

# MINI-STUDY GUIDE

To

# 7 LESSONS FOR LEADING IN CRISIS



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# Study Guide to *7 Lessons*

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## Mini-Study Guide to “*7 Lessons for Leading in Crisis*”

By Bill George, Nick Craig  
and Amy Avergun

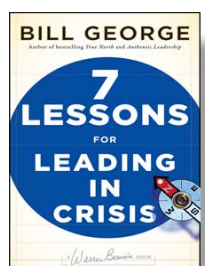
### **PREFACE**

The “7 Lessons Mini-Study Guide” offers you the opportunity to go deeper into your study of the *7 Lessons for Leading in Crisis*. You may use this guide for general discussions about the *7 Lessons* in order to deepen your understanding of how leaders cope with crises and wind up either succumbing to them or using crises to strengthen and enhance their leadership. In any case, there is a great deal to be learned about how leaders deal with the challenges they face that can help you develop as a leader.

With the benefit of this guide, you can also work with a group of friends or colleagues from your workplace to apply the *7 Lessons* to your leadership and the challenges you are currently facing in your work and in your life. Or you may use it individually or with a coach or counselor to develop deeper insights into the ways you have dealt with the crises you have faced, and to strengthen your understanding of how you should approach crises in the future.

The “7 Lessons Mini Study Guide” uses a question format to probe your thinking about dealing effectively with crises.

The full 58 page study guide is available for purchase at [www.billgeorge.org](http://www.billgeorge.org) or [www.authleadership.com](http://www.authleadership.com)



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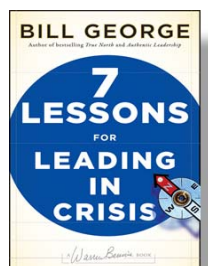
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## REFLECTION ON INTRODUCTION AND LESSON #1 FACE REALITY, STARTING WITH YOURSELF

### ***Reflections on Lesson #1:***

After reflecting on Lesson #1, answer the following questions in writing.

1. What is the biggest challenge you have encountered as a leader and what made it difficult?
2. What did you do well in the face of this challenge?
3. What did you learn about yourself from this experience?
4. Describe the most challenging situation facing you currently.
5. What role have you played in contributing to the current situation?
6. How do you treat others when they tell you the “ugly” truth?



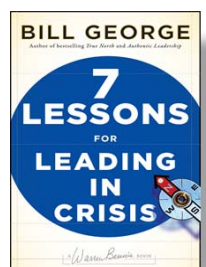
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## REFLECTION ON INTRODUCTION AND LESSON #1 FACE REALITY, STARTING WITH YOURSELF

### *Applying This Lesson to Your Leadership*

What can you learn from this lesson that will help you become a better leader by facing reality and recognizing your role in the crisis?



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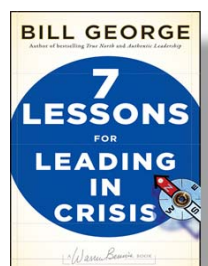
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## LESSON # 2 DON'T BE ATLAS: GET THE WORLD OFF YOUR SHOULDERS

### ***Reflections on Lesson #2:***

After reflecting on Lesson #2, answer the following questions in writing.

1. Describe a situation in which you took all the problems on your own shoulders instead of relying on others.
2. Why was it so difficult to turn to others for help?
3. Now describe a situation in which you turned to your team for help. In what ways did your teammates help you?
4. What was the difference in outcomes between these two situations?
5. What practices do you have that help you build and maintain your resilience?



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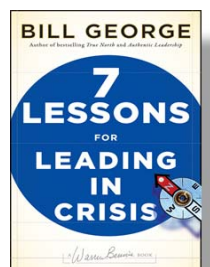
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## LESSON # 2 DON'T BE ATLAS: GET THE WORLD OFF YOUR SHOULDERS

### *Applying This Lesson to Your Leadership*

What can you learn from these experiences that will help you become a better leader by turning to others for help, both internally and externally?



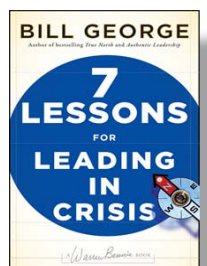
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## LESSON #3 GET TO THE ROOT CAUSE

### ***Reflecting on Lesson #3:***

After reflecting on Lesson #3, answer the following questions.

1. Describe a situation in which you mistook the symptoms of a problem for the root cause. What was the outcome? What led you to mistake the root cause?
2. Describe a situation in which you were too trusting in what people told you and did not verify the information you were receiving. What techniques do you now use to verify information you receive from others?
3. In a challenge you are facing currently, what steps have you taken to uncover the root cause of the problems? Are you looking at the tip of the iceberg, or do you think you have a grasp on the whole situation?
4. What specialists or help do you need to call on to analyze the problem and assist you in resolving it?
5. How can you use your team effectively to ensure you are getting to the root cause?



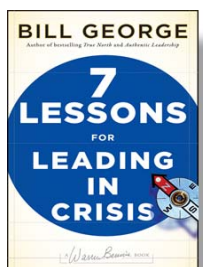
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## LESSON #3 GET TO THE ROOT CAUSE

### *Applying This Lesson to Your Leadership*

What can you learn from these experiences that will help you become a better leader by Getting to the root cause?





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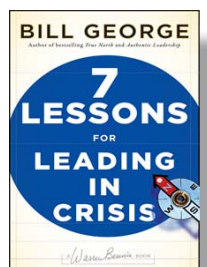
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## LESSON #4 GET FOR THE LONG HAUL

### Reflecting on Lesson #4:

After reflecting on Lesson #4, answer the following questions in writing.

1. Describe a situation from the past when you did not anticipate how things might get even worse than they seemed. What caused you to underestimate just how bad the situation might become?
2. What was the outcome and what did you learn from the experience?
3. In a situation you are facing currently, how might things get worse? Do you understand the “long roots” of this challenge or crisis?
4. If you were entering the situation as a newly appointed leader, what steps would you take to address the situation? What are the early warning signals today about what might occur in the future for your practice?



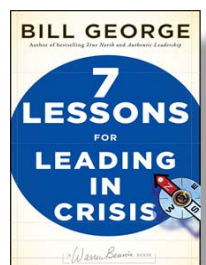
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## LESSON #4 GET FOR THE LONG HAUL

### *Applying This Lesson to Your Leadership*

What can you learn from these experiences that will help you become a better leader by being ready for the long haul?



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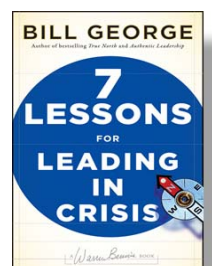
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## LESSON #5 NEVER WASTE A GOOD CRISIS

### ***Reflecting on Lesson #5:***

After reflecting on Lesson #5, answer the following questions in writing.

1. In what business challenge in the past did you miss the opportunity to create needed changes? What was the long term impact?
2. Describe a situation in which you turned a crisis to your advantage.
3. What did you learn about yourself through these experiences?
4. Think of a current situation you are facing. What opportunities does this situation offer to use the crisis to make major changes?

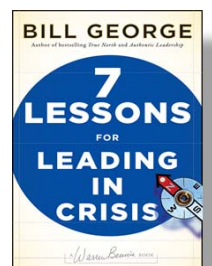


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## LESSON #5 NEVER WASTE A GOOD CRISIS

5. How quickly do you need to act?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
6. How can you most effectively channel the heightened urgency and common focus?



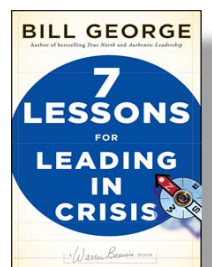
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## LESSON #5 NEVER WASTE A GOOD CRISIS

### *Applying This Lesson to Your Leadership*

What can you learn from these experiences that will help you become a better leader by taking advantage of a crisis to strengthen your organization?



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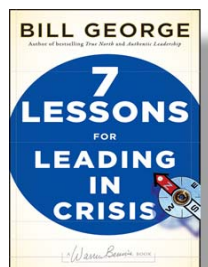
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## LESSON #6 YOU'RE IN THE SPOTLIGHT: FOLLOW TRUE NORTH

### ***Reflecting on Lesson #6:***

After reflecting on Lesson #6, answer the following questions.

1. What is the biggest challenge you have faced in being in the spotlight?
2. To what extent were you able to follow your True North and adhere to your beliefs and principles?
3. What steps do you need to take to be more open, straight forward and transparent in general?
4. Are you creating “a culture of candor” in your organization? Why or why not?



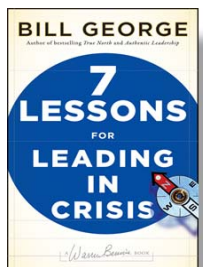
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## LESSON #6 YOU'RE IN THE SPOTLIGHT: FOLLOW TRUE NORTH

### *Applying This Lesson to Your Leadership*

What can you learn from this experience that will help you become a better leader by following your True North when the spotlight is on you?



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## LESSON #7 GO ON OFFENSE FOCUS ON WINNING NOW

### ***Applying this Lesson to Your Current Situation***

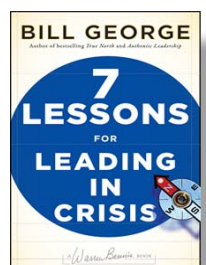
Now let's explore how you can take a *current* crisis or challenge and turn it into a positive that will strengthen your organization and your position in the market. In doing so, please review the "7 Steps to Focus on Winning" in Lesson #7, and consider how they apply to you and your organization.

#### **Step 1: Rethink your industry strategy**

1. How will the market look different in the future?
2. How will the crisis impact the key success factors for your business?
3. How will it change the competitive landscape in your business?
4. Given your assessment of the above, how should your strategy for your business change to compete successfully in the new market?

#### **Step 2: Use the crisis to shed your weakness**

1. What specific changes do you need to make to eliminate your organization's weaknesses in order to prepare it for future competition?
2. Do you have the support of your teammates?
3. What is your timetable for getting this done?





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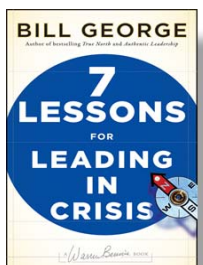
## LESSON #7 GO ON OFFENSE FOCUS ON WINNING NOW

### Step 3: Reshape the industry to play to your strengths

1. What are your organization's strengths?
2. How can you expose or take advantage of your competitors' weaknesses?
3. How can you adapt your strategy to move the industry competition to play to your strengths and expose your competitors' weaknesses?

### Step 4: Make Vital Investments during the Downturn

1. Do you have adequate cash reserves to get through the downturn *and* invest for the future?
2. What investments can you make now that will strengthen your competitive advantage ?



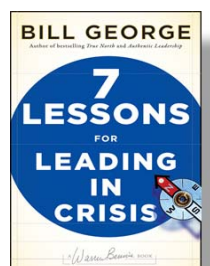
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## LESSON #7 GO ON OFFENSE FOCUS ON WINNING NOW

### Step 5: Keep Key People Focused on Winning

1. Do you have a highly talented team focusing on winning when you emerge from the crisis?
2. Are they developing specific plans along with detailed resources to ensure your post-crisis success?
3. What is the timetable for triggering the implementation of these plans?



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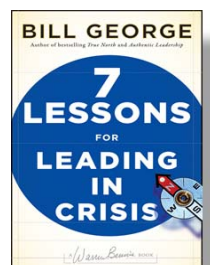
## LESSON #7 GO ON OFFENSE FOCUS ON WINNING NOW

### Step 6: Create Your Company's Image as the Industry Leader

1. In terms of your public image, what steps can you take to establish your company as the visionary leader during the downturn?
2. What are the best vehicles for getting these messages to the appropriate constituencies?

### Step 7: Develop Rigorous Execution Plans

1. Have you developed detailed plans to put the insights from steps 1-6 into place?
2. Have you provided for sufficient resources, both people and financial, to enable these execution plans will be effectively implemented?
3. What leaders in your organization are responsible for the implementation of these plans?



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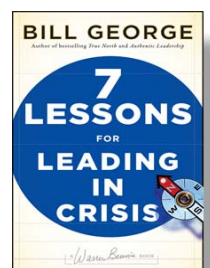
## LESSON #7 GO ON OFFENSE FOCUS ON WINNING NOW

### ***Conclusion to Lesson #7***

When you have completed answering all the questions in this lesson, go back over them and test them for their practicality and the commitment of your team to getting the tasks done.

### ***Applying This Lesson to Your Leadership***

What can you learn from Focusing on Winning that will help you become a better leader of your organization?





“Long recognized as one of the best CEOs of the 20th century, Bill George has quickly become one of the foremost authorities on leadership. *7 Lessons* is an excellent practical account of why so many corporate leaders failed and yet others turned crisis into opportunity.”

—**DAVID GERGEN**, professor, director of the Center for Public Leadership,  
Harvard Kennedy School

## The Authors



**Bill George** is Professor of management Practice at Harvard Business School. He was CEO of Medtronic from 1991 until 2001 and chairman from 1996 to 2002. He serves on the board of directors of ExxonMobil and Goldman Sachs and previously was a board member of Novartis and Target Corporation. Bill was named one of the “Top 25 Business Leaders of the Past 25 Years” by PBS.

He is the author of three best-selling books: *True North: Discover Your Authentic Leadership*, *Finding Your True North: A Personal Guide*, and *Authentic Leadership: Rediscovering the Secret of Creating Lasting Value*.



**Nick Craig** is the President of Authentic Leadership Institute (ALI), specializing in True North-based programs, and is co-author with Bill of *Finding Your True North*. Currently he delivers the True North leadership programs to a number of Fortune 500 companies as well as Wharton’s Top Executive Programs.



**Amy Avergun** is in training design and development. She works with a wide range of industries and has most recently applied her talents to ensure the learning effectiveness of all ALI programs. Her passion is to combine the latest thinking in leadership best practices with the latest thinking in how people learn to develop programs in unlocking the potential of individuals.

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