

## ARE YOU EMBRACING DIFFICULT SITUATIONS?

*By Marilyn Thiet*

Yesterday I read a thought provoking blog post from Kim Ebinger, a highly respected coach, colleague and friend. Kim's blog titled "There Isn't A Playbook" (<http://www.kimebinger.com/blog/>) discusses our natural tendencies when difficult situations present themselves. In Jack Welch's latest Blog post "10 Leadership Resolutions to Make It a Very Good Year" he includes digging into crisis or difficult situations. Yet last week in my coaching conversations with leaders in multiple industries I heard a consistent theme around hesitancy to turn towards and fully embrace a difficult situation because they weren't sure how to solve it. It is so much easier to ignore difficult situations and just hope they go away or resolve on their own. But rarely does that ever happen. The person whose performance is great, but attitude is poisoning the team. The product or service launched last year that just hasn't met expectations. High potential talent continuing to leave, and lack of a succession plan to execute. We tend to use the excuse of giving the situation just a bit more time to resolve itself, because we know that digging into it will be hard work and many times we aren't quite sure how to even begin.

As leaders we mistakenly think we must have all of the answers, all of the time. When we don't have those answers or as Kim suggests, don't have a playbook on how to resolve everything, we are fearful of turning towards the situation. What if we can't resolve it? What if someone figures out that we don't know all of the answers? We fear losing the trust and respect of our peers and teams if we aren't able to quickly solve problems. Yet quite the opposite is true. Showing vulnerability as a leader will usually lead to more trust and respect. Ignoring a problem and letting it continue quickly leads to disrespect of leaders. Acknowledging that we don't have the playbook to resolve every situation opens one up to learning.

Which situations have you been turning away from in hopes they would resolve themselves? What should have been addressed last year and wasn't because you didn't know which moves to make or how to begin? How can you begin to create your own playbook that will give you the confidence you need to turn towards and embrace any situation moving forward? There are very few situations you face that haven't been addressed somewhere, sometime by someone else. Do the legwork to get your playbook started. Find a coach, search the web, talk to colleagues. Imagine the possibilities and opportunities that will come your way this year as you turn and run towards those situations that you have avoided in the past.

*"It is not in the still calm of life, or the repose of a pacific station, that great characters are formed. The habits of a vigorous mind are formed in contending with difficulties."*

~ Abigail Adams.