

On Feb. 22, 1980, a team changed the hood of a nation. The U.S. Olympic Hockey Team left an indelible mark on the sporting firmament by defeating the Soviet Union and winning the gold medal. The odds were certainly against them: The Soviets were four-time Olympic gold medalists and current world champions. On the other hand, the U.S. team had won nothing in 20 years. In addition, the Cold War was festering and the U.S. economy was on a downturn. It was clear the entire nation needed a lift, and the team provided that boost, changing the narrative for the rest of the decade and arguably for a lifetime. Often referred to as the “Miracle on Ice,” the events of that night demonstrated that leadership and teamwork can make a difference. By building an “A” team, one can beat the unbeatable.

Inevitably, the question becomes, “What is needed to build an “A” team? At the Center for Leadership’s Speaker series, Mark House, managing director of the Florida division of the Beck Group, identified the ideals of leadership and the key elements needed to build such a team. House stressed that there is no “I” in a team and that the entire team must work together to accomplish its goals. To experience progress in any human endeavor, we must build efficient teams with effective leaders. Leaders who inspire, inform and involve their teams in producing the desired results under any circumstances.

House stated that “leadership is the process of influencing people by providing purpose, direction and motivation. People expect honest consideration from their leaders and, in return, they give their best to be part of something larger than themselves”. A leader inspires team members to rise above their limitations and exceed expectations against all odds.

House’s perspective is in line with recent theories on leadership. Team-centric leadership is becoming

entrenched in management circles and the knowledge that we win and lose together makes every player contribute in the best possible way. As John C. Maxwell points out, every successful team has two essential ingredients: a common goal and a leader to clearly communicate that goal (John C. Maxwell, 2007). Team members must understand the common goals so they can

**S**ynopsis: The new book by Frank Ghannadian is a series of short essays that introduce the reader to iconic figures from the ancient to the modern world, who have contributed to our modern thinking on leadership. The book creates an interest in additional reading and in learning more about these thought-provoking leaders. The book is published by Book Masters and is available on Amazon.com in both e-book and hardcover forms. We asked Prof. Frank Ghannadian, dean of the Sykes College of Business and director of the Center for Leadership, some questions about the book and its intentions.

**Q:**What is the idea behind your book?

**A:** There are many new books almost every day in the area of leadership and they contain new insights and perspectives on modern issues and provide applications for the new world but they all have a historical background. My quest in writing this book was to look at history and thought leaders in history and to understand where the roots of modern thinking in leadership come from. Every day we make decisions and how we make those decisions, such as whether to buy a piece of property, to add an employee benefit, or to do something

crisis situations usually have high stakes and provide little time with which to deal with them. As our world changes and condenses, events of critical proportions are happening with more regularity: Hurricane Katrina, Super Storm Sandy, and the tsunami in Japan with its resulting nuclear clean up. Besides natural disasters, our world faces other emergencies, including deadly viruses and bacteria such as E-coli and the Ebola outbreak in Africa. Add to this list random violence, shootings, terrorist attacks and so-called "simple negligence," which results in disasters like the BP oil spill or massive product recalls, and it becomes clear that people today are affected by crises on a level that those years ago were not. Even on a personal level, everyone experiences family medical emergencies, caring for aging parents, or dealing with the special needs of friends or family members.

People in a state of crisis are cast outside their comfort zones but must still make important life or death decisions. I spent over 20 years in the Army and, during my time there, including combat in Iraq, I learned that identifying key components of good decision making helps people to make better decisions in crisis situations. This realization led me to research this concept when I returned to school at Case Western Reserve University to obtain my Ph.D. in management.

My research covers in extremis leaders – leaders whose lives are also in danger. The occupations I study include firefighting,



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