

PRAESTA

Which Fires Do I Put Out?

Many of our coaching conversations at times of major change or disruption are with people feeling pushed to their limits, whether in their work, their home lives, or both. Leaders worry about the wellbeing of their teams and feel they can't show their own vulnerability. Team members notice they can be easily upset by words or actions from others that they would normally take in their stride.

At the same time, we see a huge shared commitment to doing the right thing and not letting the team down. People are proud of the difference they are making. They want to be able to look back and say they were part of something big and worthwhile.

There are no easy solutions that work for everyone – but might it be useful to know some of the approaches that people tell us can help. Could one or two of them work for you?

As an individual, might you:

- Stand back and ask yourself: which are the fires I must put out, and which fires must be left to burn
- Resist beating yourself up when things go wrong: take the learning and concentrate on tackling the new reality
- Identify the signs of stress in your body or behaviours, and know which strategies help you return to your best self
- Find someone you can talk to about how you feel. If you worry about burdening them, say you don't need solutions, just a listening ear
- Recognise that the leader's emotions are contagious. Calmness inspires confidence – and admitting vulnerability can make it OK for others to admit what they are experiencing.

As a team, might you:

- Keep reminding yourselves of what really matters over the longer term
- Look for the opportunities, as well as the risks
- Stay focussed on the things that must be done and can only be done by this team working together
- Show curiosity about where partners and stakeholders are coming from, and what is most likely to influence their behaviours
- Avoid letting every meeting become transactional. Set time aside for the human connection and for moments that help you smile.