



# Personal Leadership During a Crisis: How to Stay Clear, Confident, and Calm in the COVID-19 Pandemic

By Joelle K. Jay, Ph.D.

I've spoken about personal leadership – or the leadership of the self – many times in the past, but what does personal leadership mean during a crisis, like COVID-19?



If you're like many leaders, on a day-to-day basis you often find yourself swept away by the busyness - away from the sound principles of effective leadership, away from some of the essential things you want to do (but never have time for), and even away from yourself. But now, faced with the pandemic, we find ourselves confronting a new issue entirely – leading yourself during a crisis, when in addition to all of those priorities, you're trying to manage the intense emotions – your own and of those you lead.

During times like these, if you're able to lift yourself out of panic mode and leverage an optimistic mindset, you have an opportunity to productively move forward and stay clear, confident, and calm despite the crisis.

Start by asking yourself:

- What am I learning now, and how can I effectively address it?
- What do I want from myself, for the people I lead, and for my life and business, no matter what uncertainty the future (and the present!) may hold?
- How can I carve out time for reflection and detox so I can continue to stay focused on what matters most for myself, my family, and my career?

By the way, if you are (as so many of us are) now working and leading from home, you face a whole new level of change and challenge that can also derail your progress. Or, with the right mindset, it might improve your process. Take advantage of the time saved in this work-from-home world. The time you would usually commute, hang out chatting in the halls, or putter about your office might be repurposed now for some much-needed rest and planning.

I encourage you to give yourself permission to use your time in quarantine to think about what projects you want to pursue. Decide what can you do with this opportunity, and you won't

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Originally Published on LinkedIn

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Joelle K. Jay  
EXECUTIVE COACH, SPEAKER AND AUTHOR

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emerge from this period three months later and find yourself in any kind of career setback. You'll emerge stronger and more resilient than ever before – ready to succeed with the challenges ahead.

There's no question that we find ourselves in unprecedented times. It can be a time of confusion and uncertainty. For leaders who take the opportunity, though, it can also be a chance to create the kind of leadership that's built from a stronger, more sustainable foundation.

*For more practical exercises and advice on personal leadership, see Joelle's book: [The Inner Edge: The 10 Practices of Personal Leadership](#).*



[Joelle K. Jay, Ph.D.](#), is a Director with the [Leadership Research Institute](#) and an executive coach specializing in leadership development. She strategizes with business leaders to enhance their performance and maximize business results. Her clients include presidents, vice presidents, and C-level executives in Fortune 500 companies such as Microsoft, Google, and Adobe. She is the author of [The Inner Edge: The 10 Practices of Personal Leadership](#) and [The New Advantage: How Women in Leadership can Create Win/Wins for Their Companies and Themselves](#). To connect with Joelle, go to [www.JoelleKJay.com](http://www.JoelleKJay.com) or email [Info@JoelleKJay.com](mailto:Info@JoelleKJay.com).

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