

# Handbook for Spiritual Leadership Training

## Preparing for Change, Assessing Risk & Making Decisions

### DiscussionHandout For Long Distance Learning

#### *Week/Session 2 – Risk Assessment “Houston, We Have an Problem”*

**Before the Training:** Read, *Fundamentals of Change, Risk & Making Decisions* with particular focus on the portion addressing risk. Also, the section, *Scriptural Principles of Preparing for Change, Risk & Making Decisions* and then complete the DiscussionHandout questions prior to the coaching session.

#### Discussion Exercise #1 Risk and Ministry

One of the problems with risk is sometimes we didn't see it coming, or if we did, we didn't understand the nature and characteristics of it.

For example, risk is nothing more than trying to predict:

- **identity**—the specific characterization of the risk.
- **mass**—the size of the risk.
- **velocity**—the rate at which the seriousness of risk is increasing, decreasing or staying the same over time.
- **tempocentricity**—how the risk is framed in time.
- **outcome probability**-- the percentage likelihood of the perceived risk actually occurring.
- **quantitative consequence(s)**—the impact of the risk if it actually occurs.

If, for example, you were an EMT (emergency medical technician) and responding to an emergency with multiple injuries you would first initiate a triage protocol to determine who's injured most severely, who can be saved and who can be left alone while treating more severely injured victims. One of the first things you must observe or notice is breathing and bleeding. With bleeding you need to determine how big is the wound? (*mass*). How fast is blood pumping out? (*velocity*). How long will it take for this person to bleed out or for the wound to clot (*tempocentricity*). What are the chances the person will live if not treated; if not treated? (outcome probability). What are the consequences if this person dies or requires a long time of intensive care and recuperation? (quantitative consequences). In assessing risk in ministry the four same variables apply.

#### Questions for Conversation Regarding the Characteristics of Risk

In the matrix on page 3, before your coaching session, list a specific risk event in your ministry. What is the worst thing that could happen? If your ministry involves children, perhaps it's failing to have adequately screened a sexual deviant or a bus roll-over or the loss of your ministry leader.

**Risk event:** *Identify a present risk issue in your ministry. It could involve security, key people, resources, support, etc.*

**Mass:** How big of a risk does this appear to beat the present time? What's its mass? In other words, if I ignore this risk what could go wrong and what would be the consequences? Is the risk big enough it could crush the ministry? If I devote a large amount of attention to this risk, is it worth the time?

**Velocity:** What's the likelihood of this risk escalating and getting out of control? In other words, what its velocity. Is it growing rapidly in its serious nature? Or, is it deflating on its own over time?

**Tempocentricity:** If I don't do something when is the risk likely to become an incident? In other words, its tempocentricity determines if this is an imminent danger or opportunity or do we have time to address more immediate issues?

**Outcome probability:** How likely is this to happen? Can you put a percentage probability on it? What makes you think it is high, low or moderate?

**Quantitative consequence:** If I resolve this issue now, what will happen or not happen? In other words, what are the quantitative consequences? If I wait for whatever reason--such as needing more resources, more information, more agreement, less opposition, less emotion, etc.—what will happen or not happen and to what degree or amount?

By breaking down a specific risk issue into its smaller pieces, does this help to gain a sense of control over the event?

**Discussion Exercise #1****Ministry Event Risk Assessment Sheet**

Risk Event	Mass	Velocity	Tempocentricity	Outcome probability	Quantitative consequence	Risk management strategies

**Further Questions for Conversation**

*When God first called Abram, what did he have to risk in answering the call?*

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*When God first called you to ministry what did you have to risk in answering the call?*

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*When God asked Abraham to sacrifice his son, what did he have at risk?*

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*Even though God hasn't tested our trust in him to the level of Moses but describe a time in your life when you had to put it all on the line (or the altar, as it were). What happened?*

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*Not everyone who is faced with those choices chooses the call of God. When the risks are so high as with Abraham and Dietrich Bonhoeffer, why would they risk everything for a call from God? How could they risk everything? What do you think they possessed?*

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