

How to Become the Resilient Leader Your Mission Requires

Resilience Toolkit and Webinar Series #8

with **Melanie Lockwood Herman,**
Nonprofit Risk Management Center

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How to Become the Resilient Leader Your Mission Requires

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The Nonprofit Risk Management Center inspires effective risk management and Risk

Champions across the nonprofit sector. We enable nonprofit leaders to identify and manage risks that threaten their missions and operations, while empowering them to leverage opportunities to take bold, mission-advancing risks.

About Us

Agenda



Setting the Stage for Risk Leadership



8 Characteristics of Effective Risk Leaders



Final Tips and Takeaways



Setting the Stage for Risk Leadership

Unpacking the Risk Leader's Role

Risk leaders help team members weigh the potential upsides of risky events, actions or decisions.

Risk leaders help others:

1. Appreciate the importance of taking risks to advance an organization's ambitious mission
2. Recognize the value of diverse perspectives anytime an organization is considering whether to take or accept a risk
3. Resolve to make risk-aware decisions, rather than defaulting to knee-jerk risk aversion when outcomes are uncertain



The Balancing Act

- Being a risk leader means learning to walk a delicate tightrope between risks that radically advance your mission and decisions so dangerous that if things went wrong, the organization would cease to exist.



What is Risk?

The term risk is often thought of as referring to a loss or potential harm. To be an effective risk leader, you need to think about risk more broadly. Here's a definition from NRMC:

- RISK = a future event, action, or decision with the potential to affect a key objective of your agency adversely or beneficially.

Key aspects of this definition include:

- Risks are FUTURE events, actions, or decisions. If it's happening now, it's not a risk! It's a reality.
- Risks have the potential to affect your organization adversely OR beneficially. We take and embrace risks because of the potential positive results we hope to achieve!



8 Characteristics of Effective Risk Leaders

1. Persistent Problem Solver

- Do you like puzzles? Do you get excited with the prospect of putting together a DIY furniture kit? Are you innately curious about how things work?

Successful risk leaders are naturally curious, determined problem solvers. In risk, there are no obvious answers. In fact, the most obvious answer might divert your attention away from an alternative, more fruitful solution!



2. *Humble Listener*

- Risk leaders must be self-aware, appreciate and recognize others' contributions, and be open to admitting when they are wrong.
- It's a misconception that risk leaders have all the answers! Successful risk leaders tune in to how concerns and issues make people feel. They listen to diverse stakeholders and seek out perspectives that support and refute risk solutions.
- They are also willing to rethink prior solutions and find better approaches. You cannot address risks with a single perspective or perpetual strategy that will be relevant for the ages.

3. Committed Planner

- Risk management takes many forms.
- Sometimes it's a casual conversation in the hallway or during a virtual meeting.
- However, at the end of the day, all risk conversations must be supported with action.



4. *Determined Advocate*

- Risk leaders are passionate advocates!
- They persevere to foster an open mindset and inspire teams to explore risks thoughtfully and without fear.
- Speaking enthusiastically and convincingly about safety, policies, and contingency plans is a key component of risk leadership.



5. Trusted Confidante

- Obtaining buy-in, encouraging staff to speak candidly, and securing commitments begins with trust.
- The successful risk leader assures team members that they are doing things for *the right reasons*.
- Risk leaders support and foster a risk culture where honesty is central. Risk leaders cannot function in a “gotcha” environment.



6. *Mission Devotee*

- Risk leaders must deeply, truly, and absolutely believe in what the organization is trying to accomplish.
- Risk management should never consist of excessive safety gates or defenses that water down or weaken a nonprofit's mission.
- Risk leaders support healthy risk-taking that supports and bolsters the mission of an organization.



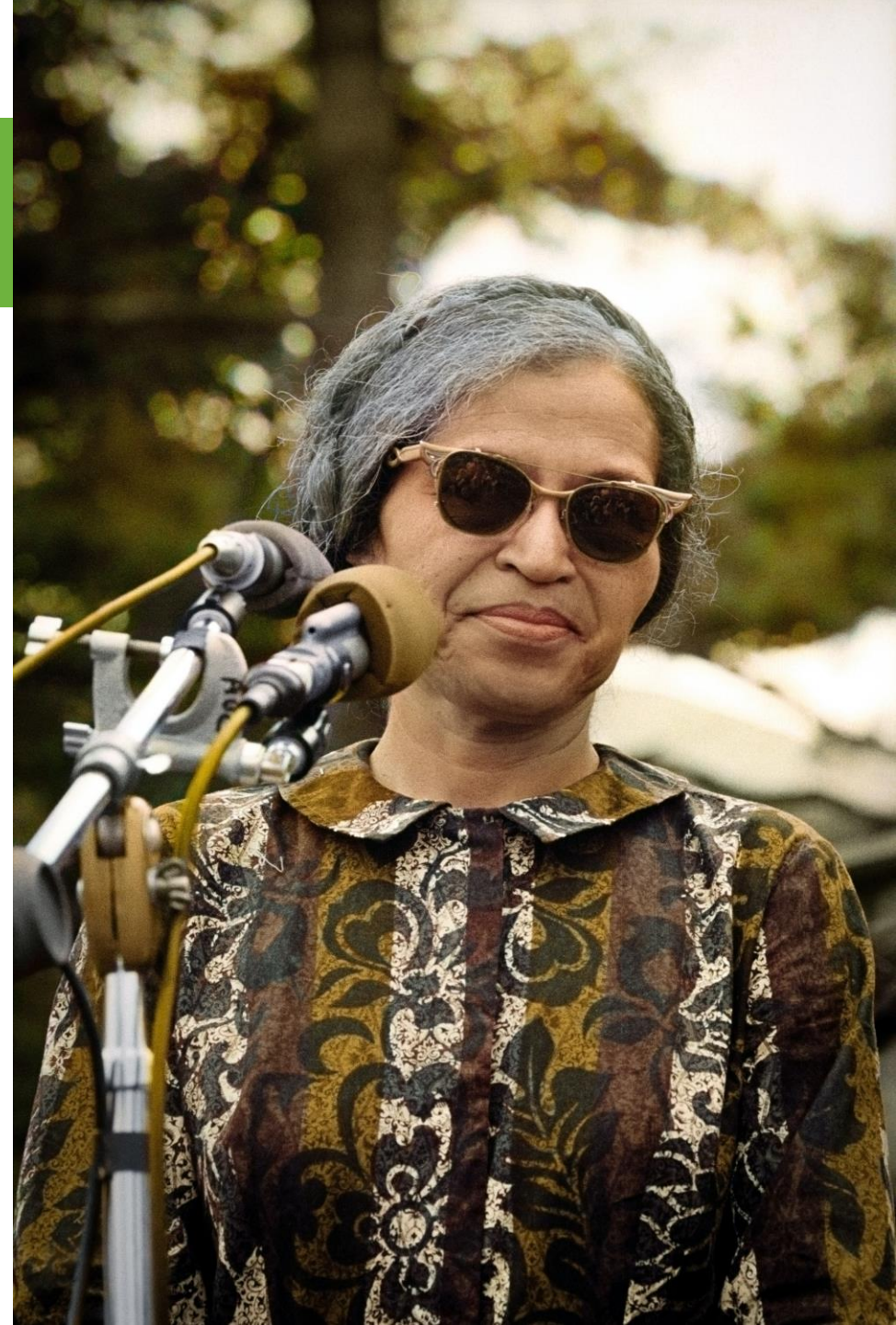
7. *First-class Communicator*

- Risk leaders must explain things.
- They write policies, draft contingency and continuity plans, and provide updates on emerging trends, concerns, and mitigation strategies.
- The successful risk leader must be comfortable talking to people on the front lines as well as leaders on the board!



8. *Calm, Confident Champion*

- People look to the risk leader for sage advice, to calm people's worries, and as an architect of plans in the face of chaos.
- Risk leadership requires a calm confidence – the ability to guide people through situations with compassion, empathy, and authority.
- A Risk Leader's words and actions help others feel optimistic and ready to meet challenges.





Final Tips and Takeaways



Listen to Learn

“Listening to employees will not only help make the most effective decisions, but it also builds trust, a scarce quantity during a crisis.”

– Scott Galloway, *Post Corona*

Always admit when you've been wrong



“A step backward, after making a wrong turn, is a step in the right direction.”

– Kurt Vonnegut

Bring your team together with a common goal

“Leadership is the ability to convince people to work together in pursuit of a common goal.” – Scott Galloway



Resources on www.nonprofitrisk.org

- [Round and Round: The Leadership Learning Loop](#), RISK eNews
- [What Star Trek Taught Me about Risk Leadership](#), RISK eNews





Thank you!

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Questions??

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