

WHEN THIS IS ALL OVER: THE ARCHITECT OF FINISHING WELL AND BEGINNING AGAIN  
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You likely hear it, and maybe have even said it... 'when this is all over'...  
The hope of the end of this pandemic. It is actually not the hope of the end but the hope of a new beginning.

When this is all over—I am going to... Fill in the blank. For most of us it is to dream bigger, to do better, and to live deeper in the big and small ways. For leaders this is a great opportunity to begin again—to create and be an architect in our organizations. So, let's look at our leadership, when this is all over—what then? I offer you three things to consider as we end and begin again.

**First—see your people as people.** Sounds so easy right—but if you are just seeing your people as a means to get things done for you, you will miss the boat. Your followers, employees, your people, will have just been through a severe experience and need you to be fully aware of all that comes with that. They will likely have residual effects of living through this pandemic and have some fear and anxiety, as life has been uncertain for a long period of time and this uncertainty will still be present.

We need to see our followers as whole individuals—not just hands to 'get' things done for us and our organizations, but as people with hands, hearts, heads—whole people. Dr. Bruce Winston often advocates we as leaders see our followers as 'hired hearts' and not just 'hired hands'—and we must carefully engage their minds, their hands, and yes—their hearts. Your followers will need to be cared for, in new ways, and deeply. Recognize the depth of where they have walked and do not overlook what trauma they may have experienced. Actively seek to meet their needs—ask what you can do as a leader to engage this whole individual.

**Second—cultivate the culture.** This is the time for you as the leader to craft and cultivate a new culture—a grand opportunity really. If your culture before was less than desirable now is the time, you have just experienced a great disruption, a leveling of sorts, that allows you the chance as things resettle to make changes. What are the defining values you would like the culture to represent? Clearly determine what these are and then clearly share these with your people. This will require two things of you—alignment and example.

Be sure to have *alignment*—if you espouse (state) what your values are and the culture is, then you as the leader must clearly live these out—the stated values and the lived values must match or your followers will not believe in your culture. And set the *example*. You as the leader set the stage, live it out and then invite others to join the journey alongside you.

**Third—innovate and create.** We have all experienced disruption and upheaval—we have created new methods or new strategies to get work done. Let this be a time to continue that new level of innovation and creation—do not lose the momentum. And here is the key for this—let your followers innovate and create—they know better than you what works for them and at their level.

This is a new season, never return to the old ways—you have opened a door to new (even if you pushed to do it) and embrace the newness. You will see grand potential before you, and if you let your followers create and innovate this new path, it will likely be more effective and definitely be brighter.

In human history there are rarely the times when we are given a new page to turn, and even if it was an unwanted and even tragic time, this pandemic afforded us this new page—let's not waste it. It is within your reach as a leader to be the architect of building again—it is up to you what you build—so build well.

*Author bio: Dr. Kathleen Patterson serves as Professor and the Director of the Doctor of Strategic Leadership program in the School of Business and Leadership at Regent University, where she has been since 1999. Dr. Patterson is noted as an expert on servant leadership and has coordinated 3 Global Roundtables, in the Netherlands, Australia, and Iceland. Additionally she is involved in numerous consulting projects nationally and abroad, and sits on the boards of the Larry C. Spears Center, CareNet, and Millennials for Marriage.*