



Sitting in the Eye of the Storm



The 2005 hurricane season caused serious destruction in New Orleans and along the Gulf Coast. I remain stunned by the power of the storms that literally blew communities apart.

As I keep an eye on the progress made in this region since 2006 something else is becoming visible to me. In the midst of this chaos I see people dedicated to turning the remaining debris into something better and brighter. People with nothing left are on a mission to rebuild their personal lives, businesses, and communities. It is truly an inspiration to see.

I've often used the analogy of **sitting in the eye of a storm** in my work as a leadership development consultant. However, in recent months it has taken on new meaning for me.

- It is the moment when everything is swirling around us and we are rattled to the core.
- It is the moment when everything we thought we knew suddenly seems unfamiliar.
- It is the moment when we are not sure where trust resides in ourselves, our teams, or in the organization.

Like the real storm, debris is flying and we are whipped by the winds of change, fiscal challenge, employee issues and more.

However, something else happens when we ride out the eye of the storm. At a very critical point the winds shift and everything calms down. When the winds die down we too are surrounded by debris. Debris consisting of new opportunity, new challenges, broken programs, new programs, wounded employees, excited employees, exhausted leaders, energized leaders.

What we do immediately following the storm really matters.

I encourage you to follow the lead of our courageous professional sisters and brothers living in New Orleans and the Gulf Coast. **Take a deep breath. Gather all of your courage, and begin sifting through the debris left in your organization after the storm.**

Some will be of great use to you. Some will need to be immediately disposed of, and some you will set aside until it becomes clear how to use it in the future. Slowly but surely, with leadership and skill, you will find ways to build something new that may benefit your work in ways yet to be imagined.

I offer these thoughts in honor of our professional colleagues in New Orleans and along the Gulf Coast. May their commitment and courage to rebuild their businesses and communities inspire us all to new levels of leadership.

Adapted from The Leadership Journey, published in the Auburn Citizen newspaper