



## What To Do After The Moment of Truth

You know we've all been there. You're moving through life, doing a great job, confident in your competence and everything is under control. Perhaps you've done what you're doing many times before, and are happily on autopilot. Just as the smug look takes over your face, you relax and turn your attention to something else, BAM! There it is, out of the blue, something you may have overlooked or did incorrectly, something obvious and preventable, or something purely unexpected.

The next thing out of your mouth might be, "Aw shoot!" (or words to that effect.) "Am I embarrassed!" or "I'm much more competent than that." Maybe you think, "I know better" or, "Darn, that's not like me" or, since you expect perfection from yourself, "Pass the whip so I can beat myself!"

### MAYBE NO ONE WILL NOTICE

And here you are, with an outcome seriously out of sync with what you want,



expect, or, much worse, committed to someone else: your boss, your client, your friend, your partner, etc. Now, please admit that you have the same fleeting first thought that I have, "Hmmm, maybe no one will notice." This is also known as the kitty litter

fallacy: It may disappear from sight, but it will eventually be noticed and unfortunately gets worse as it ages. So simply watch that thought flit through your mind and wave it goodbye.

### YOUR MOMENT OF TRUTH

Next, sit down, take a deep breath, and acknowledge that you are at a "Moment of Truth." You can run, you can hide, or you can accept it gracefully and move forward. And the truth is, that the quicker you accept, the less impact you have on your self-esteem. Swift acceptance means: *You will learn this lesson.* Slow or no acceptance means: *You may not dare to try again.*



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OK, you accept it. You're accountable. Now what? You look in the mirror and tell yourself that you are in trouble. After the panic subsides, you begin to plan methodically for resolution. You get to work organizing your thinking. You marshal all your resources to ensure that you don't make a quick decision that will create further trouble. And, regardless of how much time you think you have to get the right effort started, you will do your best if you take your time and think in slow motion.

## APPLY TIME, ASK QUESTIONS

By applying time at the beginning, you'll be better prepared to take any necessary action. Here are the questions you can ask yourself:

### 1) WHAT IS THE PROBLEM?

Do I understand it? Can it be validated? Who can help me assess so that I have multiple brains at work on it? How much time do I have to fix it?

### 2) WHAT DOES IT MATTER?

Who or what is impacted? To what degree? Who are the stakeholders that I should poll for viewpoints? What will happen if we leave it alone?

### 3) WHAT RESOURCES DO I REQUIRE TO DECIDE WHAT TO DO?

Have I called in my "Best idea" people? Have I included that critical "It'll never work" person (my Eyore?)

### 4) WHAT ARE MY BEST ALTERNATIVE SOLUTIONS?

Are they fully defined? Do they contain intangible as well as tangible impacts? Are the tradeoffs clear? Have they been cross-validated by others? Do the stakeholders agree they are possible?

### 5) WHAT IS WITHIN MY CONTROL?

Do I need to escalate? Who needs to make the final decision about resolution? Do I have commitments from other parties who need to participate in the decision and/or the resolution?

### 6) WHAT IS MY RECOMMENDATION?

Am I confident in it? Do I have all ingredients for success within my control or committed by someone else? Will this keep the original problem from re-occurring? Have I paid attention to any nagging fears? Do I OWN my recommendation and/or decision?

See, it's easy. Now you can get on with it. Do what you said you would do. Being human isn't so bad, after all.

In closing, I offer a quote by M. Scott Peck: "The truth is that our finest moments are most likely to occur when we are feeling deeply uncomfortable, unhappy, or unfulfilled. For it is only in such moments, propelled by our discomfort, that we are likely to step out of our ruts and start searching for different ways or truer answers." Good stuff! ▲

#### Client Comments:

"Diane has written the clearest case for executive involvement in IT that I have ever seen."

- A state agency head

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