



## Leadership Amidst Disruption

By Jonathan Lightman

In about a month, I will be delivering a keynote address to several hundred people on the topic of leadership. As expected, there is no shortage of information: roughly 115,000 peer reviewed papers, 31,339 on leadership styles (up from a mere 499 in 1960). In other words, I've got a lot to digest.

Having simultaneously ran a 501(c)(6) professional membership association and 501(c)(3) policy institute for nearly 20 years, I can easily rattle off several guiding principles on leadership: be steady, set goals, deliver the best while preparing for the worst, and remember to breathe. Through all this, the organizations I led not only survived, but thrived through the constants of death, taxes, and change.

But there's a palpable change in much of the world, certainly the United States, where Future Shock seems like child play. Today's environment is less about steering the ship toward calm waters than embracing the storm we're in. With a divided society, disruptive government, and inability to discern fact from fiction, there are no calm waters on the horizon. It's an Oz-like fantasy at best, not anywhere close to those still in Kansas (or wherever).

At a minimum, today's leaders must not only understand, but prepare, for the following:

- Government can turn on a dime and pull the rug out from underneath you.
- Crisis management is no longer *ad hoc*, but must be standing, trained, and ready to go.
- Monetary reserves are no longer a goal but a necessity as disruption is liable to happen.

It used to be that only the strong would survive. Today, it's the strong and the nimble. Contingency plans are vital to any operation and leaders have to get on board. We'll never get back to yesterday, but there is a way forward for those who are ready.

If you'd like to explore this further, let's connect, [jlightman@whatsb-yond.com](mailto:jlightman@whatsb-yond.com), (916) 712-5827. In the meantime, wish me good luck on my talk. I've got to get back to my reading.