have built their strategies. In combating these pressures, a military's greatest resource will be its leaders.

Military training enables forces to prevent or create surprise; it less directly prepares leaders to respond effectively to surprise. Investment in robust capabilities cannot eliminate all vulnerabilities. The tendency has been to develop risk-management practices to mitigate forecasted risks, rather than to acknowledge that surprises will occur and find opportunities to leverage and exploit them. Risk forecasts are inherently flawed because no amount of information or data can provide leaders with absolute certainty. In the end, however, from the tactical to the national level, effective response to surprise will be assured by a leader's ability to develop and navigate resilient organizations through vast seas of acknowledged and unanticipated risks and opportunities.

Leaders must have some critical attributes to achieve this. They must:

- acknowledge surprise as inevitable,[2]

- effectively manage the emotional impacts that surprise creates,

- facilitate the development and empowerment of creative problem solvers at all levels of their organization,

- establish a culture of trust to catalyze proper development of future leaders,

- think through the interplay of risk and opportunity in the short and long term,

- develop a training plan that enables their mission to continue in the event of disruption, degradation, or denial of their primary technological means (especially for communication, navigation, and timekeeping),

- define optimization as a function of efficiency, effectiveness, and resilient potential,

- have an acute ability to build, strengthen, and collaborate within and across professional networks, and

- rapidly find and integrate solutions to achieve desired outcomes.

Collaboration across a network of individuals can harness a range of people, each with their particular scope, talent, experience, biases, and diversity of opinion. A master integrator can leverage collaboration and focus the range of creativity, insight, awareness, and talent to tailor a solution. Leaders may feel alone when facing tough challenges—a common adage is that "leadership is lonely." Leadership should have moments of quiet for thinking and making tough decisions as well as for when failure must be borne. Otherwise, a leader's time should not be lonely at all. A wide net cast to collect data, insight, and wisdom makes for less loneliness and more effective and responsive leadership.

This book assumes the following: that a leader alone will not have all the answers, creativity, insight, awareness, and talent to lead an organization through shock, disruption, surprise, or crisis. The organization one leads will also not always have all the resources or corporate knowledge to succeed. Ultimately, individual organizations are inherently limited in their capability and must cultivate interdependence with one another long before crisis occurs.

Surprise, disruption, and crisis create a gap between initial shock and the reaction of leaders and organization. This gap must be quantified, studied, and understood as the sudden emergence of opportunity, rather than as a risk, roadblock, or problem. Ways, means, and effectiveness of the response must be better understood and reshaped for that to happen. "Resilient intent" is an organization's ability to achieve desired outcomes despite rapid and chaotic disruptions and the leader's discomfort with risk. This ethos assumes the following premise from Peter C. Mastro's "Operational Resilience for 2040":

> Uncertainty and surprise will remain inherent in the nature of competition between creative humans dedicated to accomplishing their goals against an adversary. The combination of the enduring nature of surprise and increased adversary capability calls into question the United States military's ability to create sanctuaries to protect critical vulnerabilities; a current necessary condition for it to maintain a capability edge over its adversaries. *These changes require the United States to develop a military that can operate through disruption and even thrive in it* (emphasis added).[3]

Attaining resilient intent requires adoption of postindustrial thinking. Efficiencies and capabilities by themselves are no longer the keys to success. The rate of change within the operating environment and the spectrum of risks within operating environments are easily capable of overwhelming a well prepared organization without resilient leadership. Resilient intent also requires post-information age abilities to exploit enormous amounts of data. However, these abilities alone can both empower and encumber. Threats or risks to an organization's survival or mission effectiveness can "hide in the open" in cyberspace through data disaggregation. Many adversaries and competitors already leverage disaggregation to disrupt and reorder, to move and countermove.[4]

Modern military culture has six common blind spots that inhibit the comprehensive development of more advanced leaders: trust, risk, investment of time, ownership, technology dependence, and personal adaptability. Appropriately, six primary questions can serve as catalysts for reflection and dialogue to aid in the evolution of modern leadership culture to best prepare for surprise, disruption, and crisis. These questions can be read and discussed separately or as an entire work.

US military leadership culture must evolve to embody, enable, and achieve resilience of intent in time, tempo, and level of effectiveness better than any adversary. An evolved leadership culture will acknowledge that it cannot prepare for everything. Collaboration and rapid adaptation will produce solutions, maintain the advantage, and respond effectively to anything.

# Why Don't I Trust My People?

*You lead to the extent you trust and are trusted. The rest is just management, the kind nobody misses when it's gone.*

Many leaders genuinely believe they trust their people. Some leaders do not trust their people. Some leaders abide by the "trust but verify" dictum, but their verification methods are emotional, driven by cynicism, paranoia, or a quest for vindication. Some leaders lack trust because they fail to measure accurately and assume risk prudently. Some leaders lack professional intimacy with their people while others base trust on experience. The importance of a culture of trust is widely reported.[5] According to the former chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, Gen Martin Dempsey, "trust is required at every echelon of the [military], and . . . building trust with subordinates and partners may be the most significant action a commander will perform."[6] Morale, potential, and creativity suffer when members of an organization do not feel their leadership's trust. If trust is fundamental to the success and morale of an organization in times of relative stability, it is critical when communications are disrupted or when other unexpected crises arise. Leaders must practice trust—then they can rely on it when the operations tempo, complexity, and scope of efforts increase and frequency, consistency, and reliability of communications technology decrease. Leaders must set the conditions for cultivating trust and verifying performance without vindictive

intent. Mission command, process-oriented operations, and mission control are three operational models for leaders to accomplish this.[7]

*Mission command* enables disciplined initiative within the commander's intent and is set by clearly communicated and understood vision and values.[8] Simply put, mission command empowers subordinates to achieve desired outcomes by choosing their own ways and means and by accepting prudent risks within the boundaries of their leaders' expressed vision and values. Success depends on the freedom to conduct actions deemed necessary that are within the defined—but not constricting—bounds of the stated intent of the mission.

A second model is a *process-oriented* operating environment. This environment typically occurs when technology is central to the mission of the organization. The boundaries and limits of a given technology's performance are established through process checklists, emergency procedures, or changes in circumstances and through operational and maintenance technical orders and publications. This culture is founded on explicit specifications. Individuals or organizations not in accord with these specifications are acting "at variance" with designs. Therefore, training and preparation tend to become centered on perfect adherence to formulated process procedures.

The third model is *mission control*.[9] Effective leaders may determine that operational constraints—such as time-sensitive requirements or political considerations—require strict adherence to their singular direction. Less effective leaders depend on mission control because they do not accurately think through risks and opportunities.

They may focus solely on directing others how to do their jobs or simply not trust their subordinates to complete tasks.

Incorrectly imposing one operational model when the other is better suited impedes optimization and can cause interpersonal strife. For example, when two leaders are collaborating, and one is personally or culturally dependent on a mission-command paradigm and the other a process-orientated paradigm, they will talk past each other and much frustration can arise. Successful leaders must have the mental agility to work with all three models and even hybridize from each of them to optimize their problem solving and the effectiveness of their organizations. Within these three models, leaders can develop a reasoning for whom they trust, to what extent, why, and how they validate or adapt their rationale. Three foundational concepts critical to this approach are loyalties, memories, and professional intimacy.

Loyalties are the starting point for many decisions. Loyalties can be granted to people, organizations, capabilities, functions, or programs based on the level of a leader's familiarity or past emotional investment. Other loyalties emerge from a leader's personal values and convictions. Loyalty to one's friends or career can shape calculations of trust and risk and levels of advocacy for justice, additional resources, or expedited processes. For these reasons personal and professional relationships play substantial roles in shaping decisions and outcomes.

Memories, particularly of both "scars and superstars," often shape a leader's trusting judgments. Scars come from events or people associated with times of frustration, strife, or pain. Without clear recognition of the degree of independence

of present events have from the past, leaders can incorrectly project those scars onto the present and inhibit the cultivation of trust. Memories of subordinate superstars are a relief because they excelled with each challenge and accomplished everything that was required. The memories can catalyze blind trust in what, or who, is familiar and neglect changes not easily recognized.

Finally, trust is calibrated to the level of professional intimacy with subordinates and "owners" (i.e., the individual who is truly responsible for a task, function, program, or people). Col Kurt Buller, retired, formerly the commander of the US Air Force 720th Special Tactics Group, made this a top priority for himself and all subordinate commanders and leaders. Professional intimacy was a top priority to be maintained with each unit member despite high operations tempo or physical distance between supervisors and members. Professional intimacy empowered all personnel and families to support each other through times of significant grief due to personnel killed or wounded in action. Much like trust, building professional intimacy takes time. It should not only be sought after an emergency occurs. Organizational resilience requires that professional intimacy all the time.

A genuine understanding of the subordinates' attributes and talents also comes from professional intimacy. Leaders are enabled to develop their subordinates' qualities, adapt accurately, and to motivate better. Leaders may not trust because they may not be familiar with all of the relevant owners—inside and outside of their organization—and their unique priorities, capabilities, and potential. Trust enables leaders to organize owners effectively within their organization and synchronize

processes to determine clearly the distribution of responsibilities. Leaders are wise to invest in developing a professional intimacy with the people around them and evaluate the trust "centeredness"—rather than verification centeredness—of their organizational culture.

Professional intimacy is brought about by and fosters a level of communication that provides leaders with insight to perform critical analysis, reflection, and actions that can continually improve the organization, its people, and the mission. It is important that the practice of "trust but verify" be executed without naïve optimism or lingering cynicism. For example, subordinates working to innovate and solve problems within the bounds of a leader's clearly articulated and understood vision and values should not fear punitive disciplinary actions for failure. Rather, leadership requires deliberate investment in facilitating the success of subordinates and advocating on their behalf. Aside from the immediate benefits of a trust culture, this works toward building a necessary reserve of future leaders better prepared to demonstrate resilient intent.

Leaders who limit the trust placed in their people limit their growth. These leaders tend to approach problems as a manager who prefers to do rather than delegate and direct subordinates at every step, fostering a culture of dependence on the manager.[10] This approach is a "do/direct" philosophy, and it is the typical approach of leaders who are seen as micromanagers. It is typical of micromanagers, "one who [tries] to control or manage all the small parts of (something, such as an activity) in a way that is usually not wanted or that causes problems."[11] As leaders rise to encompass more

responsibilities driven by complex and layered processes far beyond the scope of personal expertise and capacity, they must step back, adopt a different perspective and derive a new appreciation for results altogether. The need for increasingly rapid and complex actions, processes, and tempo is simply too important to be held back by untrusting managers.

Many leaders demonstrate technical or tactical mastery of their craft early in their careers. Immature doer/directors can have a "been there, done that, did it better than you" attitude with their subordinates. Micromanagers may also be unwilling to risk failure when they see subordinate actions or processes at variance with their narrow focus because of unfortunate personal experiences. This approach makes the leader indispensable in processes that should be nearly autonomous. Organizations dependent on doers/directors are rigid and fragile. They face significant roadblocks to rapid adaptation and resilience when the unexpected occurs, and owners and subordinates are not empowered or prepared for crises.

It is critical for leaders to think clearly and deeply about the extent to which one trusts and is trusted. This thinking is the foundation for a trust culture—by reflecting upon successes and shortcomings to drive investment in junior leader development. Finding the time for this is tough, especially when burdened with incessant doing and directing, strict mission control processes, leader-dependent subordinates, mistrust, or even contempt. Once there is a trust culture, leaders can, and must, deeply explore the fears, concerns, threats, and challenges that inhibit opportunities for

success, innovation, development, and adaptability—they must weigh and accept risk. Then they must take action.

## What Is My Problem with Risk?

*One universal truth about successful innovation is that it is inextricably linked to the risk of failure––and cannot truly exist without it.*

—Air Force Call to the Future

*Now, more than ever, we need bold leaders at every level who encourage innovation, embrace new thinking, and take prudent risks to achieve mission success.*

—The World's Greatest Air Force, Powered by Airmen, Fueled by Innovation

The genesis of this inquiry is a result of personal mentorship from retired Col Brett Nelson, during a deployment to a special operations task force in Afghanistan in 2010. Then-Lieutenant Colonel Nelson asserted that one of the most important leadership responsibilities is to measure correctly and assume risk. Leaders promote creative problem solving when they properly train junior leaders to anticipate and discern risks and opportunities, a crucial skill set for rapid and efficient re-

sponses to disruption or surprise. Also, poor and dangerous decisions can be made when risk and opportunity are not considered independently.

One can practice this through simple exercises: View leadership decisions through a risk lens, then break down every decision into the simple forms of outcomes and consequences. Keep options within the bounds of higher headquarters' vision and values and select actions to take. With practice this thought process becomes less mechanical and more seamlessly integrated into the leader's decision-making framework.

The International Organization for Standardization defines "risk" as the "effect of uncertainty on objectives."[12] "Risk management" is the "identification, assessment, and prioritization of risks followed by coordinated and economical application of resources to minimize, monitor, and control the probability and/or impact of unfortunate events or to maximize the realization of opportunities."[13] Risk, then, describes potential, a future event, or something that might or might not happen.[14] Ulrich Beck and Anthony Giddens authored seminal works on the concept of a "risk society," one that organizes itself around the question, "How can the risks and hazards . . . be prevented, minimized, dramatized or channeled?"[15] Beck described the risk society as "the modern approach to foresee and control the future consequences of human action."[16] Leadership can, indirectly through culture (better) or directly through command, achieve a consensus in addressing risk.

Successful "risk consensuses" require common training and education for all the organization's leadership in discerning, measuring, and assuming risks and capitaliz-

ing on opportunities. Junior leaders often learn their approaches to risk through interactions with their leaders during the formative years of their careers. Without a common culture, risk collaboration will generate friction within organizational leadership. Within and across organizations, inconsistent approaches to risk can be exacerbated by diverse character traits exclusive to sub- and microcultures,[17] such as boldness or timidity within disparate leadership styles, or inherent dangers unique to each unit's normal operations. In her book *Risk: Negotiating Safety in American Society,* Arwen Mohun provides insight into the origins of these differences by observing that "both contemporary psychological research and historical evidence also suggest that risk perception varies from individual to individual and between different social groups. These differences reflect personal experience, but also cultural values held in common and reinforced by others."[18] Because of individual paradigms and proficiencies in risk management, collaboration among and within networks (like sections, groups, wings, centers, commands, services, agencies, and career fields) can fail if some leaders are willing to assume risk and others are not.

In 2009, US Air Force Special Operations Weather Team Airmen developed a principle for planning and conducting highly specialized and necessarily dangerous training. The common approach to risk was simple: "Learn to discern and manage risk rather than fear, disregard, or mock it." Gold Team operators, 10th Combat Weather Squadron, are the plank holders for this principle. "Learn to discern" acknowledges deliberate investment in the professionalism, maturity, and emotional intelligence of the operators on their journey to master their craft and to

evolve as leaders. The goal was to cultivate a level of trust in subordinate leaders in a training environment in preparation for combat operations. Why? Cultivating trust during preparations and training is the principle catalyst for teamwork when uncertainty, surprise, chaos, and confusion ensue. Some leaders, certain about the future, will aim to buy down risk in training by limiting intensity or eliminating unexpected events. Effective leaders must also carefully weigh the complexities and challenges their people will face in real-world operations and embrace preparedness for *uncertainty* as well. Exercising imprudent "risk avoidance" policies during preparation and training may mitigate short-term risks but can exacerbate risk in combat operations.

Developing a mastery of discerning and managing risk and opportunity begins with assessing risks. Once the practice of discernment begins, leaders can then develop their individual approaches to risk, practice adapting them to context, and then better understand others' approaches risk. To simplify discernment analysis, Table 1 lists common risk considerations by category. The categories include:

- professional risk, risk to one's own professional goals and needs;

- internal risk, risk required by an organization to sustain normal operations and processes;

- mechanical risk, the risk that occurs when the organization is in action and facing disruption, trying to progress, improve, or adapt; and

- external risk, an estimation of factors that act upon an organization that cannot necessarily be influenced.

An effective exercise for leaders to develop risk discernment begins with assessing loyalties, operating environment, personal approach to risk, and the perception of their leaders' approaches to risk. This exercise should not be prescriptive, but is an opportunity for leaders to examine fully the spectrum of potential risks and common personal or cultural habits, and relate them to the situation.

Questions that augment this discussion are:

- How does the organization understand and organize itself around risk?

- What has the leadership communicated about risks?

- What are some of the risks I have not considered?

- Why do people seem to find themselves in adverse consequences when they thought they understood the risks before making their decision?

Creating a notional basket of common decisions, together with a few that are personally difficult, allows leaders to determine the risks and opportunities that are most or least comfortable in assuming. A better-calibrated approach founded more on facts and less on assumptions or emotions is possible. Common risks that leaders must consider are delineated in table 1.

**Table 1. Common risks leaders must consider**

| Professional risk | Internal Risk | Mechanical Risk (The Org in Action) | External Risk |
|---|---|---|---|
| Legal | Legal | Legal | Legal |
| Personal Integrity (Morals, Values, Beliefs) | Understanding of the Problem | The Many Hows (Methods) | 360° Continuity of Support (Perception Based) |
| Personal Bias* | Orientation to the Problem† | The Many Whens (Tempo, Decision Points) | Adversarial Actions/ Reactions |
| Decision Quality[19] | Mission Success | Success of Processes | Competitor Actions/ Reactions |
| Career Goals | Fiscal Certainty | Person or Organization Carrying Out the Task (Capability and Proficiency) | Senior Leaders Biases |
| Continued Employment | Protection of Resources | Financial Cost | The Unforeseen |
| Finances | Safety of Personnel | Human Cost | Long-Term Implications |
| Credibility | 360° Credibility | Blowback | Short-Term Implications |
| Vision Surety | Security | | Blowback |

| Professional risk | Internal Risk | Mechanical Risk (The Org in Action) | External Risk |
|---|---|---|---|
| Personal Resilience | Supply Chain | | |
| 360° of Trust | Mission Assurance | | |
| Blowback[20] | Information Assurance | | |
| | Organizational Fragility | | |
| | Blowback | | |

* Žižek called these " 'unknown knowns'. . . since risk is subjective its construction occurs through culturally biased lenses." Coker, *War in an Age of Risk*, 91.

† Leaders in a crisis will be oriented to more than a singular threat or hazard before them. Proper orientation sets the stage for effective strategy development, the practical application of the strategy, and the personal fortitude required to achieve resilient intent in any circumstance.

Integrating risk and opportunity discernment into a leader's decision-making framework can be challenging. Leaders dwelling on risks can get lost in "analysis paralysis" and slow their decision-making cycles with endless considerations and "what if" scenarios. On the other hand, decisive leaders must ensure their framework is firmly grounded in the best possible understanding of the current and evolving conditions. Then the future can be confidently considered. Achieving the balance between risk discernment and prudent risk-assumption skills, required to

adapt rapidly to disruption, cannot be "bolted on" to a leader once they take charge. The development of agile leaders requires risk-discerning mentors who trust and empower their people often and early.

Over time, thinking through short- and long-term risks and opportunities prepares leaders to be more rapidly adaptive. Leaders who cultivate an organization whose members consistently measure and anticipate risks and opportunities are going to be better prepared for surprise when a crisis occurs. Planning or anticipating is better than not planning anything at all because it softens the edge of unfamiliarity. Gen Dwight D. Eisenhower once said, "Plans are worthless, but planning is everything."[21] Confidence in any estimation of the future usually decreases in proportion to the distance from when a the decision was made to the time of its consequences. Indeed, once a plan is put into action, many independent variables will require adaptation to achieve success. The plan, the organization, and the leaders must be resilient because things will not necessarily go as expected. Plans rarely survive contact with reality, much less an enemy. Unexpected barriers or disruptions will create gaps that will increase response times and slow adaptation. Preparation for success must include preparation for surprise. Resilient leaders do not plan in certainty. They anticipate uncertainty and prepare for rapid adaptation.

The planning process generates other positive impacts:

- active planning, in certainty and uncertainty, builds team cohesion and flexibility;

- cohesion is improved thereby, through refined communications and teamwork;

- planning processes that include all team members capitalize on intellectual diversity and foster collaboration;

- collaborative environments cultivate shared visions, values, and purposes;

- common purpose helps overcome team fragmentation;

- flexible, collaborative teams with decisive leadership and common purpose at all levels are rapidly adaptable and resilient; and

- rapidly adaptable and resilient teams succeed.

Leaders not sufficiently accounting for risk in their plans can quickly become encumbered during a crisis. In a reactionary state, they will increase the time required to mitigate ongoing problems and to find new opportunities in evolving conditions. Inaccurate or inadequate estimates of risk can even limit the effective communication between followers and leaders and lead to misapplied capabilities, under-resourced priorities, or loss of credibility. Three officers were especially instructive to this writer, USAF Col Joseph Benson, USAF Col Kurt Buller, and AF Special Tactics officer Col Michael Flatten. Colonel Benson fervently mentored on the necessity to advocate for organizations and people through measured audacity and boldness in communications. He asserted that many leaders shy away from this important responsibility because they place too much importance on the profes-

sional risks rather than the opportunities made available for the subordinates or the mission. Colonel Flatten also stated that many leaders prefer to try to tackle problems on their own or shy away from requesting help while others focus on what they fear––judgment, increased scrutiny, or rejection––if they ask their leaders for additional resources. Subordinates might try to present opportunities for mitigating risk, but the leader will demur fearing his professional risks.

It is, therefore, beneficial to consider risk and opportunity over the short- and long-term with discerning eyes. Recently retired from the special operations community, Col Brett Nelson states that discerning risk and opportunity, "allows consistent superior decisions to be made at or near real-time."[22] Simply stated, a leader has to identify and leverage opportunities arising from any given situation at hand. This is the essence of rapid adaptation. Minimizing the lag between disruption and response is critical. Anticipating that plans will naturally break down over time, and then comprehensively weighing risk and opportunity, will increase personal and operational resilience, agility, and readiness to adapt.

Indeed, measuring risk can be difficult, overwhelming, and emotional. Organizational practices can be crude and inconsistent approaches to risk by leaders and personnel at all levels. Leaders' personal approaches and responses to risk must be refined, deliberate, and calculated. A leader's communicated risk approach sets conditions for the creative boundaries their subordinates will use to accomplish tasks and solve problems. It is important to analyze the concept of risk within the

context of the three risk management models, as well as the four responses to risk common to many people.

The three common models military leaders use to anticipate and mitigate risk are operational risk management, acquisitions/project risk management, and risk-avoidance policy. The operator cultures of the USAF flying and battlefield Airmen communities use "operational risk" to discern and mitigate known risks or threats when conducting flying missions, parachute operations, and tactical training. Much of the literature delineates threats, hazards, and dangers from risk. These concepts are integrated here for simplicity—for example, threats can be considered in the category "risk to force." Acquisitions/project risk focuses on cost overruns, achieving all timelines, and identifying actions at variance with legal and binding contracts and agreements. "Avoidance policies" can be quietly personal or published professional guidance developed to prevent or mitigate risk. Examples of policy norms include on- and off-duty safety; security of personnel, information, and equipment; professional risk (career); personal integrity (morals, values, and be-liefs); and personal goals (e.g., the odds of getting what is desired). These norms are propagated by both the deliberate and indirect observations of leaders through speeches, on-the-job training, mentorship, inspections, and day-to-day interaction.

Many people commonly use four default responses to organize their thoughts and make a decision. The first is "risk aversion," which is an emotional state. Risk-averse leaders commonly invest significant time and energy to evade or avoid risk, without carefully weighing opportunity. Evading of risk is a simplistic response

from a leader who has not examined all risk, is overwhelmed by new information, or is unfamiliar or uncomfortable with a particular situation, pace, or evolving context within which decisions must be made. Such leaders typically respond with a knee-jerk "no" or "you can't do that" when approached by subordinates with new ideas or initiatives. Note that this is not the same as prudent risk adaptive leaders who use "risk avoidance" in an attempt to redirect or reconstruct the organization and processes to institutionalize and make permanent the avoidance of a particular risk altogether. Safety Investigation Board recommendations, which often drive institutional norms across existing operating procedures, are great examples of this.

To appease their own or their supervisor's emotional distress with risk, leaders often adopt a "zero-defects" mentality. Prudent toleration of mistakes, failure, ambiguity, creativity, randomness, and bad luck are difficult, if not impossible, for risk-averse leaders. Former Defense Secretary William J. Perry once publicly stated that "demanding such a rigid standard produces timid leaders afraid to make tough decisions in a crisis, unwilling to take the risks necessary for success in military operations. This zero defects mindset creates conditions that will lead inevitably to failure."[23] Blanket risk aversion does not allow subordinates to focus on addressing current risks or addressing future opportunities. Risks exist in every decision; there is a danger in every moment of indecision. Risk-averse leaders feel emotionally better off by not "rocking the boat," but their logic is flawed. Hence the second default response: risk denial.

"Risk denial" is a most expedient means to organize the complexities of risk because risk is simply disregarded. Risk denial is reflected in four common concepts:

- fatalistic inevitability—what's supposed to be is what will happen,

- superstition—fortune favors the bold,

- naiveté, and

- emotional dissatisfaction with expected opportunities (not liking outcomes one thinks will happen).

Decision making can be constructed from random distributions of shades of risk denial, but leaders do not want random outcomes from their peoples' judgments. Therefore, risk consensus is an imperative.

Shared purpose must be cultivated within a vision and values for promoting expertise, innovation, and risk-taking. Boundaries for behavior and risk-mitigation tools and processes are required. Unfortunately, these efforts can cause leaders to fall into yet another common trap—the default response of risk compensation. Author John Adams illustrated this trap in his discussion of the invention of automobile seatbelts to prevent injury or death during accidents.[24] The resulting behavior by many drivers was that they could drive faster and more recklessly because seatbelts mitigated the risk of harm. This sort of response is called "risk compensation" and is an illogical way to simplify decisions to assume greater risks. Mitigation of risk and

real decreasing of risk are not necessarily in one-to-one proportionality; three seatbelts do not guarantee the safety of passengers going three times the speed limit.

The fourth common default response is risk shift.[25] Shifts in how much risk one will assume may not be a result of calculated risks against objective and static criteria; in fact, they are usually rooted in deeply personal loyalties, values, and emotions. "Risk shift" occurs when external forces influence leaders to shift the perception of risk and often decrease the amount of risk the leader is willing to assume. Examples include changes in the immediate family such as a pregnant spouse or new baby; the possibility to death or injury to friends; or proximity to promotion, appointment, retirement, or other critical times deeply related to personal desires. Conversely, internal or emotionally driven shifts can cause a person to "show off" by increasing the amount of risk accepted given the perceived opportunities made possible when someone of significance is understood to be watching.

These default responses to risk are natural, seemingly rational, and convincing to the individual decision maker. Indirectly, they also communicate the leader's loyalties. It is critical for leaders to understand that these common responses are very real, exist within every person, and must be deliberately overcome through training and meaningful development.

Leaders can demonstrate mastery of risk discernment in two ways. The first is the ability to adapt rapidly the amount and types of risk the leader is willing to assume. Leaders must be able to anticipate changes and adapt their decision-making frameworks to new visions and values within which they must operate—these re-

quire both action and agility. As the operating environment changes, risks will also change. A senior leader's acceptance of risk can increase or decrease depending on a multitude of factors but must be consistent with the needs of the mission. As a leader's approach to risk changes, there is also the responsibility to guide the organization through the changes. Subordinates who have been told "no" or "you can't do that" many times over months and years may have overwritten certain possible courses of action or solutions out of their memory. This kind of leadership can limit ingenuity and innovative potential to find and leverage opportunities while overwhelmed with risks in increasingly complex tasks or with diminishing resources. Without changed guidance, subordinates may not be able to recognize when the environment is conducive to try old ideas again. In a time of crisis, they might be critical to solving an unanticipated problem––if only they knew that old dead ends were now open roads.

Second, leaders must exercise wisdom and prudence in assuming short-term risks for long-term opportunities.[26] Assuming long-term risk in exchange for short-term opportunities is often the most comfortable decision. Short-term results are often immediately beneficial, tangible, and usually quantifiable, but there is also much less perceived professional risk on the leader who achieves immediate results.[27] Sacrificing short-term gains can be an unpopular leadership practice because long-term opportunities for gains can be negated by numerous independent factors and are not guaranteed to succeed. [28] Therefore, assuming risk in the near-term to realize long-term beneficial outcomes requires advanced risk-discernment

skills, a mature assumption of risk, and harmonious relationships to ensure support from the organization.[29]

Inevitably, things change. Ideas once irrelevant can instantly become essential, and immoveable restraints can suddenly vanish. New technology, new leaders, and new contexts can render old tasks, functions, programs, and authorities irrelevant. Opened doors, new opportunities, new resources, and new solutions can replace them. The range of options can increase within the leader's acceptable risk boundaries. The opposite can also be true. Sometimes opportunities and creative spaces that were once flexible, available, open, and possible can suddenly be unavailable, unrealistic, and irrelevant. Rapidly adapting one's approach to risk either by seizing opportunities emerging from new constraints or by recognizing sudden acceptance of flexibility from one's leaders indicates a high degree of resilience.

Awareness of one's approach to risk is the first step to quality decision making.[30] Decisions are based on the estimation of risk and opportunity and are often shaped by the amount of trust between leaders and the members of the organization. Once students of leadership become aware of their loyalties, trusts, and approaches to risk, they can continually refine them, take responsibility for their actions, and lead more effectively. Given the importance and complexities of trust and risk, it is critical that a leader has time to think and reflect on them. These analyses must be deliberate, comprehensive, and continually resulting in actions that improve an organization, its people, and the mission. A complete and predictable thought loop of analysis, reflection, and adaptation reinforces this framework. Despite the necessity,

many have not much time to think. The next question provides an analysis of how leaders can invest their time to both think and act wisely.

## What Do I Do with All this Free Time?

Theoretically, a leader's first day on the job can be free of commitments. As a leader responds to the needs of his organization and superiors, managerial and leadership actions take shape and begin to fill up the schedule. Many leaders find that their schedules are so full that their workdays begin to expand into long nights; weekends and holidays vanish or were never really there. Most leaders never ask free time questions because they do not have any. It is not unusual to see leaders rushing through hallways, truncating conversations, and vigorously typing—truly believing that they are doing the best for the organization, the mission, and their career. Free time and down time are both rare and cherished, but they too are often replaced by tasks or meetings. Exhausted or relentless leaders would have difficulty perceiving their professional roles or what they would do if they had substantial free time.

Understandably, many leaders are culturally and emotionally compelled to feel, or perceived to be, "busy." Poor time-investment practices can promote fragile processes, benign neglect of people or functions, and inadequate anticipation of short- and long-term risks and opportunities. The better practice is a disciplined and comprehensive approach to investing time, setting the conditions for optimizing a resilient organization and its mission.

Answering the question, "What do I do with all this free time?" provides an opportunity to explore how leaders can invest their time so as to cultivate an effective, efficient, and resilient organization.[31] That leaders could or should have time to think might be controversial. Many good leaders have a strong conviction that being busy is directly proportional to the relationship of productivity, effectiveness, and value. This agricultural- or industrial-era mindset is only sufficient when a leader's "hard work" is making effective decisions as carefully as possible and as quickly as necessary. The 24th Special Operations Wing organizes, trains, and equips combat controllers, special operations weather teams, and pararescue operators. The Wing's psychologist, Dr. James Young, states that

> Some of this behavior [staying busy] is a result of conscious processing of the idea that "if I'm not busy, I'm not earning my pay," but other factors are likely at play. For example, organizations influence the degree to which we see this behavior by directly or indirectly valuing the person that is able to juggle the most. Because we work in an environment without a real bottom line [e.g., money earned], it's often difficult to determine if juggling more actually translates into being more productive or effective. . . . So it's just assumed that more is better. It's the same reason, I think, some people show up early in the morning or stay late. . . . It gives the impression of greater productivity.

Dr. Young pointed to studies that demonstrate the positive bias that supervisors have of employees who show up to work early. He posited that guilt is another factor. It is unacceptable for most leaders to come to the conclusion that they are not

working as hard as their people. To compensate, leaders fill their schedule with a variety of things that will keep them busy.

There is a similar phenomenon that exists in a leader's inner monologue, along the lines of "the more 'stuff' I did today correlates with how good I can feel about myself as a leader." Consider the following: "If I worked in sales and I exceeded my quota every month working fewer hours, maybe the need to stay busy would be less? Or maybe I can work hard and further increase my profit . . ." Also, in a work environment where feedback is infrequent or less meaningful (vague or ego boosting), there is more likelihood of a perceived need to stay busy. Leaders must step back, adopt different perspectives, and make new assessments and appreciations for outcomes. The leader must construct a decision-making framework—one that includes time to reflect and assess.

Leaders must also be compelled to think. A sound decision-making framework should, at a minimum, account for the direction of the organization, organizational effectiveness, and the actualities of the overall improvement of the organization and reflect the leader's effectiveness. These elements must be regularly analyzed and not permitted to atrophy through neglect. Neglect can lead to vulnerabilities that will limit performance and can be exploited by adversaries or competitors. Effective leaders optimize mission effectiveness by facilitating the success of their people and integrating ideas and functions to create greater impacts. Those who practice this are called "facilitator/integrators."[32]

Leaders can divide available time into two components, the reflective loop (a leader's thoughts) and activities––the effective actions list (fig. 1). These are interdependent, conducted simultaneously, and facilitated by a leader's decision-making framework. The critical elements leaders must reflect upon and understand for decisions about the effective actions list comprise the reflective loop. Priorities will inevitably draw leaders to individual aspects of this cycle, and every effort must be made to avoid any regular omission of any element.



**Reflective Loop**

Leader's Own Effectiveness
People
Functions, Tasks, Programs, & Initiatives
Resources
Risks & Opportunities

**Decision Making Framework**

**Effective Actions**

Communicating Vision & Values
Investing in Relationships & Personal Growth
Collecting and Reporting Data & Information
Inspiring, Disciplining, & Rehabilitating Subordinates
Administrative Advocacy
Doing & Directing; Facilitating & Integrating
Rest; Deliberate Pause

**Figure 1: Regular, comprehensive, and reflective analysis must be the starting point for a leader's actions**. These actions should also further inform reflection. A leader's unique decision-making framework facilitates the complete process.

The reflective loop provides a continual path for the leader's thoughts about important people (including the leader), functions, tasks, programs, resources, initiatives, risks, and opportunities. These thoughts include all elements of a leader's scope of responsibility and those individuals that may be impacted by or benefit from in future collaborations. Comprehensive and in-depth analyses of each of these elements and adaptation opportunities are conducted later through each of the "six questions."

The components of the effective actions list must be informed by reflection and oriented in the direction of the leader's vision and values. These actions are also not strictly accomplished in a linear fashion and are not meant to be independent of each other. Leaders increase their effectiveness when applying two or more elements concurrently. Less effective leaders fail to apply these elements consistently across all the aspects of their organization over time.

The most meaningful effective action a new leader must employ is to communicate vision and values. It is critical to confirm that all members, especially subordinate leaders and owners, understand and apply them. A leader's vision and values must be in harmony with those of superiors and, yet, uniquely tailored to the organization and mission. As with risk and opportunity, vision and values must always be considered and communicated together. Vision and values provide boundaries and direction that develop subordinate behavior, process optimization, innovation, and organizational culture.

Investing in relationships and personal growth is critical to building and strengthening one's self, an organization, or a network. Relationships are proven to

support personal resilience from emotional traumas such as post-traumatic stress.[33] Striving for professional intimacy allows leaders to calibrate their understanding of the state of their environment, fine-tune risk measurement, broaden their perspective, and formulate plans. The ability of a leader to effectively inspire and discipline subordinates is largely dependent on the depth and quality of professional intimacy between them. Respect for a leader's position grants a certain amount of credibility. However, it is the investment in relationships that empowers all members to achieve unity of purpose and effort within the established visions and values, especially across separate organizations.

Investing in relationships and personal growth, especially when meeting with peers or superiors, requires time away from the organization. Face-to-face relationship building conveys the importance of professional intimacy; it says, "This relationship is so important that I am taking time away from my organization to invest in our relationship."[34] However, prolonged absence from the organization or absence during critical events can erode a leader's credibility because they are "never around." It can be an exercise in buying down professional risk while professional intimacy with subordinates helps build and sustain a leader's credibility that can endure times of absence or crisis.

Professional intimacy combined with data and information collection empower leaders with situational awareness for honing effectiveness in evaluating the experience and applying lessons learned.[35] Formal and informal individual or groups meetings are opportunities to bring together people, programs, and functions who

otherwise may not be connected. Leaders can leverage other settings such as socials, coffee breaks, team-building activities, and professional development luncheons to facilitate networking opportunities and cross talk between organizations.

Data and information collection and reporting can include meetings, reports, data calls, daily situation reports, after-action reports, weekly activity reports, monthly vector check reports, and quarterly budget reports. Many leaders collect data through spreadsheets and electronic means. Information is usually gathered through meetings. Conducting meetings efficiently and with purpose is an art in itself. Many meetings are called because a decision is required. Leveraging meetings for the secondary effect of cultivating resilience is challenging. Leaders must construct and guide meetings so as to reinforce the sustainability of all processes should they be suddenly taken out of action. If a particular meeting must regularly occur, leaders can use it to integrate elements from the effective actions list. For example, an otherwise dull staff meeting can be transformed when the senior leader invests in relationships with attendees, inspires them to higher levels of performance, and facilitates their success with decisive advocacy.

To the extent and speed that risk and authorities will allow, meetings are also opportunities for leaders to drive down subordinates' dependence on them. Each meeting should present opportunities to increase subordinate proficiency, expertise, and problem-solving skills; to identify process deficiencies; and to reduce the need for a further meeting on the same subject. These opportunities should not encourage leaders to neglect to invest in relationships with subordinates. Leaders

have a unique vantage point to address problems and facilitate short- and long-term solutions. They must also train and educate emerging leaders so they can do the same, thereby informing facilitation with data and information collection.

All of this powerfully informs the ability to inspire, discipline, and rehabilitate. Truly effective leaders can achieve all three simultaneously. Rehabilitation is of particular importance for resilient organizations. Rehabilitating substandard performers or those with conduct issues requires focused efforts to leverage opportunities to improve performance, professionalism, and attitude. It is all too easy to avoid dealing with these leadership responsibilities. Misconduct, mishaps, casualties, or myriad other "bad news" can also arrive as surprises, testing a leader's personal resilience. Bad news will usually require inspiration, disciplining, or rehabilitation. The emotions, thought processes, collaboration, and decision calculus responding to bad news will prepare for responses to crises on grander scales. Objective evaluation of one's performance with peers, superiors, and subordinates can be extremely useful. Try to answer the following: "Did I demonstrate a positive attitude and effectiveness in my *approach and commitment* to inspire, discipline, and rehabilitate?" Experiences in disciplining, inspiring, and rehabilitating can become waypoints for future leadership guidance if they are properly recorded.

The next element of the effective actions list is administrative advocacy, which includes tasks such as completing performance evaluation reports, presenting awards and decorations, and writing letters of appreciation or recommendation. It also includes highlighting achievements of the organization or specific personnel to senior

leaders. Administrative advocacy is separate from other elements because these tasks require a leader to be out of the bustle of day-to-day business. These activities are an administrative expression of the leader's judgment and require painstaking effort.

It is important to reemphasize the interdependence of the elements on the effective actions list. For example, administrative advocacy and information collection and reporting can require a substantial time investment. Many leaders invest much time conducting these tasks, convinced that they are hitting home runs in support of their people. Consumed with these tasks, they fail to invest fully in relationships within their organization or to reflect upon elements of the reflective loop. All of this undermines leadership effectiveness and diminishes trust.

Occasionally "doing or directing" a task or function can inspire a member or provide a quick solution when challenged by a particular problem. Unfortunately, when leaders too often "do" their subordinates' tasks, trust is undermined, innovation hindered, and the development of future experts is stunted. Leaders who steadfastly default to mission control are commonly called micromanagers and are known for being perpetually stuck on the do/direct element of the effective actions list. They insert themselves in and between the decisions required of their subordinates, commonly resulting in frustration, low morale, and diminished trust. To greater detriment, micromanagement stifles critical thinking and abbreviates precious incubation time. Individuals trapped in this environment are unable to evolve their problem solving. Consumed with immediate results, they often fail to facilitate long-term solutions to problems common inside the organization. Damage

caused by a leader's incessant "doing and directing" is twofold: the organization becomes comprised of micromanagers and personnel unable to think critically, needing constant guidance, and cannot rapidly adapt when disruptions occur. Impressionable subordinates within this culture also grow to value a "do/direct" management style, perpetuating the rigidity of the organization and the culture.

Leaders should assume the roles of facilitator and integrator. Facilitation requires clear and continuous communication of vision and values, delegating, and advocating. Advocating subordinates' ideas requires leaders to say "yes" and inspire them to explore new initiatives. Leaders must weigh the risk of loss in time and energy (taken away from "primary" tasks) when it is directed toward innovation and consider that pursuing and nurturing innovation boosts morale, motivation, team building, and overall professionalism. While the idea may ultimately fail, so much more has been accomplished to improve individuals members and the organization. This sort of risk-opportunity consideration is called "decision support analysis." All leaders should learn and teach decision support analysis to facilitate successful preparation, packaging, and presentation of information when advising senior leaders. Decision support analyses improve the ability to integrate new ideas with existing practices.

Integrators habitually seek opportunities for collaboration. They can bring together individuals, sections, and organizations that may have never connected before. This network can then be activated to produce more options, to anticipate or prevent disruption, for much better outcomes than might have been achieved by a single or-

ganization. Integrators also coordinate and synchronize capabilities, functions, tasks, and programs for unified efforts to realize vision and values they all work within.

An example of a facilitator/integrator practice of encouraging innovation is the Palchinsky Principle whereby using sample results in a small area is used before risking widespread and unpleasant damage. If the outcome is satisfactory or better, then consider facilitating the success of the initiative as a new status quo across the organization (fig. 2).[36]

Leaders can facilitate new ideas with resources, link people to others with similar challenges, or help them find to digital or print resources with relevant lessons learned. Some ideas may need advocacy for additional resources or funding and leaders can prudently assume the short-term risk for potential long-term gain and facilitate the success of subordinates. Clear vision and values empower subordinates approaching problems and developing initiatives that leaders should advocate because they are within the accepted boundaries. New ideas should not be immediately dismissed because they fail to produce maximum unattainable benefit with zero risk. Poorly communicated vision and values will likewise stifle innovation. After several rejections, junior leaders can accede to the status quo, quickly becoming a part of the problem rather than actively facilitating solutions. In 2005, then-Col Darren W. McDew, commander of the 43d Air Wing at Pope AFB, North Carolina (later, the commander of Air Mobility Command and US Transportation Command), greeted all inbound personnel newly assigned to his base. He said that their fresh perspective and ideas would contribute to innovations for the first six

months. In the following six months on station, most personnel become a part of the problem. See figure 3 for a conceptual example of this hypothesis.

**Clearly Understood Vision and Values**
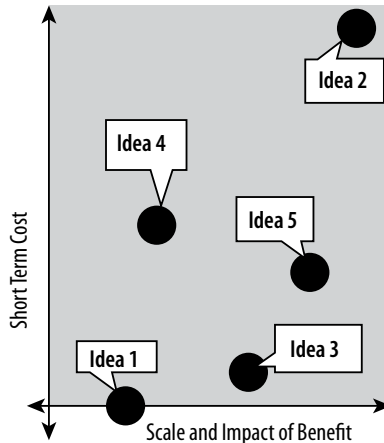


**Figure 2. The shaded area identifies the clearly understood vision and values of the leader**. This domain and range can concentrate the innovative ideas from people in an organization. They should not strive for a bull's eye. Also, a disruptive or transformative concept may be somewhere in the shaded domain, but it is off the page entirely.

**Unclear or Unknown Vision and Values**
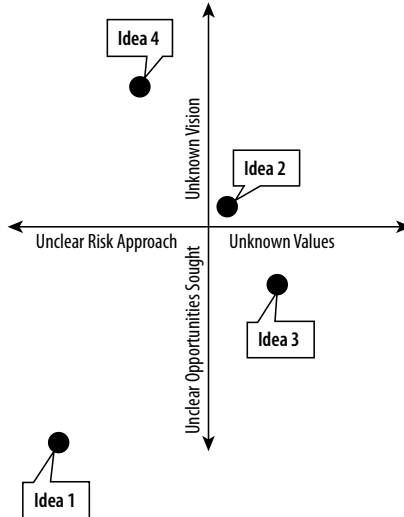


**Figure 3. Unclear or unknown leader's vision and values are represented by both axes to infinity in all directions**. Innovative ideas will emerge, but common answers from the leader are often no, no for now, maybe, or try again. Eventually, the innovative spirit of the organization will wither.

Organizational resilience, redundancy, and creativity in lower-level leaders, distribution of control, and optimized processes all free up leaders' time and enable more *thinking* and *leading*. Processes and people are no longer powerlessly dependent on the leader, and these organizations are better prepared to self-heal in unexpected disruptions. There is no independence from, and dissonance with, the shared vision and values. Enmity is avoided, and strong professional relationships are evinced. Adopting a concept from Stephen Covey's *Seven Habits of Highly Effective People*, leaders and people in an organization must be interdependent upon each other for what value they bring to the overall effort.[37]

Facilitators/integrators can achieve this interdependence much more easily than doers/directors. They approach problems with the facilitator's mindset, striving to facilitate successful problem solving by lower-level leaders. Doing and directing should be kept to a minimum. Leaders cultivating a resilient organization must exercise prudence when determining when and to what extent it must be "done" to solve problems by themselves, or to make specific "direction" for subordinates to solve them.

The leadership interventions in broken processes ought to be limited to debriefing, publishing lessons learned, or training and education to improve subordinates' problem-solving skills and to approach problems with a facilitator's perspective. Learning and practicing this requires profound changes to common leadership approaches to problems. There are three barriers to developing a facilitator/integrator culture.

The first challenge is selecting and developing the right leaders. Often prospective leaders and commanders are identified for increased responsibility in the US

military by demonstrating technical and tactical mastery in the early years of their careers. General officers often mentor young lieutenants and captains to master their crafts and strive to be the experts in their fields of work. Seniors do this because mastery of skills is the "tip of the spear" of mission accomplishment. Tactical effectiveness can be quantified or validated for an individual and a team's credibility. Credibility can earn trust and buy down risk, resulting in increased deliberate development, investment, career vectoring, and promotion. It is critical to acknowledge that there exists a leadership development quandary at a point in one's career development because technical and tactical mastery is not necessarily a critical attribute of a master facilitator/integrator. In fact, this type of mastery is only one element of many attributes that can be used to identify someone for a position of leadership. In times of crisis or degraded communications, any leader or subordinate of any organization can suddenly become a facilitator/integrator of many pieces of other organizations, engage in mass collaboration, and sustain his or her aspect of resilient command and control.

Retired Air Force Gen Gilmary Hostage, formerly the commander of Air Combat Command, and Lt Col Larry Broadwell published an article on resilient command and control (C2).[38] The intent was to present a new C2 paradigm, shifting away from centralized control and decentralized execution toward centralized command, distributed control, and decentralized execution. In a personal interview, and in collaboration with, Colonel Broadwell, commander of the 1st Fighter Group, we established definitions of these terms within the context of resilient in-

tent. "Centralized command" is the legal authority to publish overarching vision, values, and priorities within which all subordinates must apply their capabilities. "Distributed control" is the synchronized application of all available resources to address common problem sets. "Decentralized execution" assures that each player operates in concert with the commander's vision and values, is capable of rapid adaptation, and is empowered and authorized to integrate capabilities with maximum effectiveness given the unique context of a particular problem set.

Then there is the second challenge: building thinking capacity beyond the paradigms and loyalties exclusive to the sub- or microculture of one's tactical upbringing. Leaders in positions of responsibility, requiring high-orders of mass collaboration and rapid adaptation, must be able to transcend the cultures where they spent their formative years. The ways that one learns and grows to master a single craft or capability are different from how leaders evolve, and this must also be acknowledged. Growth in leadership must be a reflection of the imperative of facilitating solutions by linking unconnected people or capabilities for the mission to succeed.

Third, leaders must transcend a military leadership culture slow to adapt to rapid information technology (IT) developments. Lt Col Greg A. Roman concluded that military adaptation to C2 in the information age all too often gives in to the "the seductiveness of information technology" by rapidly centralizing vast quantities of information and decision-making authority. This centralization builds rigid hierarchies that focus information flow toward greater central control creates glaring vulnerabilities.[39] He somberly concluded that the result is a military unprepared for

the operations tempo of information-age warfare.[40] A problem of trust and risk arises to determine which leaders, at what levels, ought to have the appropriate authorizations to make particular types of decisions. Centralization occurs when a leader presumes that amassing all the right information will drive *certainty,* and that will inform excellent decisions. The inference is that subordinate leaders who will have less information will have less certainty and make decisions with unacceptable risks.

Addressing the challenge of certainty, Martin van Creveld concluded in *Command in War* that, theoretically, there are only two ways to achieve absolute certainty, total centralization (100 percent do/direct management) or complete decentralization (100 percent facilitation/integration) of information and decision-making responsibility.[41] Van Creveld's analysis of 2,500 years of command in war indicates that a commander's intent is achieved more prudently when he leans toward centralization.

However, in an operating environment where communications are denied or disrupted, high degrees of centralization may become unattainable. Agile leaders must, therefore, determine to what extent they should centralize or decentralize decision making based on the level of trust in their operational culture, their ability to discern and anticipate risk and opportunity, and the constraints of the operating environment. In environments where communications are intermittent or denied, leaders may not have the luxury of relying on traditional hierarchies and architectures. A living and fluid network of distributed facilitators/integrators closely collaborating to address similar problem sets must create solutions on the fly. Inflexible reliance on the mission-control model will limit the breadth of solutions with

leaders overwhelmed by helplessly doing/directing. Other leaders separated by communications disruptions may need to direct hasty actions prudently. Wisdom and flexibility can come from training that instills the ability to anticipate surprise.

These three challenges must be addressed through more thoughtful leadership selection, training, development, and placement. Senior leaders must also value the ability to collaborate as a part of job performance and subsequently organize, train, and equip the force to do that better. Rapid adaptation of communication and organizational information management processes may require reaching outside military circles to learn from corporations, small-business entrepreneurs, and nongovernmental organizations operating on the cutting edge of the digital revolution.

The final element of the effective actions list is rest and deliberate pause. First, it is important to highlight the relationship between rest and resilience. Research indicates that periods of stress followed by appropriate rest effectively increase resilience and strength of individuals and organizations. Dr. James Young stated,

> Based on my professional experience and the related literature, I would suggest that rest or recovery is the most overlooked variable when it comes to understanding the impact of stress. It's typically not the stress that has a negative effect on our emotional/psychological state or level of performance; rather, it's the lack of recovery from these stressors. We must consciously seek rest and recovery following significant stressors. If we do, we actually grow from the stressful experiences. We see a similar process with physical stress (e.g., working out) in that we have to recover from the workout to grow stronger physically.[42]

Dr. Chad Morrow, chief of Psychological Applications at an Air Force special tactics squadron, advises that all professionals must "take recovery as seriously as any energy expenditure."[43] He explained that personal resilience, whether from work- or trauma-related stress, is significantly dependent upon deliberate and structured investment in rest and recovery. At the time of this writing, few training aids address how to invest downtime optimally. Military professionals usually default to their normal training level after high levels of stress and rest is not a consideration. Most military personnel practice habits to feel "disengaged" from the demands of their duty. The habits can include many healthy and unhealthy practices that ultimately may or may not improve personal and family resilience.

Rest allows the mind to process complex memories, enhancing a leader's clarity and creativity. In his book *The Mission, the Men, and Me: Lessons from a Former Delta Force Commander*, retired US Army Col Peter Blaber explains that rest allows the brain to incubate and illuminate information and experiences that have "saturated" a leader's thoughts. The incubation and illumination phases most often occur when a leader takes advantage of rest, pause, and good sleep. The brain can sort through concepts and find patterns that lead to "Eureka!" or "aha!" illuminating moments that result in innovation and higher-order problem solving.[44] The implication is that leaders sustaining a rigorous and grinding professional lifestyle of continual "saturation" may be unable to mature their ability to solve increasingly complex problems.

Many leaders strive to project an appearance of sustained superior performance despite the lack of rest. Leadership by example when rest is not an option is one thing, ignoring the importance of rest is another. These leaders set the example for junior leaders and subordinates, inadvertently stunting their natural cognitive processes and limiting short-term effectiveness and long-term adaptability. Less resilient leaders force the members of their organizations to "sustain a surge" of relentless pace without appropriate periods of rest, depleting morale, motivation, energy, and family support. When a crisis occurs, these leaders and the organization will need a further surge to respond, attempting to access depleted reserves that are simply not there to meet required objectives. True professionals will strive even when physical, mental, and emotional gas tanks may already be nearing empty. Unfortunately, the aim is to thrive in crisis, not strive for survival.

Deliberate pause, restraint, and exercising patience are often seen as taking no action at all, but there is a difference between prudence and indecision. Deliberate pause should not be an excuse to slow down the tempo of an organization that needs to act quickly. A leader who has prepared for the unexpected by thinking through risks and opportunities will recognize patterns as they emerge and know when to demonstrate restraint. For example, a tactical pause can provide an excellent opportunity for soldiers in a firefight to regroup to maintain the initiative. However, a tactical hesitation is a failure to execute when it comes out of uncertainty of the situation or overwhelming emotion. Similarly, an organization will hesitate because it (or its leader) is not prepared for surprise.

Focusing on effective actions will improve an organization's effectiveness, performance, and resilience. Most leadership effort, especially during collaboration, requires engaging and influencing others within and outside the organization. During data and information collection, leaders will hear subordinates identifying limitations or restraints, often imposed by an elusive "they." Leaders must understand who "they" are and identify the best ways to communicate with, and influence, them.

## Who Is the "They"?

This question, verbatim, is one continually asked by retired USAF Lt Gen Eric Fiel, during his tenure as the commander of AF Special Operations Command, 2011–2014. It was a method of finding out exactly who had ownership of the restraining aspect of a particular activity—he could, therefore, determine whether he, a subordinate, or his leadership was required to weigh in to overcome specific limiting factors and accomplish the mission. "Theys," then, are the owners of the authorities, processes, programs, functions, or tasks a leader would like to collaborate with or influence. Effective leaders within and across organizations must, therefore, invest in building and strengthening a network by first asking, "Who is the 'they'?" In the military, the "they," or the owner, is the one with the authority, the one with the resources, or the one who will likely be fired because of a significant failure within their scope of responsibilities. The ability to truly influence outcomes depends on a leader's ability to find and influence the owner. To influence people, one

must find (or become) the boss. To influence tasks, projects, or processes, for example, one must locate the section chiefs, production supervisors, floor managers, or engineers. However, influencing programs and initiatives is more complex.

Many programs are created to preserve precious resources and the people who use them. Examples of some of those programs are sexual assault awareness and prevention, diversity in the workplace, safety, physical security, or regular maintenance checks. Commanders own programs, and it is their responsibility to integrate the values of the program into the culture and fundamental decision-making processes of the people within the organization. A program point of contact (POC) is typically the person most engaged in addressing questions and concerns from members of the organization, but the commander bears the responsibility for facilitating the success of the program in an interdependent relationship with the POC.

Initiatives are the investments in ideas within the mission, vision, and values of an organization but are usually outside (or at variance with) the standard procedures. Talented junior leaders usually own initiatives—because they originated the idea or have been delegated to develop it. Leaders can add credibility to initiatives by openly communicating support for the owners while providing advocacy, resources, and freedom to maneuver as needed.

Leaders either pay for or reap the benefits of past decisions. So keep in mind that the "they" could be former leaders, influencers, or owners whose circumstances, approaches to risk, or personal judgment seemed appropriate at the time of the decisions. Leaders cannot influence the past; they must exercise their reflective loop

to gather information, think critically about the present, and determine the benefits of influencing or transforming the status quo.

Leaders seeking to know who the "they" are may unexpectedly find themselves to be the owners. To prevent this surprise, leaders must quickly and thoroughly explore and clearly understand the depth and breadth of their authorities once assigned the position of responsibility.

When someone outside of the organization is identified by a subordinate as an owner, the leader may be asked to engage because of their superior authority. If the initiative exists inside the established vision and values, the leader can simply engage the owner directly or "go over their head" to someone with even greater authority. Leaders can have an opportunity to advocate for their people and request action, and many three- and four-star generals pride themselves in being "action officers" for important initiatives.

Leaders must consider the importance of communication with all the various owners within their organization. Foremost, these are critical opportunities to listen and learn. They can also be used to reinforce visions and values and to inform, inspire, guide, and mentor.

All leaders must strive to build a professionally disciplined yet highly networked organization, but their ability to engage owners outside of an organization is largely, but not exclusively, dependent on command relationships. Researching and understanding organizational charts that denote hierarchies, leaders, offices, and desks build one's understanding of where owners are within and across large organiza-

tions. Without professional relationships or familiarity, the names and duty titles alone have little to no meaning. However, once leaders begin to populate the charts with names *and* faces (investing in relationships) by establishing personal connections (developing professional intimacy), the charts become living things. The powers of personal connections are significantly enhanced by cultivating professional intimacy rather than strict reliance on transaction-based relationships driven by self-interest.

Many junior leaders ignore charts and rely much more exclusively on chains of command and established procedures. Often this behavior is directed by commanders; sometimes it is simply driven by unfamiliarity with the organization and how it works. (Please note that subversion or deception is not advocated—all leaders must not compromise personal integrity.) Influence and collaboration suffer where there is dissonance in loyalties, authorities, or risk management. The best way to engage a higher-placed "owner" for advocacy might be adherence to formal processes, because most internal business lives in the *process-oriented* model.

Formal processes and relationships act like a cardiovascular system. They pump life in prioritized, but consistent, ways to the whole body. They also promote healing or rebuilding from minor injuries. Informal relationships act like a nervous system, collecting and disseminating information and understanding. They decide, synthesize, and transform with information from sensory inputs. Neither system can operate without the other. Both need nurturing, training, maintenance, and exercise.

Serious and life-threatening injuries are almost always surprises. Sometimes, like combat wounds, risks might be anticipated and mitigated with tactical medical training and preparations for timely patient delivery to hospitals with specialized staffs. Extending the injury analogy, injuries threatening life, limb, or sight (surprise, crisis, disruption, or denial of a capability), require more and faster intervention than the cardiovascular system alone can manage. These events require external intervention by a surgeon or specialist—collaboration with outside expertise.

A master facilitator's/integrator's network may span organizations, hierarchies, owners, leaders, agencies, departments, bureaucracies, and cultures. These high-order networks of collaboration can cross resource and funding lines, even when the money and owners are unrelated in mission but tied together in the defense of the nation. Leaders who rise to fill positions of great responsibility must coordinate and collaborate with individuals from nongovernmental organizations, officials from other countries, and multinational coalitions with constantly changing geopolitical dynamics and disparate views on ways, means, and risks.[45] In all of this, the principles of organizational resilience remain the same. Find and influence owners, facilitate and integrate their capabilities and ideas, extend collaboration to the farthest reaches of the network, focus on responding to the crisis or surprise, and achieve the mission.

Even with the most meticulous collaborative efforts, leaders and organizations are always put to the test in sudden disruptions and crises. Preparing for these requires a balance between building robust preventative measures and responsive

adaptation. The next question in this book examines how an organization can carry out its mission when its technology is disrupted or degraded or fails entirely.

## What Is Wrong with My Supply Chain?

In many studies, resilient organizations are most often tied to an ability to continue the mission after the loss of leadership.[46] More challenging and more important is the capacity to continue toward mission accomplishment when resources and technology are suddenly disrupted, rendered ineffective, or lost.

A significant challenge to most line commanders is that they are only responsible for a short link of their supply chain—day-to-day care, sustainment, and preventive maintenance. In the US military, the responsibility of supply surety belongs to experts in offices and depots usually working some distance away from the "line" or operational units.

Many junior leaders feel about as responsible for their technology as a tourist on a commercial airliner feels responsible for flight safety. It is easy for many leaders embedded in complex processes not to ask "What Is Wrong with My Supply Chain?" because the equipment is usually someone else's responsibility. Not asking the question forms a blind spot critical in cultivating resilient intent. The connective tissues in the body of a military endeavor are synchronized and sequenced operations. The cellular composition of any operation is in the employment of tactics, techniques, and procedures (TTP). Ultimately, TTPs usually rely on the best

technology available. Thus, any improvement or degradation of equipment can result in a significant modification of tactics, operations, and strategies. The more one's suite of TTPs relies on a particular technology, the more they are vulnerable to crisis or disruption and the harder and slower it may be to adapt.

Leaders and the users of technology are issued equipment with guidance on proper use and care. When the supply chain fails or requires improvement or modification, those questions or actions only *seem to* become someone else's problems. IT specialists deal with hardware issues, the system administrator deals with network issues, and the maintenance personnel take care of equipment failure, but the leader is still responsible for completing the mission. The intent must be met even when primary ways and means are of limited use, unreliable, or irrelevant.

Resilient intent provides an interesting and extraordinary lens for viewing an organization. Create a theoretical "basket" of critical equipment: government-issued laptops and commercial, off-the-shelf global positioning system (GPS) watches, and so on. Risks to the laptops include possible industrial espionage against the hardware or software and attacks on, or exploitation of, the laptops by hackers. Consider the conclusions drawn in a Center for New American Security.

> Digital technologies, commonly referred to as cyber systems, are a security paradox: Even as they grant unprecedented powers, they also make users less secure. Their communicative capabilities enable collaboration and networking, but in so doing open doors to intrusion. Their concentration of data and manipulative power vastly improves the efficiency and scale of operations, but this concentration in turn exponentially increases the amount that can be stolen or subverted by a successful attack. The complexity of their hardware and software creates great

capability, but this complexity spawns vulnerabilities and lowers the visibility of intrusions. Cyber systems' responsiveness to instruction makes them invaluably flexible, but it also permits small changes in a component's design or direction to degrade or subvert system behavior. These systems' empowerment of users to retrieve and manipulate data democratizes capabilities, but this great benefit removes safeguards present in systems that require hierarchies of human approvals. In sum, cyber systems nourish us, but at the same time, they weaken and poison us.[47]

Off-the-shelf GPS watches do not have anti-spoofing safeguards, and GPS signals can easily be jammed or modified to indicate an incorrect location. There are unique entities that deal with "enterprise-wide" technology that has been pre-screened and vetted by labs and in acquisitions testing. There is some physical risk in the supply chain vulnerability: faulty contracts, engineering flaws, deliberate deception, wear and tear, standard loss rates, and changing operational environments can compromise supply surety. To reduce risk, leaders often rely on reducing loss rates by publishing a risk-evasive training policy. The result is a bench stock of mission-ready equipment that personnel avoid using or experimenting with because there is a higher value placed on averting the risk of loss than on opportunities for innovation. It could be symptomatic of a narrow approach to addressing risks and opportunities or that the leader simply cannot accept the risk associated with innovation.

With recurring damage or loss, or the need for rapid adaptation to respond to emerging problems, leaders can try to modify standing procedures without sacri-

ficing mission effectiveness. Then leaders must facilitate rapid resilient research, development, and resupply.

In significant disruptions to technology, such as a broken supply sustainment chain, jammed communications equipment, hacked computers, spoofed navigation, or unsynchronized clocks, leaders must find ways for the mission to continue. While many think that military professionals have become too dependent on technology, maintaining a "tech proficiency balance" of expertise within an organization is prudent regarding risk and opportunity. Simply stated, leaders must maintain a balance between the development and sustainment of trained experts proficient in the latest technologies and a bench of experts proficient in operating older technology or methods. Maintaining a spectrum of well-practiced TTPs can integrate the tech-proficiency balance at the small organization level. Designing and practicing TTPs to sustain this balance help assure more rapid adaptation to a compromised supply chain. As in the earlier above, it is relatively easy to spoof or degrade GPS hardware, but it is much more challenging to keep compasses from finding magnetic north. A tech proficiency in maintaining land-navigation expertise balances opportunities for more innovative training with likely risks. This approach to training also cultivates operators—and future leaders—who can flexibly prosecute the mission despite the disruption of their advanced technology.

Leaders who value maintaining a tech-proficiency balance can also facilitate idea sharing and foster flexible planning, optimizing processes, and creative solu-

tions to potential problems, thereby enhancing all members' professional and emotional readiness.

Achieving this balance can be tough. Time spent training to less advanced and seemingly relevant tasks can be seen as being wasted. Some organizations have such a significant training burden that adding additional training to their schedules comes at a very high cost. Leaders must include operational resilience as parts of their vision and values and rely on junior leaders to design elegance into training plans to achieve the tech-proficiency balance.

Tech-proficiency balance can be difficult to find and maintain. For example, in the office, if networked computers fail, it probably means work stoppage. However, older methods of processing information, reconsideration of the organization's processes, or even mission reorientation might keep things going. People must maintain competence on both older and leading-edge technologies to provide necessary flexibility and agility. Practice and the necessary training must also be a priority in the vision and values.

All of this can lead to organizational turmoil. Training, planning, and preparations using "outdated" TTPs might be seen as detrimental to the "real" mission. Disregard for the possibilities and probabilities of technological disruption or poor risk analyses can lead to a flood of planning "what ifs." Without leadership backing of tech-proficiency balance, these can lead to the organization being emotionally and functionally unprepared for sudden technological disruptions. Leaders can

mitigate all this with a clearly established vision and values that are optimizing a balance of efficiency, effectiveness, and resilience.

Defining optimization in this way means assuming a significant professional risk if leaders overemphasize the efficiency portion of the optimization. Anticipating long-term risks requires preparing for when the corporate memory or experience is inadequate for a particular situation and mature leadership is needed. Near-term external risks may often be too imposing to allow concentration on resilience while optimizing processes, organizations, and technology investments. An example would be when external economic considerations impinge on acquisitions and research and development decisions. If the economy is declining and budgets are shrinking, the investment in resilience potential may seem to be too costly. Fortunately, a resilient culture of intent can be underwritten by a tech-proficiency balance with a diversity of platforms, equipment, and tools for accomplishing the mission. Results- and efficiency-driven leaders can view this as futile, "nice to have" but out of reach, and a "no, for now." However, winning and overcoming sudden disruptions or crises will be for the most resilient organization, not necessarily the most technologically advanced.

As emerging technology improves the TTPs, technology and proficiencies must be rebalanced. Technological dependencies engrained in normal business can create blind spots in risk analysis. A network must be built and activated to increase awareness, share best practices, and rapidly create effective solutions.

Leaders preparing for surprise face significant challenges from within their organizations. Inertia, tradition, personalities, and friction are a few such obstacles. However, the risks of surprise are too significant to ignore, and when crises occur, members will look to leaders for guidance, direction, and solutions. The final question addresses a leader's effectiveness and ability to facilitate effective adaptation of the organization.

## Am I the Leader I Want To Be—or the Leader the Organization Needs Me To Be?

*The speed of change and uncertainty in the future will create an even greater demand for innovative, adaptive Soldiers and leaders who thrive amidst ambiguity.*

—US Army Vision—Strategic Advantage in an Uncertain World

This inquiry often leads to somber reflections. Most leaders want their talents and strengths to resonate in their organizations. However, leaders usually have limited ability to choose their workforce, especially in the military. They must rely on and adapt to external factors such as the recruitment, assessment, and selection processes; the effectiveness of previous training and education; and the investments previously made in the growth and development of the individuals they will lead.

At the onset, most leaders also do not get to choose their organization's internal and external contexts. Military organizations may find themselves in combat, disaster relief operations, restricted budgets, or challenging geographic locations.

Though they can influence attitudes and practices over time, leaders do not initially choose the culture and subcultures of their organization. Neither can leaders choose the initial condition of the organization. This inability can be sobering when seeing their vision for the organization effectively blocked by things like effects of poor talent management, incompetence, low morale, or emotional wounds left by previous leaders or conditions.

Leaders should strive for a natural style in crisis or major disruption. The emotion and friction in unsettling realities can deeply affect people; even the most trusted members can lose credibility through misconduct or unprofessionalism. Personal problems inside and outside of work can even propagate throughout the organization. Crises and disruptions can include loss of a key leader or a respected person, a death of or harm to someone in the organization, and decreased resources with increased expectations. Leaders must have the stability, professional intimacy, and vision to see the mission and the people through all of these.

Effective leaders must demonstrate resilient intent, embrace the cumulative effect of partial solutions, energize their network and advisors, and perform careful analyses of the elements of the reflective loop. The reflective loop enables leaders to create effective strategies to employ the necessary components of the effective actions list (in fig. 1).

Many organizations are not rife with these sorts of dramatic problems. Leaders must, nevertheless, accept that they might have to find ways to advocate for and motivate others sometimes outside of their comfort zones, to push them beyond the edge of familiarity. The necessary approaches may be contrary to how the leader normally interacts with people. Demeanor, as much as anything else, will also need to be adapted. During a crisis or its aftermath, temperament, patience, and personal sources of strength may require significant recalibration. Patience must be practiced with a realization that most information reporting from the results of actions may come very slowly, if at all. When attempting to construct or reconstruct an organization, a leader must ask, "Is this the organization I want, or the organization the mission needs?"

In crises, communication disruptions can create significant problems. Internet connections, radio, or cell phone communications can be slow, intermittent, or nonexistent. The tempo of decision making and the consequences of decisions may be extremely high, but getting timely data and information may not be possible. Technological issues, adversary or competitor actions, or even severe weather can upset the flow and quality of information. At the very least, this results in frustration and feverishly working people.

Catastrophic equipment failure is a crisis, but it can also present new opportunities. For example, consider a flying squadron facing catastrophic technology failure in all of its aircraft. With the loss of primary capability, pilots, crews, and support personnel can still be an incredible source of talent and brainpower. The larger

network may find added resilience by leveraging this grounded unit. Temporarily repurposed as a talent depot, these people can answer questions, provide analyses, or generate solutions to complex problems that otherwise simply cannot be managed. In the larger network, this is the embodiment of resilient intent; despite sudden changes in ways, means, and risks, the desired outcomes remain. Therefore, leaders must also ask, "Is this the mission we want or the mission that is needed?"

When sudden and significant disruption happens, leaders may have to reexamine every aspect of the organization, its functions, programs, tasks, people, resources, and effectiveness. There also may not be much time to do this. Leaders who have prepared themselves and their organizations to exercise resilience have sustained, consistent, and disciplined analyses of all the elements in the reflective loop. By demonstrating resilient intent, leaders reaffirm their loyalties; reconsider and reflect on risks; scale and adjust the vision and values for the organization; prioritize functions, programs, and initiatives; and facilitate efficiency and resilience in all. Most processes following significant disruption will experience a loss in efficiency. Circumstances may require leaders and process owners to assume a mission-command mindset. They may need to adapt trust validation practices and assume that some will be at variance with the original guidance. Resilient leaders distribute control to relevant process owners, continue to develop emerging leaders, and guide the new organization with clearly stated vision and values.

Aside from the adaptive actions necessary in response to an "everything has changed . . . for now" event, leaders must also adapt their management styles. Doers/

directors and their organizations may not be the first to fail but will likely be the slowest to recover. Doers/directors, underinvesting in their people, cultivate a rigid and fragile organization with minimal resilience. They commit a mistake of omission—failure to devise strategies and integrate initiatives, such as the tech-proficiency balance, into their usual culture with resilience as a priority. Resilient organizations simply cannot be created *after* an emergency. In a contest to effectively close the gap brought on by surprise, those who are most resilient have the advantage.

Organizations developed by facilitators/integrators may still fail at the onset, but they are prepared to recover much more quickly. People in these organizations can grasp the power of persistence and the cumulative effects of partial solutions. Once integrated, people across a network, carefully developed to be creative thinkers and problem solvers, can create synergies and exponential ways and means for facilitating the mission. Creative and adaptive process owners are required for mission survival and mission success. Facilitators/integrators may never be able to prepare for every setback, but they can be assured that their investment in personnel and networks will prime their organization for quicker, more effective recovery.

## Conclusion

National and military leaders make significant efforts to prevent surprise using all the instruments of national power. Some ways and means include superior intelligence collection and analysis, innovative technology and strategy, partnerships

with industries, creating alliances, and global economic interdependence. Still, surprise can never be completely prevented, and not all risks can be anticipated.

The nature of conflict and competition is now *strategic* surprise, disruption, degradation, and denial of technological advantage. Sometimes surprise can occur suddenly with immediate effects. Sometimes surprise is slow burning and localized, operating just below cause for escalation. Both can challenge the intent of one nation or many nations. Effectively closing the gap between crisis realization and effective response, either localized and tactical in nature or widespread and strategic in scope, will require a leadership culture that embraces resilient intent.

Transitioning new operators from specialist "doers/directors" to generalist leaders and "facilitators/integrators" requires careful selection and development. However, specialization of expertise within an organization is also necessary and must be equally nurtured and maintained. Balance is a consistent theme in a resilient-intent culture.

Developing facilitators/integrators requires senior leaders who can appraise junior leaders largely upon the ability to collaborate successfully, sustain sound judgment, and remain decisive. Developing resilient command-and-control architectures requires intensive training and exercises that empower all participants to work through gaps caused by disruption, degradation, and denial of technology. Facing likely mission failure is required to verify mastery of the craft critical in preparing for surprise. Therefore, senior leaders must value certain types of failure during training. The right kind of failures during training and exercises will stimu-

late debriefing sessions rife with frustrated and shocked operators and leaders in the formative parts of their professional lives. These failures should occur often enough that surprise becomes a comfortable presumption, real-time innovation becomes expected, and scalable collaboration—even at the tactical level where young leaders desire independence—becomes a cultural norm. Once excellence in expertise is verified, the force must be *validated for surprise*.

- Why Don't I Trust My People?
- What Is My Problem with Risk?
- What Do I Do with all this Free Time?
- Who Is the "They"?
- What Is Wrong with My Supply Chain?
- Am I the Leader I Want To Be––or the Leader the Organization Needs Me To Be?

These six questions are relevant for any leader, formal or informal, in any organization, in any role. Use them to push yourself and your organization beyond the edge of familiarity. Cultivate resilience in your people. Optimize their mission effectiveness. Prepare them to adapt and grow stronger. That is REAL leadership.

## Notes

1. This is a synthesis of concepts from Lind et al., "Changing Face of War."

2. Lt Col (Select) Stewart Parker, special tactics officer, interview by author, 9 March 2015.

3. Mastro, "Operational Resilience," 5.

4. Office of the Secretary of Defense, Strategic Capabilities Office, interview by the author, January 2015. Information obtained under conditions of nonattribution.

5. Fairholm, *Leadership and the Culture of Trust*; Office of the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, *Mission Command White Paper*; and Scaife and Mills, *Paradigm of Trust and Dialogue*.

6. Office of the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, *Mission Command White Paper*.

7. An excellent analysis of the type of military branches and cultural approaches for these models can be found in Groysberg, Hill, and Johnson. "Which of These People Is Your Future CEO?"

8. Army Doctrine Publication 6-0, *Mission Command*, 1.

9. Gen Joseph Votel, commander, US Special Operations Command, lecture and interview by the author, 23 March 2015.

10. The progression of dependence, independence, and interdependence is derived from Covey, *The Seven Habits of Highly Effective People*.

11. *Merriam–Webster Dictionary*, s.v. "micromanage," http://www.merriam-webster.com/diction-ary/micromanage, accessed 24 February 2015.

12. International Organization for Standardization (ISO) Guide 73:2009, *Risk Management—Vo-cabulary*, s.v. "risk management," https://www.iso.org/obp/ui/#iso:std:iso:guide:73:ed-1:v1:en.

13. Hubbard, *Failure of Risk Management*, 49.

14. Mohun, *Risk*, 4.

15. Beck, *Risk Society*, 19.

16. Beck, *World Risk*, 4.

17. A concept adapted from Schein, *Organizational Culture and Leadership*.

18. Mohun, *Risk*, 5.

21.  Statement of the President to the National Defense Executive Reserve Conference in Washington, DC, 14 November 1957, http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/?pid=10951.

22.  Col Brett Nelson, USAF, retired special tactics officer, interview by author, 11 March 2015.

23.  Kozaryn, *American Forces Press Service*, 6 August 1996.

24.  See Adams, *Risk*.

25.  This was originally entitled "risky shift" by James A. F. Stoner in 1961. The proven concept is that people make different decisions about risk when they are alone and is discussed in an operational context in Atkins, "Human Factors in Avalanche Accidents."

26.  For a concise discussion on delineating wisdom and prudence, see Miller, "The Military Ethos and the Hero."

27.  Col Brett Nelson, USAF, retired special tactics officer, interview by author, 11 March 2015.

28.  These are called "wicked problems" as opposed to "tame problems." For a simplified discussion see Seidensticker, *Future Hype*, 45–48.

29.  Nelson, interview.

30.  Palaoro, "Decision Superiority and Information Operations."

31.  This section assumes the anonymous adage, "Time should never be spent, but ever invested."

32.  For excellent vignettes on facilitators/integrators at the operational and strategic levels, see Kennedy, *Engineers of Victory,* and Sheehan, *Fiery Peace in a Cold War.*

33.  Dr. James Young, psychologist, interview by author, 2 April 2015; and Nelson, interview.

34.  Capt Gary Charney, interview by author, 5 May 2015.

35.  The idea that the evaluation of personal experiences leads to growth is from Pastor Andy Stanley of Northpoint Church in Atlanta, Georgia, from his lecture series entitled *Starting Over*.

36.  Captured elegantly in Hartford, *Adapt*.

37.  Covey, *Seven Habits of Highly Effective People*.

38.  Hostage and Broadwell, "Resilient Command and Control." 39.  Roman, *Command or Control Dilemma*, 2.

40. Ibid., 3.

41. Creveld, *Command in War*.

42. Young, interview.

43. Personal interview with Dr. Chad E. Morrow, psychologist, interview by author, 22 July 2015.

44. Blaber, *Mission, the Men, and Me*, 70.

45. Air Command and Staff College Lecture on Civil-Military Coordination Centers, International Security Studies, September 2014.

46. This is excellently captured by Mastro, "Operational Resilience." Creating an organization that positively responds to volatility or crises is discussed at great length in Talib, *Antifragile*.

47. Center for a New American Security (CNS) Report, "Surviving on a Diet of Poisoned Fruit," executive summary.

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# Practical Exercises

**Surprise**

1. What is surprise?

2. Historically, militaries have prepared for emerging threats and surprises by investing in ?

3. What is resilience and does it matter?

4. Why does resilient intent require postindustrial-age practices? Provide two original examples.

5. Why does resilient intent require post-information-age practices? Provide two original examples.

**Trust**

1. Answer the question in 250 words: To what extent do I trust my people? Why is trust important in the workplace? Is it more, less, or equally important in combat or deployed environments?

2. List three significant events in your life or career that shaped the extent to which you trust others.

3. To the extent that I do not trust, what work-arounds have I practiced to overcome this?

4. Do those work-arounds limit my leadership ability because I become more saturated with tasks?

5. Does the lack of trust inhibit innovation in my organization?

6. In 250 words, reflect on the quote, "Leaders must practice trust—then they can rely on it when the operations tempo, complexity, and scope of efforts increase and frequency, consistency, and reliability of communications technology decrease."

7. What are the problems (if any) with trusting too much?

8. How can I verify the performance of those I supervise without being malicious or distrusting? Do formal inspections help or hinder this? If they hinder, what kind of verification practice can improve trust without diminishing morale?

9. Compare the "mission-command" operational model with "process-oriented" and "mission-control" operational models.

10. Which works best in your work environment? What other work environments have you seen where one was more appropriate, but where the limits of trust shaped the use of a less-than-optimal operational model?

11. List 10 reflections or experiences from any time in your life that have shaped your loyalties.

12. Reflect upon past leaders and your perception of their loyalties; did their loyalties help or hinder the mission?

13. List five memories of "scars": What did they do to frustrate or hurt you? As you reflect on them, were there any weaknesses they had in common?

14. List five memories of "superstars." What did they do to impress you? As you reflect on them, were there any common strengths?

15. In 100–200 words, reflect upon the term "professional intimacy" and its relevance to your effectiveness as a leader.

16. Discuss the following point: Leadership requires deliberate investment in facilitating the success of subordinates and advocating on their behalf. Aside from the immediate benefits of a trust culture, this works toward building a necessary reserve of future leaders better prepared to demonstrate resilient intent.

17. Discuss this idea: "Leaders who limit the amount of trust placed in their people limit the growth of their people."

18. When is micromanagement a good idea?

19. How can leaders better develop their people in order to move away from the micromanagement or mission control model?

20. Answer the question in 250 words: How can I cultivate a culture of trust in my organization?

**Risk**

1. Answer the question in 100 words: What is my approach to risk?

2. When rapid and effective responses are required, where can leaders draw new ideas and creative solutions from?

3. Should a leader's efforts to gather creative ideas be limited to certain types of people or certain service member career fields? Can the best ideas and solutions come from individuals outside traditional organizational structures?

4. What are my problems and concerns with risk? Which one of the following four examples best fits me? Which concern me at work? With friends?

   - risk aversion
   - zero-defects mentality
   - risk denial
   - risk shift.

5. Are there any key events in my life that influenced my perspective on risk?

6. Discuss the importance or irrelevance of considering "opportunities" along with risk when making leadership decisions.

7. How can leaders develop their people to "learn to discern and manage risk rather than fear, disregard, or mock it"?

8. When is trust a necessity?

9. Consider any examples from yourself or other leaders who treated trust as a luxury versus a necessity. What was their approach, if any, to developing trust?

10. Create a notional "basket" of five common decisions in the workplace and at home. Select at least two that are personally difficult for you each time you approach the common situation.

11. One at a time, select the appropriate risks from Table 1, page 17. Assign as many as are relevant to each of the five decisions in your "basket." Discuss opportunities along with each decision in 100 words or less.

   Decision 1:

   - Professional
   - Mechanical
   - Internal
   - External
   - Opportunities

Decision 2:

- Professional
- Mechanical
- Internal
- External
- Opportunities

Decision 3:

- Professional
- Mechanical
- Internal
- External
- Opportunities

Decision 4:

- Professional
- Mechanical
- Internal

- External
- Opportunities

Decision 5:
- Professional
- Mechanical
- Internal
- External
- Opportunities

12. Consider this idea: "Plans rarely survive contact with reality, much less an enemy. Unexpected barriers or disruptions that will increase response times and slow adaptation." How do leaders prepare themselves and their organizations for surprise?

13. Reflect on this: "Leaders not sufficiently accounting for risk in their plans can quickly become encumbered during a crisis. In a reactionary state, they will increase the time required to mitigate ongoing problems and to find new opportunities in evolving conditions." Recalling or imagining a real-world example, explain in 75–150 words why being a leader in a reactionary state does not maximize personal or operational effectiveness.

14. What are the three most common risk-management models military leaders use?

15. Referencing your decision "basket" above, what type of common risk response (if any) do you default to when a tough decision must be made? Why?

16. How are your loyalties and values related to the type and extent of risk you will assume? How much risk do you expect your subordinates to accept as compared to your own?

17. Referencing the quote, "Leaders must be able to anticipate changes and adapt their decision-making frameworks to new visions and values within which they must operate—these require both action and agility. . . . Rapidly adapting one's approach to risk either by seizing opportunities emerging from new constraints or by recognizing sudden acceptance of flexibility from one's leaders indicates a high degree of resilience." For what types of evolving operational work environments would you consider adapting your risk discernment?

18. Discuss a decision where a leader must commonly weigh short- and long-term risks and opportunities.

19. Answer in 500 words: How can I cultivate a culture of risk-right approaches in myself and my organization?

**Free Time**

1. What types of activities fill up your work schedule? List no fewer than 30 workday activities, to include personal time such as email, exercise, restroom breaks, smoke breaks, and social media.

2. Is the following quote true for you? "Many good leaders have a strong conviction that being busy is directly proportional to the relationship of productivity, effectiveness, and value."

3. Is there a relationship between the amount of free time available to leaders and the extent to which leaders trust their subordinates?

4. "Leaders must also be compelled to think. A sound decision-making framework should, at a minimum, account for the direction of the organization, organizational effectiveness, and the actualities of the overall improvement of the organization and reflect the leader's effectiveness." Consider current or past experiences; how thoroughly do you or your leaders consider these elements when making decisions?

5. Below are the elements of the "reflective loop." Reflect upon your present or most recent assignment.

   • People

   • Functions, tasks, programs, initiatives

- Resources
- Risks and opportunities
- Leader's own effectiveness

6. What are/were your vision and values? How often and what methods did you use to communicate them? What could have been more effective?

7. How much value did/do you place on investing in relationships? In personal growth?

8. Is your organizational effectiveness limited largely by the health of the individuals within it?

9. What mechanisms did/do you collect and report data and Information?

10. List top five examples of how you have or another leader has inspired, disciplined, and rehabilitated subordinates:

11. Discuss what tasks you as a leader actually have to do and those that you can facilitate.

12. How have you or how can you better integrate people, ideas, capabilities, or initiatives? What are the risks and opportunities associated with integrating across organizations?

13. Do you subscribe to the idea that individuals and organizations are made stronger and more effective by strategic "pauses" or deliberate recovery periods?

14. How do you prioritize rest? When have you taken or ordered your organization to slow its pace? Taken a deliberate pause?

15. Reference figure 2. Consider your current or most recent leader's vision and values. Were they clearly communicated early and often? List five innovative ideas that would've fallen within their vision and values domain (shaded area, figure 2, page 39). List five ideas that would not fit in the shaded area.

16. Elaborate on the following: "Organizational resilience, redundancy, and creativity in lower-level leaders, distribution of control, and optimized processes all free up leaders' time and enable more *thinking* and *leading*." Applying a relevant example, how does this relate to short- and long-term risks and preparing for surprise?

17. Consider the importance of not reinventing the wheel at your workplace. Are lessons learned effectively integrated into processes and decisions to improve operational effectiveness? If not, why not?

18. According to the book, what are the three primary barriers inhibiting the development of facilitator/integrator culture?

19. Leaders must acknowledge that the ways in which one learns and grows to master a single craft or capability are different from how a leader must evolve. At what point in your career does this event take place? How will you begin to transcend the cultures within which you spent your formative years?

20. Martin van Creveld's analysis of 2,500 years of command in war indicates that a commander's intent is achieved more prudently when leaning toward centralization of decision-making. Does this remain true when conducting operations when communications are disrupted or denied?

## Who is the "They"?

1. The ability to truly influence outcomes depends upon a leader's ability to find and influence the _____.

2. What is the difference in roles from a point of contact and the owner if the two are separate individuals or organizations?

3. "Once leaders begin to populate the charts with names *and* faces (investing in relationships) by establishing personal connections (developing professional intimacy), the charts become living things. The powers of personal connections are significantly enhanced by cultivating professional intimacy rather than strict reliance on transaction-based relationships driven by self-interest."

Is this a true statement, or should organizational structures be adhered to with such discipline that informal relationships are discouraged?

4. A significant barrier to influence or collaboration with an owner exists when loyalties, authorities, or risk management are dissonant. In cases like this, formal processes to engage a higher-placed "owner" to advocate on the leader's behalf may be necessary. Leveraging the chain of command in this manner can be very useful if your initiative falls within the boss's vision and values and especially when the boss is willing to assume the risk. List examples of initiatives when you or past leaders advocated these sorts of initiatives and three examples when they did not.

5. What Is Wrong with My Supply Chain?

6. Reflect upon the key technology required to complete your day-to-day tasks. To what extent is your mission dependent upon this technology working?

7. Within a properly secured facility, concisely list five tactics, techniques, or procedures (TTP) fundamental to your primary mission.

8. List an alternate method for each TTP if your primary technology fails.

9. Consider the scope of your organization's mission. Do you have a tech-proficiency balance that continues the mission, given risks associated with combat operations against a technologically advanced adversary?

10. What about humanitarian operations in a communications-denied environment?

11. Define the term "optimization" according to the book:

12. How can the organization you are responsible for be optimized for both its primary mission *and* surprise?

13. The author asserts that "winning and overcoming sudden disruptions or crises will be for the most resilient organization, not necessarily the most technologically advanced." Have you or your leaders integrated preparation for surprise in their vision and values? If not, how could they? What would be the cost in training and time?

14. What are the risks and opportunities associated with deliberately preparing for surprise?

15. What are the risks and opportunities associated with not preparing for surprise at all?

## Am I the Leader I Want To Be—or the Leader the Organization Needs Me To Be?

*Answer the following questions in 1–500 words each:*

1. Am I the leader I want to be—or the leader the organization needs me to be?

2. Is this the organization (structural design and processes) I want or the organization the mission needs?

3. Is this the mission (are we doing business the way) we want or the mission that is needed?

4. What are the three primary areas I need to focus on or enhance to make myself and my organization more resilient?

5. What are the specific or concrete steps I can take to start enhancing resiliency in those specific areas?

6. Whose help do I need to enlist to speed the change process outlined in those areas?

7. What are the indicators that I have been successful in making the changes above?

# Index

"Today, commanders are prepared better than ever to lead through crisis. But what if the commander is taken out? Who will fill the void and continue mission? You will. Be ready. And who would replace you? Get them ready. Now."

—*Lt Gen Eric E. Fiel (Retired)*

"If you want to know what the Next Generation Airman may look like, or want to begin your journey to become one, answer Sawtelle's six questions."

—*Col Larry Broadwell, USAF*

"Jonathan Sawtelle's work on leadership and resilient organizations is exceptional research—easy to read and unforgettable. Take this book with you and prepare to thrive in any environment."

—*Col Stephen A. Rose, USAF*



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