Leadership and Decision Making in an Era of Rapid Change

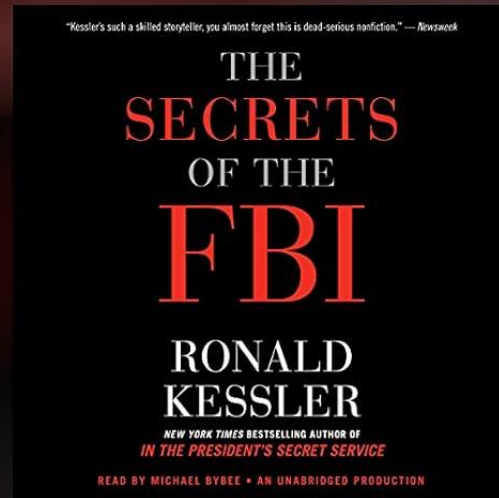# How Decisions Are Made
When The Plan Stops Working

**Rules shift
Expectations change
Technology accelerates
Support can disappear overnight**

When these happen, you will struggle if you do not have a process that allows you to make decisions

Success happens by focusing on what doesn't move…

When everything else does

Mission Clarity

90 Second Decision Filter

What decision must be made now — not later

What decision would create irreversible damage if delayed?

What decision would create clarity for everyone else?

1. In a crisis not everything needs a decision. But something almost always does.
2. This is where leaders get burned. Delay feels safe, but it's usually the most expensive option.
3. Good decisions don't just solve problems. They unblock teams, reduce noise, and allow your team to move.

Don't confuse *planning discipline* with *execution rigidity*

Planning is about intent. Execution is about reality.

Planning moves deliberately. Execution must move fast and adapt.

People struggle when they confuse *planning discipline* with *execution rigidity*.

Think of planning and execution as two gears. Planning moves deliberately. Execution must move fast and adapt. When you force execution to move at planning speed, everything grinds.

Plans should be stable
Execution should be flexible
Intent should be crystal clear

Strong leaders don't abandon the plan
They abandon attachment to the plan

One of the fastest ways leaders burn out is by treating everything as urgent. When something lands on your desk ask yourself these three questions:

PRESSURE FILTER

1. Is this urgent, or just loud?

2. Is this reversible?

3. Does this require leadership, or management?

1. Social media is loud. Crisis is urgent.
2. If it's reversible, move faster. If it's not, slow down — but don't freeze.
3. Not everything needs escalation. You won't reduce pressure by working harder. You reduce pressure by filtering better.

You cannot manage 21st century complexity
With 20th century assumptions

If your solution is getting more complex, you're probably solving the wrong problem.

1. They acted on the clock, not on emotion

2. They escalated to people, not processes

3. They made one decision that allowed everyone else to act

Do not panic or freeze. Do not wait for certainty. Time matters more than certainty in the early moments.
In a crisis, systems preserve procedure. People create momentum.
Relationships almost always move faster than workflows. This is why building relationships is so important.
A single decision can unlock action across multiple organizations.

In a crisis, you don't raise to the occasion

You fall back to your decision habits

People who perform well under pressure aren't calmer, smarter, or luckier. They're clearer. They know which decisions matter first.

1. Anchor to mission, not emotion
2. Decide faster than fear
3. Remove friction before adding control
4. Communicate intent, not just instruction
5. Own the decision, even if it evolves

Leadership under pressure isn't about brilliance. It's about clarity, speed, and ownership.

When the plan breaks, success happens when you have the steps in place to fall back on.

Thank You!

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