



# INSPIRING CONSCIOUS EVOLUTION

— WITH AMANDA FLEMING

**Communication through Crisis** - Principles and strategies for effectively communicating through crisis.

This is the time for managing the crisis as it is still unfolding. It requires excellent teamwork, a culture of absolute willingness to pitch in, courage, resilience, endurance, leadership and **effective communication**. This global challenge is clearly going to go on for a while.

Resilience at its core is all about relationships - connectedness - with ourselves and each other. Now is **not** the time to give yourself or others a hard time. Everyone is doing the best they can with the resources they have.

You can google for many resources but here are my tips for leaders communicating through crisis:

## **PART ONE - THE PRACTICAL**

**First Principle - Communicate daily:** Video calls and txt are working best

**Second Principle - Keep it real and keep it reassuring and simple**

**Third Principle - Event + Response = Outcome** (flexibility is key right now)

1. **Focus on what you can control** and whatever else you do - keep it real and keep it kind. *You do not need to hide how you are.* We are all struggling to absorb the implications of COVID19 - many unseen as yet.
2. **Convene a COVID task force** to identify and take responsibility for all the moving parts of your unique situation. Consider all the areas that will need attention outside of your BAU scenario. Meet frequently with your senior team for updates - face to face as much as possible. This could lead to a central online space where your customers and suppliers and teams can get relevant info from going forward. There are many templates out there to save you time.
3. **Speak the language of 'we'** as much as you can. Be consistent.

4. **Think carefully about how you 'frame' things.** Framing creates context and relevance. The way you frame things will affect the result. eg: A valid update is 'I have nothing to report' - silence is deafening at times of crisis.
5. **If staff cannot come to work,** organise ways (via your COVID task force) that your teams can support each other from home or in local community...we all want to help, and purpose staves off depression. Find what your staff can do to be of service to the wider community/your business.
6. **Arm yourself with facts.** If you don't have time, assign a trusted 'wing-person' to get the best info to you. Stay up to date in this very fluid environment. Show others where they can find reliable information (add your own govt's website to all comms). Work to respond wisely without spreading panic. Straight forward - less is more when everyone is bombarded and overwhelmed.
7. **Recognise and acknowledge there will be trade offs.** Competing priorities will need robust debate to address them - or instant decisions will have to be made. Be clear about your decision-making strategy and communicate it widely. Mistakes will be made. Encourage your business to recognise this - lead with compassion.
8. **Stay tuned in to your Intuition** and open yourself up completely to creative ideas from all your staff as to what the future might look like - at least for the next 1-2 years. Ask 'What if...? a lot... This could be a HUGE co-creative opportunity moment.
9. **Do what you can to start moving** towards that post pandemic future - even one hour a week doing 'thought experiments' will flex your imagination muscle (this is probably happening already). PLAN as best you can...make plans flexible...hope for the best, plan for the worst. Have plans A, B and C (and D, E and F!) based on different scenarios: We stamp COVID out/we mitigate till vaccine/we get overwhelmed...
10. **Help your people help your people as best you can.** Make sure you have a trusted surrogate ready to share the leadership comms role. If we get this right, we will adapt and carry on, different, and maybe better for the re-set. You can't do everything!
11. **Avoid being drawn into others' fear responses** - be the reassuring one. Fear diminishes our resources because we end up in reaction mode: **Event + Response = Outcome.** Notice if you go 'reaction mode' and take a moment to pause and re-centre yourself before you make significant choices.

## PART TWO - THE PERSONAL

1. **Get decent rest.** Exhaustion leads to poor decisions and communication errors. x6 hrs minimum - ideally 7-8hrs. Avoid over-consuming info before bed.
2. **Acknowledge** and accept the new realities to yourself as they emerge. We are collectively in new territory and we are making up the map as the best info is available. **Believe** we will get through together. Fear is not useful. A clear head is.
3. **Self care:** You MUST look after yourself... depression and despair are top of the list for people right now. Family harm is increasing fast. It is mission critical you manage your own internal state so you can be the reassuring one for others. The Ice House has a team of safe ears so reach out.
4. **Choose an online platform or two to learn (if you haven't already).** Zoom is very useful right now, and Google and Microsoft have effective meeting and sharing cloud-based tools plus there are plenty of social media spaces you can use to stay connected. If you are communicating online *give people the best tips for making it work*. People need to see your face for reassurance so avoid only communicating by phone, text or email.
5. **Consider the pastoral aspect of every leader's role.** The more emotionally connected your teams are (a 'we are in this together attitude'), the more resilient you will all be. Activate support plans in case of community spread for staff in other regions. Have people in your team (or you if possible) your people can connect with...and let them know where they can add ideas to the pot. Have discreet check ins with those who can struggle even on a good day...
6. **Build in some FUN...**make a silly video and share it with your team - organise 'light' competitions - let people see you. This situation *can be a team builder* if you let it. We can deal with serious matters but we also need to defrag and let off steam to manage collective stress.
7. **Support victims and respond quickly to any significant changes.** Wisdom is the application of intelligence AND compassion - be wise.
8. **Know in your heart** that we will get out the other side - great things will come of this time. BELIEVE. It is time to imagine a new future and get to work building it.

**More Free Resources:** [www.inspiringconsciousevolution.com/COVID](http://www.inspiringconsciousevolution.com/COVID)

I am at your service. You can email me direct to my personal address: [flyon.aj@xtra.co.nz](mailto:flyon.aj@xtra.co.nz) and I have also created a dedicated resource page where these tips are stored as well as some notes on Conflict Resolution, Framing and both my books (in case you are stuck with nothing to read :)

COVID19 is a disruptor unlike we have seen in modern history. We are going to need to find our way forward together. Evolution has no 'stop' button. It is time for us to 'consciously evolve' and do a bit of a re-set.

My very best to yours through this world changing time,  
Amanda

