



THE GAME HAS CHANGED

To all my family, friends and clients,
It has been a nonstop discussion around the Coronavirus. As a small business owner, I have been asked about my thinking, mindset and strategy for working through this global pandemic and now a public health crisis. The rippling effect of this virus and the subsequent economic impact has been huge.

Unpredictable storm clouds lie ahead.

Business has virtually come to a stop and I ask myself daily, what can I control as a business leader during an environment of total unknowns, uncertainty and ambiguity? What can you control? How can we continue to add value to our valued clients during this period? How can we come out of this crisis as stronger leaders and create even stronger firms for years to come? How can we enhance our virtual productivity? Let's stop there for now.

1-PUT YOUR OXYGEN MASK ON FIRST

As you can see from the picture of the oxygen mask in my home office, it serves as a daily visual reminder to take care of myself first and foremost. There is a reason that flight attendants instruct you on that procedure when we fly. If we don't take care of ourselves first, we can't help anyone else. So my friends, breathe. Take care of yourself, your mind and your body. You certainly have control of that. Read a book, start a journal, take a walk. Your takeaways from this period of our lives will help us to better inform the generations that follow us. Your clients need to put their masks on as well. **Let's find new ways to help each other through this unexpected and unwanted medical journey.**



2-STAY POSITIVE THROUGH ALL THE NEGATIVITY



Easier said than done, wouldn't you agree? It's easy to panic and think of worse case scenarios. It's okay to contingency plan and think about your options. Just balance it with some perspective. This is certainly the biggest global health crisis in my 65 years. Normalcy doesn't seem to exist anymore. We don't know and fully understand what may be coming. Rules don't seem to apply in this environment. And many folks are thinking of survival. Just staying alive for those that have been

affected. Paying bills and getting by month to month for many. Holding on to a job for some. And for many business owners, doing everything you can to protect the business that you passionately have built. Just my thoughts as I believe this will

get worse before it gets better, but I believe this too shall pass. I just wish I had a crystal ball. It sure hurts us all now seeing our business schedules blow up. I truly feel terrible about the misfortunes and challenges that are besetting many. **I remain positive long term that life will change and we will be better in the years to come.** Sure hoping so.

3-BE SENSITIVE TO THE NEEDS AND WORRIES OF OUR TEAMS

The old expression that there is no "I" in team, makes sense here. This is the time to be a great leader. Continue to inspire to be able to accomplish what you want for the future. Keep your hand on your team's heart while you may be forced to make some potentially tough decisions ahead. So stay committed to your calling and cause. Don't lose faith in the long term.



Keep the dreams alive and continue to control what you can. And if you have to make any really tough, courageous decisions, respectfully make them. All you can do is treat someone in a way that you would want to be treated, hopefully honorably and valued.

4-STAY CLOSE



This is one of my all-time favorite phrases. I always tell my family, friends, and clients to stay close. In this environment, the phrase is even more relevant. This is a time to comfort each other. I've always said the skills of acknowledging, clarifying and confirming are the heartbeat of world-class communications. So take your level of listening up a notch. Emotional intelligence should be at a world-class level. Focus on serving now, not selling. Find ways to be better partners. Bring some value add to the table. **Think of a courtesy service you may offer that may assist your clients to help them to more effectively deal with their clients.**

When the dust settles, I can promise you one thing, people will remember.

5-BE WILLING TO INNOVATE, IMPROVISE AND PIVOT IF NECESSARY

It truly is about thinking out of the box. Many people and firms are in survival mode now. You will need to get out of your comfort zone and find new and creative ways to deliver your services. Productivity will be challenged in the short term but I believe productivity can be enhanced in the longer term. Unfortunately, the Coronavirus is real. **You may need to accelerate an offering or deliver your services in ways you haven't tried before.** Clients still have needs. It's your job to figure out how to still be a great partner with them.



6-MAINTAIN PROPER CONTROLS ON EXPENSE MANAGEMENT



Your monthly review of cash outlays and investments in your business may require a weekly look and probably daily for the shorter term. Stay on top of this. No surprises and unnecessary wants vs. real needs for the short term. How long will your resources hold up? Invest wisely in things that could somehow drive or support a client revenue opportunity. And please don't forget that these are times when your value is at an all-time high. **Be smart, prudent, wise, and not cheap.**

7-ABSOLUTELY, POSITIVELY NO AMBIGUITY

Be clear on what needs to get done. Delegate properly. No finger-pointing. Nothing falls through the cracks and I mean nothing. You have to be flexible but that doesn't require you to lose or lessen world-class standards that should be in place. Everyone is on edge now worrying about their jobs, the financial impact on their families, day to day living and retirements. Many establishments are simply locking their doors. No notices, no compassion. And many of those doors will not re-open. Get stuff done that needs to get



done, it just might have to be done differently. **Allow some room for trial and error. Expect some early disappointments as you acclimate to a new working reality. In the long run, if you have good people, extraordinary people, let them run a bit and watch them figure it out.**

8-CLIENT AND PIPELINE MANAGEMENT ARE MORE CRITICALLY IMPORTANT THAN EVER



You have got to find ways to balance providing empathic service during a time of crisis and delicately keep your hand on the steering wheel as you maneuver through uncharted roads and water ahead. **Your clients are going through the same emotions that you are.** Their needs most likely have not changed and at some point when survival shifts back to normal or some version of a successful past, you will most likely be needed as you were before

but it may require new behaviors to compete in a different future. You could come out of this stronger if you really focus on ways to serve your clients in ways you hadn't thought about before or had not acted on before.

9-KEEP CHALLENGING YOUR THINKING AND YOUR TEAM

Your daily mantra should consist of, What else can we do? What do we have control of? How do we continue to provide extraordinary value during a time of real crisis? Get off the couch, turn off the news after you have heard it once to get your updates and get back to work. Now is the time to truly differentiate yourself, your team,



your company. **Do something.** Call a friend, call a mentor, and leave a message for your clients. Let people know you are thinking of them. How would you feel, how do you feel when you are not forgotten and someone calls for your advice. I'll tell you...valued!

10-PRAY



Pray for guidance, pray for the world to calm down, pray for the leadership we need to get this under control. And most important, pray for your health so you can help and attend to the needs of others. We can really make a difference now in the lives of others. Extend your hand in ways you may not have thought of. No regrets now, be abundant when

you can, and don't forget things you should be grateful for. Keep your perspective on what you have and what others do not. And finally, keep pushing yourself to be your best as you have an amazing opportunity now to truly live your legacy.

FINAL THOUGHTS

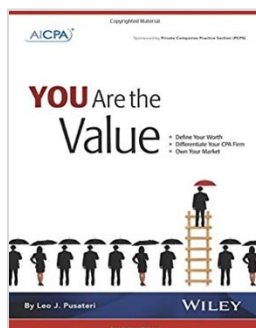
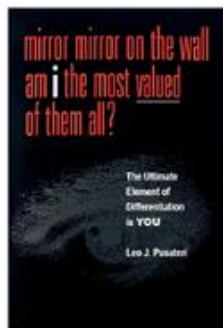
The one thing I am realizing now is that the time periods of short-term and long-term thinking have changed. Short-term thinking used to be 3 months to 1 year. Long-term thinking used to be 1 to 3, to 5 years plus. This Pandemic has altered our timeframes for strategic thinking and business planning in ways that we may not have ever imagined.

Short-term is becoming hourly, to daily, to weekly to 1 to 3 months. Long-term is becoming 3-6 months and beyond. We have to adjust accordingly to balance survival with focusing on things you can control and that could increase the certainty of longer-term growth, once this Pandemic is under control.

So keep the faith, make good decisions, stay relevant and listen to the health experts.

Let's help each other get through this-**WE WILL GET THROUGH THIS** and remember, stay close.

Leo Pusateri



pusateri!
discover your value

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