

# Crises Management

## by Swami Dayananda

### COMMITMENT

The best way of managing a crisis is not to create one. I deal with issues before they mushroom into crises and cause me stress and heartburns.

For my own freedom from stress, I have to make the commitment to a task and begin to do it. I have to prioritize my tasks in the order of decreasing difficulty and deal with them one by one: the most difficult first, the less difficult second, still less difficult third and easy ones later. Why are people often afraid to commit themselves? It is because of fear: fear of failure, fear of losing what one has, fear of repercussions in making a decision, fear of taking a stand.

A psychologist once wrote a book after visiting many countries and meeting many people. India was one of the countries he visited. In his book he said that among all the people he met, a *sannyasi* has the sanest mind. This is true because a *sannyasi* does not worry about tomorrow. That is what makes him a *sannyasi*. A sane mind is one that is free of the fear of morrow.

You may be unable to commit because you are afraid of losing your job. What will happen if you lose your job? Of course it is not the best of situations to be in, but it is not the end of the world either. You can search for another job. If you don't find one, you may not be able to live in the lap of

luxury, but you will not starve either. You can always support yourself by working at a fast food chain or at a car wash. You will survive.

The alternative or outcome of not making a commitment is to continue with a heavy heart at work. The fact that you do not commit nags your mind constantly. There is no escape from it. Therefore, it is better to take the plunge and commit yourself. Our whole life is a commitment. Living is a commitment, marriage is a commitment, an appointment is a commitment, a word given is a commitment. The Vedic culture is a culture of commitment.

In the *Ramayana*, *Dasaratha* gave his word to *Kaikeyi*; he gave her a boon. On an opportune occasion, she asked *Dasaratha* for the boon. She said, "I want Rama to be sent to the forest and Bharata to be enthroned." This was a shock to *Dasaratha* but he could not go back on his word. He had given her a blank check. He had not given his word that he would send Rama to the forest—that was *Kaikeyi's* wish. He had only told her that she could ask for something if she wished and he would fulfil it. Upon hearing *Kaikeyi's* words, *Dasaratha* said to Rama, "It is I who had given my word to *Kaikeyi*, but you have the right to refuse to go to the forest." But Rama declined. *Pitrvakyaparipalanartham*, to uphold the words of his father, words which

*Dasarathahad* actually given, Rama went to the forest.

In the *Mahabharata*, *Arjuna* came to his mother after winning *Draupadi*. He said to *Kunti*, "Mother, I have brought a gift," to which *Kunti*, without knowing what the gift was, replied, "Share it with your four brothers." On hearing this, *Arjunawas* appalled because he meant *Draupadi* to be a gift only figuratively. When *Kunti* came to know that the gift was really a girl, *Draupadi*, she was also nonplussed. *Kunti* then consulted all the elders. There were a lot of questions to be answered: how can *Dharmaraja* marry *Arjuna's* wife; how can *Draupadi* marry all five of them; how can *Kunti* put up with all this; how can the other relatives accept this. After much discussion, it was decided that since *Kunti*, the mother, uttered those words, they had to be respected. One wonders who is great in this: whether *Arjunais* great or *Dharmaraja* is great, or *Kunti*, or *Draupadi*.. Everyone is equally great; so earnest was their commitment to the given word.

These stories highlight our value for commitment. By committing, we uphold what we cherish. Therefore, I commit myself to a decision after I have understood the matter well. If I need to consult someone before I reach a decision, I do so. If it is in my power to commit, and if I have taken all the factors into account, then I make a commitment and stand by it.

When I assume a responsible position where I am expected to make decisions, people look up to me. I have to make commitments.

I should not be afraid of a commitment or a decision which involves pain. After having tried and failed in all my efforts to make a person work better, if I have to dismiss that person, the decision is painful. Even though I am not dismissing him because of a personal vendetta or a prejudice, the decision to let him go is still hard. Yet, I understand the issues well, it has to be done. Therefore, I must do it. I can call the person and gently explain the situation to him. I can let him go without destroying his self image totally. Still, I have to do it.

We have a particular *dharma*: you sacrifice something for a greater cause. To save your family, you sacrifice wealth. You sacrifice a family to save a community. You sacrifice a community to save the country. Do you know how forest fires are controlled? By controlled burning. Why? Because all the undergrowth, such as bushes and shrubs, has to be burnt. Otherwise, if there is a fire in one place, the whole forest will catch fire because of the dry undergrowth.

Therefore, for the sake of the company, if I have to do something that is difficult and painful, I have no choice but to do it. Otherwise, it may result in a crisis, and I may have to close down the whole business. To save the jobs of many, I may have to take away the job of one.

## PROCRASTINATION

By postponing things, by not dealing with issues on hand, I create a crisis. To avoid a crisis is to follow the old adage: a stitch in time saves nine. So, however difficult be

a decision, it will be more painful if I postpone it for later.

Many a good relationship is lost because one does not do the right thing at the right time. When someone writes to you and you keep postponing writing back to him, that person thinks you don't care, which is not true. What is to be done at the right time, if it is not done, can cost you a lot. Even marriages may be destroyed because of procrastination. If the wife wants to talk to the husband, and he keeps postponing the conversation because he suspects she has something unpleasant to say, ultimately it can lead to a crisis.

Let us consider the example of a procrastinating executive. When he goes to work, a few files are waiting for his attention on his desk. He picks up the one on top of the pile which receives his immediate attention. For this particular job, he has to consult another file. This implies that he has more work to do which he is not prepared for right now. Therefore he postpones working on it. So from the left side of the desk the file moves to the right. The next file requires him to make an unpleasant decision, which he is reluctant to do. Therefore, he decides to set it aside. This file also moves to the right. The next file is huge and demands the boss's help, but the boss does not want to take the time. The boss wants the executive to do it instead. This one also moves to the right. Then there is another file which involves a lot of research. This one also joins the

mounting pile on the right. There is one file which deals with a routine matter and is simple. Since the executive has come to work and he must do something, he acts on it. He dictates a letter and is rid of the file. So he attends to the only job which does not involve his commitment or require a decision or any effort on his part.

People tend to go for the easy and pleasant things and leave the difficult ones for later. This is a good strategy if one wants to get many things done as quickly as possible. But it becomes a failing in the person if he cannot face unpleasant situations and always goes for the pleasant. When the day is over, the files are still waiting to get the executive's attention, and with every passing day the files accumulate. After a few days he does not want to see the files on the table at all; they irritate him and so he stuffs them into the drawers. There comes a day when the work can be postponed no longer. The files must be looked at. And when the files are dealt with the executive goes home with a clean heart. He feels light hearted. There is a sense of satisfaction, a sense of accomplishment. Why? Because even when the files were in the drawer, they really went home with the executive in his heart. Any job undone hangs heavily in your heart. This is a risk both to your health as well as your job. Therefore, doing the painful task first and the pleasant ones later avoids crisis.

**Om tat sat.**

*Compiled by Swamini Vilasananda*

Page sponsored by:

**Sri Ramachandra Trust, N.Ramachandran,**  
5, Devadi Steet, Mylapore, Chennai 400004