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Leading Diverse and Dispersed Teams in Times of Crisis

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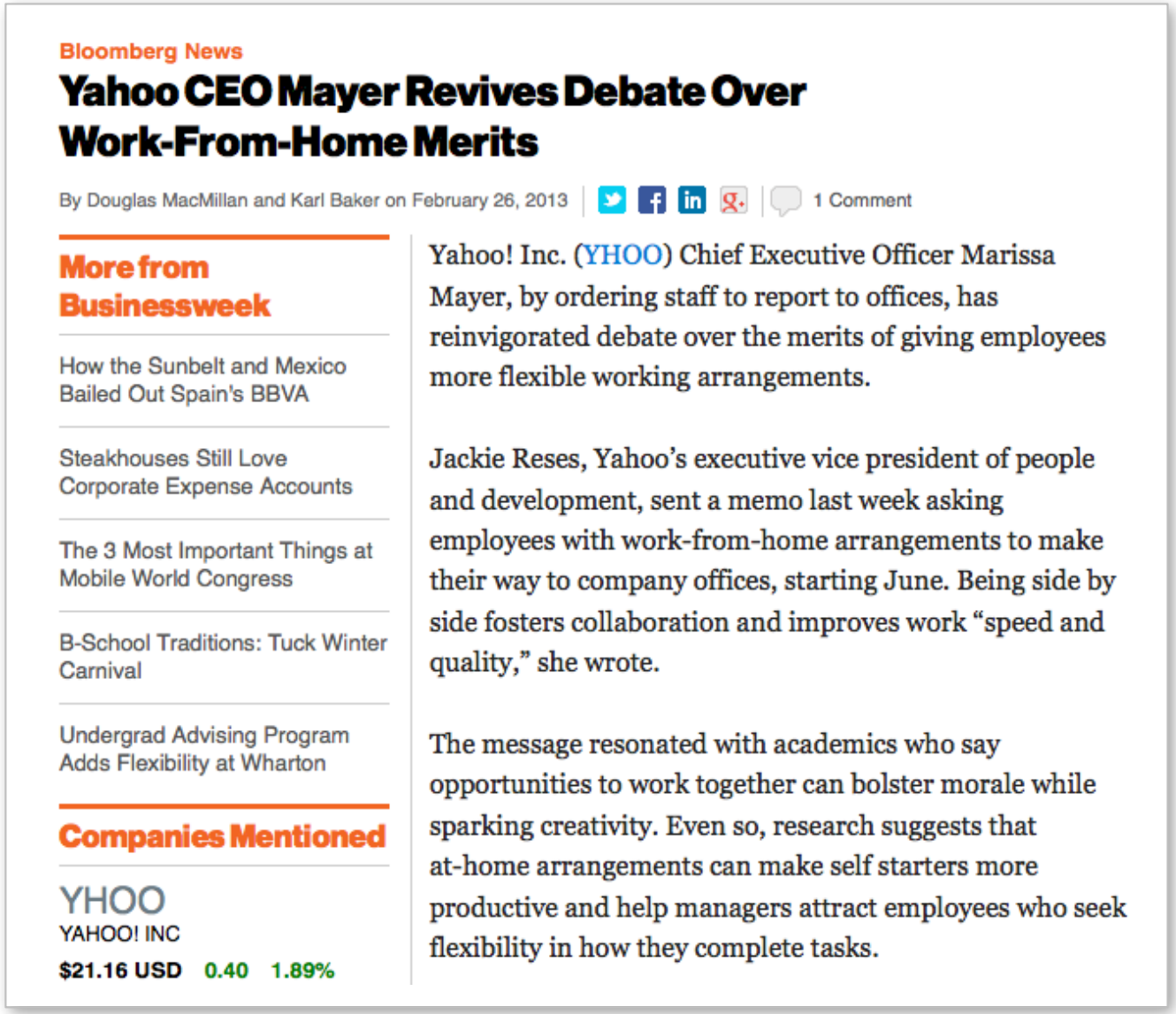
Remember This?

If only it were still a debate today…



Bloomberg News

Yahoo CEO Mayer Revives Debate Over Work-From-Home Merits

By Douglas MacMillan and Karl Baker on February 26, 2013 | 1 Comment

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Companies Mentioned

YHOO
YAHOO! INC
$21.16 USD 0.40 1.89%

Yahoo! Inc. (YHOO) Chief Executive Officer Marissa Mayer, by ordering staff to report to offices, has reinvigorated debate over the merits of giving employees more flexible working arrangements.

Jackie Reses, Yahoo's executive vice president of people and development, sent a memo last week asking employees with work-from-home arrangements to make their way to company offices, starting June. Being side by side fosters collaboration and improves work "speed and quality," she wrote.

The message resonated with academics who say opportunities to work together can bolster morale while sparking creativity. Even so, research suggests that at-home arrangements can make self starters more productive and help managers attract employees who seek flexibility in how they complete tasks.

When Working From Home Works

WFH Works Best

- Relatively Independent Tasks
- Sharing Explicit Knowledge
- Costs of Co-Locating Are High

Face to Face Works Best

- Highly Interdependent Tasks
- Sharing Tacit Knowledge
- Costs of Co-Locating Are Low

A Simple Recipe for Leading in a Crisis

Aim High

★ **Team Up**

Fail Well

Learn Fast

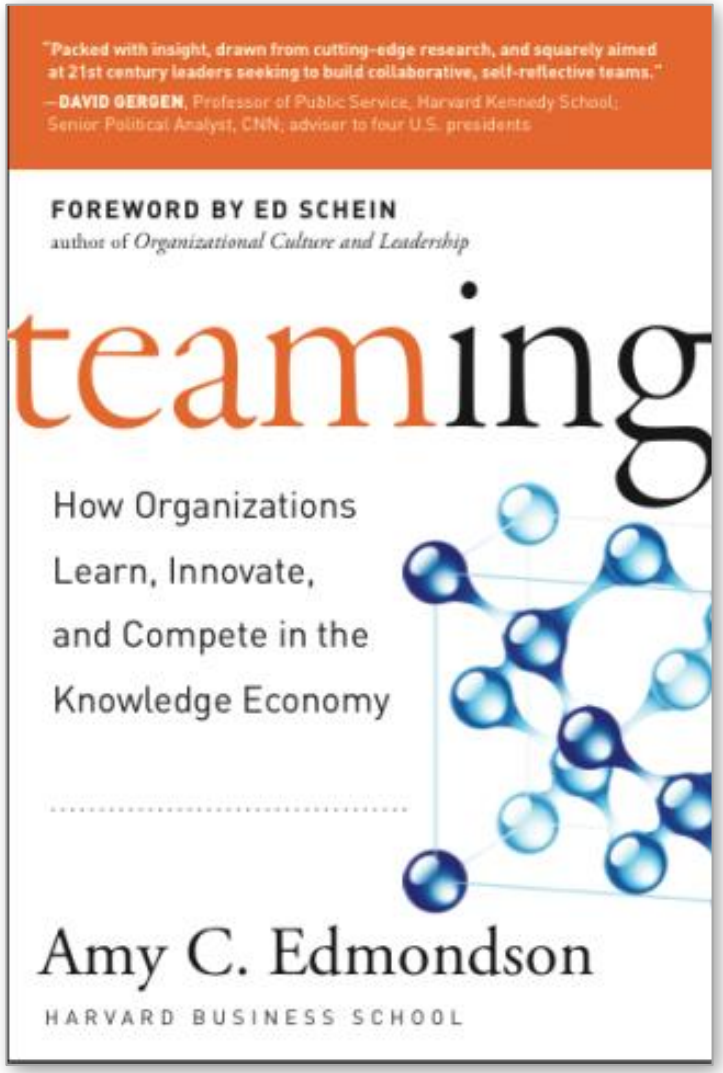
Repeat

Teaming is a Verb

team • ing (v.)

Teaming is teamwork on the fly-coordinating and collaborating, across boundaries, without the luxury of stable team structures

Teaming is especially needed when working in a crisis



What's been hard about leading your teams during COVID-19?

Elements of Effective Teaming

1. Hardware
2. Software

Elements of Effective Teaming

1 Hardware

- **Scoping** — Tentative goals & resources
- **Structuring** — Clarify interfaces for coordination
- **Sorting** — Prioritize "Reciprocal" Tasks

Teaming in a Crisis

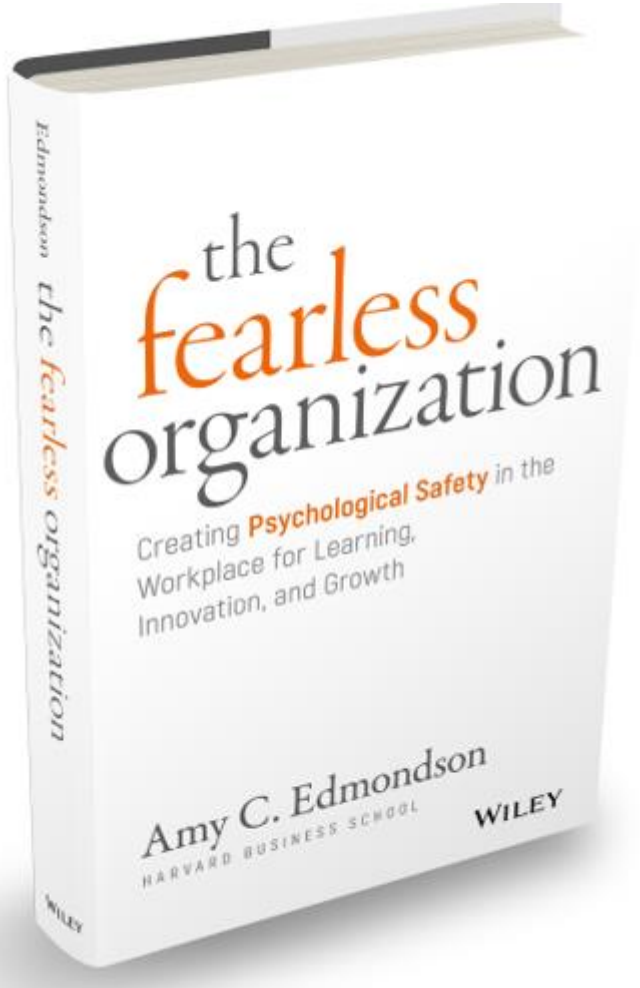
- You face many **UNKNOWNS**
- You have to bring in different **EXPERTISE** at different times.
- You **LACK** fixed roles and deliverables
- You often have to do things that have **NEVER** been done before
- You have to **ACT** – to learn
- It's **AGILE**, iterative and fraught with challenges…

Elements of Effective Teaming

2 Software

- Purpose — What's at Stake
- Psychological Safety — For Voice
- Empathy — Consider others' views & needs

Psychological safety



A belief that the context is safe for speaking up with ideas, questions, concerns, or failures – confidence that your voice will be valued.

Think of it as felt permission for candor.

Psychological Safety Is Not:

- x Being nice
- x Freedom from conflict
- x A guarantee that all your ideas will be applauded
- x Permission to slack off
- x A license to whine
- x Oversharing
- x *The Goal...*

Failures of Courage?

Or a Failure of Leadership?

Consider the different kinds of work your teams do:

Routine Operations

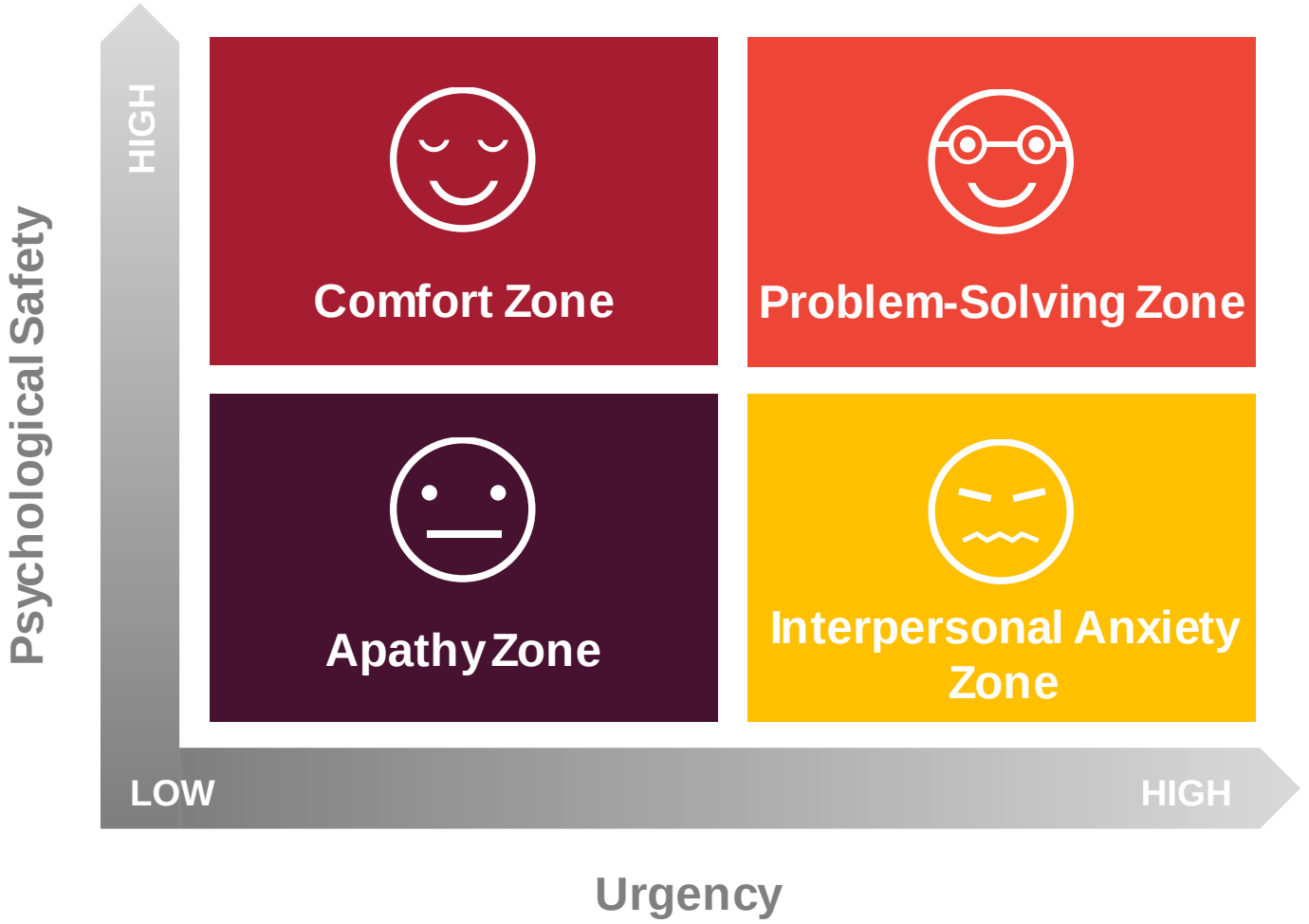
Complex Operations

Innovation Operations

Uncertainty

As uncertainty increases, psychological safety is more and more important to success…

Urgency + Psychological Safety → Problem-Solving



Fear that is shared is productive

Interpersonal Fear at Work	Fear Related to COVID-19
Subtle/Hidden	Obvious/Explicit
Experienced Alone	A Shared Experience
Concerned with What Others Think	Concerned with What We Can Do
Inhibits Innovation	Promotes Innovation

To the extent that your people have felt more comfortable than usual expressing their concerns and questions, how will you keep that transparency and vulnerability alive in the future?

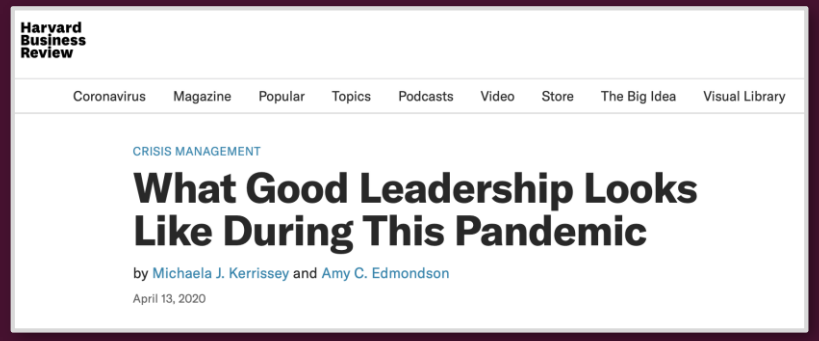
As a city leader, have you made any changes in your approach to leading teams during this crisis?

If so, what are you doing differently now, and why?

You don’t have this luxury!

Overcoming Instincts to Lead Effectively

Human instincts, combined with management training, lead us to the wrong approach in a crisis.


Harvard Business Review

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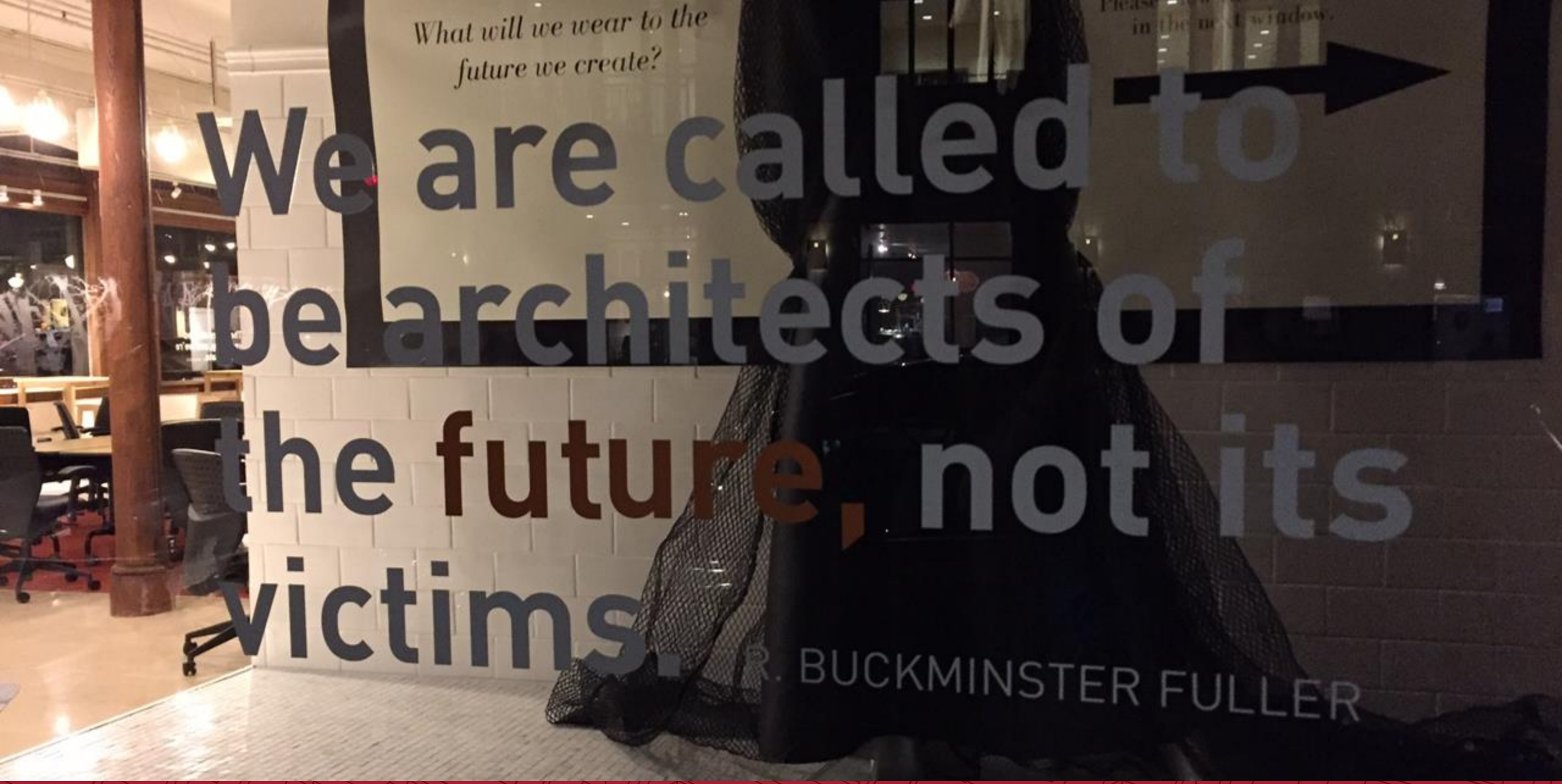
CRISIS MANAGEMENT

What Good Leadership Looks Like During This Pandemic

by Michaela J. Kerrissey and Amy C. Edmondson

April 13, 2020

What's *instinctive* when facing uncertainty	What's *needed* in a crisis
Waiting for additional information	Acting quickly on what you know
Downplaying the threat and withholding bad news	Communicating with transparency
Doubling down to explain your actions more clearly	Taking responsibility and focusing on solving problems
Staying the course	Engaging in constant updating


What will we wear to the future we create?
We are called to be architects of the future, not its victims.
R. BUCKMINSTER FULLER

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