

Leadership Under Fire: Lessons From Flight 93

Overview:

September 11, 2001, not unlike December 7, 1941, is a date that will “. . . live in infamy.” Hindsight demonstrates that there were several warnings and numerous indicators that terrorism, both in scope and intensity, was growing and changing. Nonetheless, the catastrophic events of 9/11 shocked the world and rocked the sensibility of the United States regarding the contemporary realities of global terrorism. This seminar focuses on Flight 93, within the greater context of the tragic events of 9/11.

Because of an unanticipated delay in their departure time, the passengers and crew onboard United Flight 93 found themselves in what can only be described as a fatal struggle between good and evil. Selflessly, they chose to do that which was good and right. Knowing that their lives were to be sacrificed, they acted to prevent additional loss of life. By so doing they thwarted plans that could have produced catastrophic worldwide consequences. One historian concluded that, “The crew and passengers of Flight 93, may well have spared humankind from the impact of a conflict that could easily have become another world war.”

Logistics:

This seminar is offered onsite at Flight 93 National Memorial in Stoystown, Pennsylvania. Seminars operate out of a host facility one mile from the park entrance, where breakfast and lunch options are available. This seminar includes field experiences that engage participants in the park’s museum and overlook, as well as the Memorial Plaza. At each stop, there is a short-distance walk.

The Flight 93 leadership experience can also be offered at any site of your choosing that can support a PowerPoint enhancement. With the aid of historic and contemporary photographs and numerous illustrations, this seminar can be brought to life for your group as a keynote presentation, a breakout session, or an extended seminar.

Summary of Topics:

ARC Leadership

Seminars and keynote presentations in the *Leadership Under Fire* series, each offer their own distinctive leadership lessons and insights. Those lessons and insights are based on specific historical events, occurrences, and trends. They are discussed and unified as they relate to three critical attributes common among great leaders—Accessibility, Reliability, and Commitment. When brought together, those attributes are the basis of an ARC leadership model.

Flight 93 Lessons & Insights

This seminar affords participants the opportunity to look at the story of 9/11 with a focus on the fateful end of United Flight 93 near Stoystown, Pennsylvania. Leadership lessons are richly illustrated through events and actions leading up to, during, and following that day. Those lessons afford worthy models of both organizational and personal successes and failures. Attention is given to attributes of strong leaders, strategic leadership initiatives, and tactical actions to address strategies, meet goals, and fulfill missions. Examples of these captivating, historically-based lessons include:

1. Enduring leaders consider and plan for the unimaginable. Because they do, very little remains unimaginable.
2. Great leaders never ignore or underestimate the human factor. The role of individual and collective freewill is always part of their calculus.
3. Mindful leaders know that common strategies seldom work well in uncommon scenarios and situations.
4. Compassionate leaders keep their calm in the face of tragic, even unthinkable, circumstances, for the benefit of those around them.
5. The best leaders lead by example.

Participant Feedback:

Our leadership team has engaged with Dr. McGough for three years. Participating in his leadership development programs rooted in historical context has been transformative. By studying the decisions and strategies of history's great leaders, we gained insights that are both timeless and directly applicable to modern challenges. Learning how leaders navigated crises, motivated their teams, and turned vision into action showed us new perspectives that traditional business training often overlooks. This approach grounded in history didn't just teach us *what* outstanding leadership looks like – it helped us understand *why* certain decisions resonate and endure. We feel equipped with a more strategic mindset and a deeper appreciation for the importance of resilience and foresight in leadership. Highly recommended for anyone ready to elevate their leadership skills in a truly unique way!

Dr. Amy Arcurio, Superintendent
Greater Johnstown School District
Johnstown, Pennsylvania

Dr. McGough has been a tremendous influence in my career as an Emergency Services Professional, an instructor, and in my personal life as well. His ability to connect with people, and connect people to others, is a gift that many professionals can benefit and learn from. Our personnel have a tremendous amount of respect for him and find his leadership lessons interesting and of value on both a personal and professional level. The preparation and attention to detail that he puts into his programs are evident in the high quality of the final product. Regardless of your industry or position, Dr. McGough has something to offer everyone he engages.

Daniel J. Hoff, Fire Chief
York Area United Fire and Rescue
York, Pennsylvania

Our experience with *Leadership Under Fire* seminars provided by Mike McGough have been amazing. The lessons and insights provided are all historically based, and they offer essential guidance for today's leaders. Dr. Mike's historical narratives and associated lessons have proven to be fascinating to my team. A seminar with him is a powerful experience that I highly recommend for everyone.

Dr. Gregg Paladina, Superintendent
New Castle Area School District
New Castle, Pennsylvania