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A Study of the Crisis Leadership Model at Marshall University

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A Study of the Crisis Leadership Model at Marshall University

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Submitted in partial fulfillment of the
Requirement for the degree of
Master of Arts in Leadership

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MINNEAPOLIS, MINNESOTA

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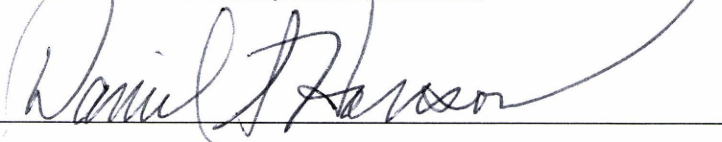
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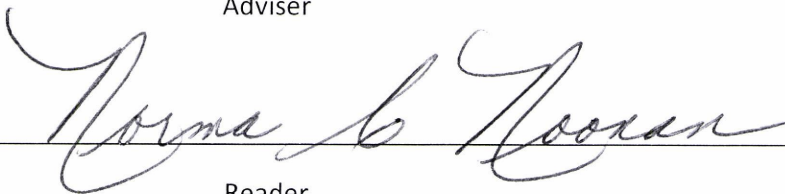
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has been approved by the Review Committee for the Thesis requirement for the Master of Arts in Leadership degree


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Committee: 

Adviser



Reader



Reader

Dedication

During the course of this research, I had the honor and privilege of interviewing Coach Jack Lengyel, the man who stepped forward and volunteered to lead in a time of unprecedented crisis simply because it was the right thing to do. I learned a lot about leadership during my research and even more about character during our conversation. Thank you for sharing time with me coach.

Acknowledgments

Several people have been instrumental during this research. I would like to thank Dan Hanson, my advisor. This process has had many highs and some not-so-highs, thanks for riding those out with me and always cheering me on. I would also like to thank Norma Noonan for your thoughtful insights; they have truly made this a much better project than it would have been without. Finally, I would like to thank Allan Bernard. Your editorial skills, your positive attitude, and your humor were much appreciated.

Abstract

This research addresses the question: what factors contribute to a group successfully navigating times of crisis and what role does the leader play in this navigation. Given recent events such as the terrorist attacks of September 11th, 2001, the tsunami that devastated Indonesia in 2004, the catastrophic force of Hurricane Katrina in 2005 and the most recent earthquake in 2010 that decimated Haiti, coupled with the current tenuous international political climate, the need to understand how groups move through crisis and what role leadership plays is vitally important.

To study this question, the crisis of Marshall University will be analyzed. On November 14th, 1970, a chartered Southern Airways flight carrying the Marshall University football team, coaching staff and many members of the community, crashed outside Huntington, West Virginia. There were no survivors. Left behind were two assistant coaches and three varsity players that were not aboard the flight. After much deliberation, the university decided to carry on with the football program and hired Jack Lengyel of Wooster College to lead the rebuilding effort.

A case study of the Marshall University football program will be conducted for this research. During this research, literature in the field of crisis management will be reviewed, literature in the area of storytelling within the context of leadership will be reviewed, the crisis of the plane crash and its aftermath will be analyzed, an interview with Coach Lengyel will be conducted, and a crisis leadership model will be developed for the purpose of determining how effectively a given leader navigates times of crisis.

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Introduction

Statement of the Problem

This research is aimed at answering the question: what factors contribute to a group successfully navigating times of crisis and what role does the leader play in this navigation. Given recent events such as the terrorist attacks of September 11th, 2001, the tsunami that devastated Indonesia in 2004, the catastrophic force of Hurricane Katrina in 2005 and the most recent earthquake in 2010 that decimated Haiti, coupled with the current tenuous international political climate, the need to understand how groups move through crisis and what role leadership plays is vitally important.

Purpose of the Study

On November 14th, 1970, Marshall University and its home city of Huntington, West Virginia, suffered what is still described as one of the greatest tragedies in college athletics when the majority of the football program and many high profile community members perished in a plane crash just outside the city. In the days and weeks after the crash, much deliberation about whether or not the university should continue with the football program took place. Ultimately, the decision to continue the program was made which would eventually lead to Marshall University having the most successful program of the 1990's. This success clearly demonstrates that Marshall University and Huntington successfully navigated this crisis.

The purpose of this study is to examine how the Marshall community successfully navigated the 1970 crisis, using a case study method. In reviewing the current literature concerning crisis management and literature in the area of storytelling within the context of leadership, analyzing the crisis event of the Southern Airways airplane crash of November 14th, 1970, and interviewing Coach Jack Lengyel, the man charged with leading the rebuilding effort for the football program at Marshall

University, best practices in the area of crisis management and leadership will be defined and a model of crisis leadership will be developed.

Research Question

Given that Marshall University and Huntington successfully navigated arguably the greatest crisis in college athletics, there are lessons to be learned about how this group of people dealt with this crisis. This research is aimed at answering the question: what factors contribute to a group successfully navigating times of crisis and what role does the leader play in this navigation.

Limitations of this Study

The major limitation to this study is limited example size, which is inherent in the case study method of research. Another limitation to this study is diminished relevancy due to the time that has elapsed since this event occurred. This limitation has been overcome by looking at the program's record during the 1990's as well as by utilizing current literature on crisis management to frame the conversation.

Review of Related Literature

In reviewing the current literature on crisis management, the majority of the works falls into two broad categories: the nature of crisis in general and the role of communication in navigating a crisis situation, with the majority of the literature focusing on the latter. Despite the enormity of literature dealing with crisis management, there is great agreement on these categories in defining this field. In reviewing the current literature in the area of storytelling within the context of leadership, the three themes of community building, defining values, and articulating vision were observed.

This review of literature will be separated into three sections: The Nature of Crisis, The Facets of Communication within the Context of a Crisis Situation, and The Role of Storytelling within the Context of Leadership. The Facets of Communication within the Context of a Crisis Situation section will be subdivided and examined in terms of general communication, framing, values, collaboration, and effective leadership qualities.

Part I: The Nature of Crisis

"When crises come, they come in pairs, or bunches, or thundering herds." - Steven Fink

In *Crisis Management: Planning for the Inevitable*, Steven Fink (1986) states that crises can be defined as "unsolicited, extreme change within an organization" (Fink, 1986, pp. 15-16). Described as "highly stressful," "a constant state of flux," "fluid, unstable, dynamic," and "risky and uncertain" (Fink, 1986, 133, pp. 20, 15). "Crises, by their very nature have the unique element of either highly positive or highly negative outcomes, depending on how they are managed" (Fink, 1986, p. 15). Further, in *Making Tough Decisions*, Paul C. McNutt (1989) describes the nature crisis as relational to the decision making process, saying "tough decisions have uncertainty, ambiguity, and conflict" (McNutt, 1989, pp. 3-4).

According to Fink (1986), crises have four phases: prodromal, acute, chronic and crisis resolution. The prodromal phase can be described as the warning stage of the crisis. The acute phase signals the crisis event. The chronic phase occurs in the aftermath of the crisis event. Finally, the crisis resolution phase occurs when the situation normalizes (Fink, 1986, pp. 20-25).

Further, according to McNutt (1989), optimal decision making has four stages. In stage one, the decision maker explores all possibilities. In stage two, the decision maker assesses the most appropriate options. In stage three, the decision maker tests assumptions by attempting appropriate options on a limited level. Finally, in stage four the decision maker assesses the outcome of the decision for the purpose of learning (McNutt, 1989, p. 36). The dynamic nature of crises can cause decisions makers to veer from the four stages of optimal decision making. Among other factors, poor decisions can be caused by time pressure and stress, failing to deal with values, and ignoring ethics (McNutt, 1989, pp. 26-34). With regard to crisis, values and ethics will be dealt with in the following sections of this review of literature.

Fink (1986), as well as Matthew W. Seeger (2003) in *Communication and Organizational Crisis* suggests that the dynamic nature of crisis allows for crucial learning. Leaders, Seeger states, should “[...] be cognizant of the opportunity that is inherent in a crisis situation and be aware that the crisis, the turning point, holds out the potential for achievement” (Seeger, 2003, p. 266). Moreover, that “failure is an essential prerequisite for effective learning and adaptation. Although panic and defensiveness may be natural reactions to crisis, both thwart the kinds of learning that turn crises from disaster into opportunities for renewal” (Seeger, 2003, p. 266).

Fink (1986), McNutt (1989), and Seeger (2003) view the nature of crisis as dynamic and full of opportunity, if managed right. Further, proper management of crisis requires the ability to assess, learn and adapt in such situations while maintaining ethics and integrity.

Part II: The Facets of Communication within the Context of a Crisis Situation

“Crisis communication is not only about words, but also about actions, deeds and examples. In other words, the behavior of the leader during the crisis has important symbolic dimensions.” -Matthew W. Seeger

In *Communication and Organizational Crisis*, Matthew W. Seeger (2003) states that “beyond enactment, a leader is a symbol of order and authority. As a consequence, merely being present, visibly engaged and accessible during a crisis is reassuring” (Seeger, 2003, p. 247). Communication during the crisis cycle is about more than the words a leader speaks, it is about behavior.

This idea is echoed in *Managing in Turbulent Times*, by Peter F. Drucker (1980):

The [leader] must establish himself as the representative of the common good as the spokesman for the general will. He can no longer depend on the political process to be the integrating force; he himself has to become the integrator. He has to establish himself as the spokesman for the interest of the society in producing, in performing, in achieving (Drucker, 1980, p. 218).

During the crisis cycle, leading by example is imperative. It is not enough for a leader to tell their followers how to react, he must model appropriate behavior.

Indeed, during the crisis cycle, communication is key to successful resolution. The literature suggests that it is communication that moves the group through the stages. Irving L. Janis (1989), in his book *Crucial Decisions: Leadership in Policymaking and Crisis Management*, addresses this concept in describing the actions a leaders should take when confronted with a crisis. These actions include consistently demonstrating steadfastness in resolving the crisis, encouraging followers to take positive

action toward crisis resolution, and highlighting what is positive about the organization that makes going through the process worthwhile (Janis, 1989, p. 242). In their article "Crisis Management: A Leadership Challenge," the Alagse organization (n.d.) states, "[The] next step for leadership is to ensure an effective and elaborate communication strategy [...] that is timely and consistent is maintained at all times" (Alagse, n.d.).

Although modeling appropriate behavior is an effective leadership practice at all times it would appear from the literature that during the crisis cycle, such modeling has even greater significance. Seeger (2003) underscores the importance of leadership behavior and modeling, suggesting that "Showing concern for victims and visiting the scene of the event is often identified as a basic leader response to a crisis" (Seeger, 2003, p. 240). Further, he writes "It is important that the leader remain visible through activities such as tours of the site, meeting with families and regular press conferences" (Seeger, 2003, p. 249). Leaders lead through visible action as well as message.

Framing

"Initially the leader must [...]engage in symbolic activities such as framing the meaning of the event and expressing concern for those harmed, while remaining calm and conveying a sense of order and control."

-Matthew W. Seeger

The importance of giving meaning to the message during a crisis cannot be underestimated. The literature refers to this process of giving meaning as framing. From a leadership perspective, framing the crisis for stakeholders is an extension of the leadership position. Seeger (2003) writes "Leadership, because of its visibility and the uncertainty of the situation, has a particularly important role in framing the initial meaning of a crisis triggering event. Hearing from a leaders helps to reduce some of the crisis induced uncertainty, confusion, and perceived threat" (Seeger, 2003, p. 240).

In their book *A Field Guide to Good Decisions*, Mark D. Bennet and Joan McIver Gibson (2006) also discuss framing as a crucial element in crisis management. They suggest framing focuses the energy of the situation. Moreover, it gives stakeholders much needed perspective to clearly analyze the situation and define the next action (Bennet & McIver Gibson, 2006, pp. 4, 10). When done well, the frame, much like the crisis situation it defines, is dynamic and adaptable as new information regarding the crisis and the subsequent resolution is revealed (Bennet & McIver Gibson, 2006, p. 13). In *Communication and Organization Crisis*, Seeger (2003) states that successful leaders are, “[...] able to frame their crisis response in ways that envision opportunity rather than merely seeing crises as a wholly negative event to be resolved as quickly [...] as possible” (Seeger, 2003, p. 267). Further, Seeger (2003) suggests such focus clarifies the meaning of the crisis for stakeholders (Seeger, 2003, p. 263).

The process of framing is straightforward. Bennet and McIver Gibson (2006) suggest that a successful leader knows his own perspective while also seeking the counsel of others as he realizes his perspective is most likely skewed (Bennet & McIver Gibson, 2006, p. 13-18). Seeger (2003) echoes this when he writes:

The narrative, then, expands beyond preserving an existing structure and extends to seeking a resolution that truly engages the organization in a socially legitimate relationship with its member, its community, its industry, and its relevant environment (Seeger, 2003, p. 263).

Values

“Leadership helps determine which behaviors will be privileged and valued and helps to establish and maintain the organization’s larger ethical climate. Virtue ethics focus on the pattern of the leader’s behavior in their role as leader and its relationship to accepted standards for integrity, honesty,

truthfulness, responsiveness, and the values they embody, then become the focus of organizational order and productivity.” -Matthew W. Seeger

The literature suggests that leaders are responsible for establishing values within an organization. Because leaders model appropriate behavior and frame meaning in crisis situations for their organizations, they must also embody the values of the organization (Seeger, 2003, p. 239). Seeger (2003) suggests that, as with framing, crisis:

[...] creates the opportunity for the leader both to publicly demonstrate moral conduct and to learn. Crises often takes on a significant moral character and serve as opportunities to clearly display and reaffirm ethics for both organizational members and stakeholders (Seeger, 2003, p. 254).

To further demonstrate the importance of values and communication to leadership, Seeger also states:

that leadership in such situations is most effective when it is supported by a philosophy, religion, set of beliefs, or ideology that is clearly evident to followers. These beliefs promote clarity and may help followers understand what to do. Moreover, effective crisis leadership often reaffirms core values and relationships (Seeger, 2003, p. 248).

Further, according to the Alagse organization (n.d), the role of the leader is to set the tone of the situation and clarify the goals for crisis management, based on his personal values, and by extension, the values of the organization. Seeger (2003) agrees with this point when he states, “leaders serve as models for moral conduct and have particular responsibilities for modeling and establishing an organization’s ethical climate and moral tone” (Seeger, 2003, p. 254).

The process of communicating values in the crisis cycle has a few key elements. According to Bennet and McIver Gibson (2006), the leader should separate commitment to resolution from the specific actions needed to attain resolution. Commitment speaks to values and emotion while action steps are pragmatic in nature and could give the impression the leader is detached emotionally from the situation. The leader should also explore the differences that exist among stakeholders so as not to discount any stakeholder point of view. Finally, the leader must model and encourage transparency throughout the crisis cycle (Bennet & McIver Gibson, 2006, 5, pp. 45-49). Seeger (2003) echoes this last point when he states, "leaders should be honest, open, and communicate as quickly as possible" (Seeger, 2003, p. 241).

Because values define people as well as organizations, giving voice to them in the dynamic environment of the crisis cycle can be a challenge. Bennet and McIver Gibson (2006) suggest that the most effective way to deal with unclear values and differing opinions in such a situation, "[...] is to talk it through. We must name what, for us, really matters, explain what it means and why. We also must challenge ourselves to listen to others who have a stake in the outcome" (Bennet & McIver Gibson, 2006, p. 25).

Collaboration

"An inclusive view of crisis management calls for meaningful dialogue among stakeholders regarding risks and strategies for crisis resolution." - Matthew W. Seeger

During the crisis cycle, communication and collaboration with stakeholders is crucial. Bennet and McIver Gibson (2006) state that "whether or not the decision involves a group, others are invariably affected. Their perspectives are important early on. Decisions improve when we take steps to engage those who have a stake in the outcome" (Bennet & McIver Gibson, 2006, p. 25).

Further, according to Seeger (2003), “The leader helps the organization and other groups to learn from the crisis by retelling the story of the crisis, summarizing lessons, and reiterating important discoveries” (Seeger, 2003, p. 251). The literature seems to suggest that during the crisis cycle, a leader must facilitate collaboration among all stakeholders in order to achieve optimal resolution.

Effective Leadership Qualities

“Effective leadership is required to counteract doubt. A formal or informal leader needs to encourage members to give priority to the primary objective of working out a good solution that will satisfy, as well as can be done under the circumstance, the major requirements posed by the vital problem at hand. “

-Irving L. Janis

The literature suggests that effective crisis leadership requires specific qualities. Janis (1989) outlines the skill set needed for effective crisis leadership: hopefulness, positivity, initiative, collaboration, vigilance, inquisitiveness, and discernment (Janis, 1989, pp. 253-256). Similarly, Seeger (2003) lists traits such as optimism, forward thinking, calmness, coherence, facilitation, and agility (Seeger, 2003, pp. 244-248). As suggested earlier, when discussing Janis’ (1989) crisis cycle, communication is crucial to successful crisis resolution. Further, this theme of effective leadership qualities is reinforced by Janis’ (1989) assertion that a leader’s actions, including: demonstrating steadfastness in resolving the crisis, encouraging followers to take positive action toward crisis resolution, and highlighting what is positive about the organization that makes going through the process worthwhile (Janis, 1989, p. 242), are integral to effective communication. These qualities of leadership coupled with communication are significant to the next area of research covered by this review of literature: storytelling within the context of leadership.

Part III: The Role of Storytelling within the Context of Leadership

"To live in this world with purpose and meaning we must tell ourselves some story of vision that gives our struggle meaning." -Annette Simmons

In general, according to the literature, the purpose of storytelling within the context of leadership is to influence listeners. The themes that emerge in the literature: community building, defining values, and articulating vision are deemed effective if they are communicated with passion. In *The Elements of Persuasion* (2007), Richard Maxwell and Robert Dickman describe passion as the essential element in storytelling that creates "the why of the story" (Maxell & Dickman, 2007, p. 27). Further, they suggest the power of this passion is tied to the emotion such passion elicits, stating "stories are facts wrapped in emotion, and the key to remembering a fact is to anchor it in an emotion" (Maxwell & Dickman, 2007, p. 125). Stephen Denning echoes this idea of passion and emotion as cornerstones of effective storytelling in *The Secret Language of Leadership* (2007) stating that part of the strategy of successful leaders is to "stimulate desire" (2007, p. 27) when they communicate.

In *The Story Factor*, Annette Simmons (2006) describes the power of storytelling in terms of influence and inspiration. According to Simmons, the successful outcome of such influence and inspiration results in followers identifying with the story to the extent that they incorporate it into their own story (Simmons, 2006, pp. 3, 29).

Maxwell and Dickman (2007) describe how effective leaders use passion to build community through storytelling, suggesting that outlining a perspective that resonates with people is crucial to creating community. Using storytelling to create a common cause brings people together and creates equity among people while providing a forum to collaboratively seek solutions (Maxwell & Dickman,

2007, p. 93). Further, they describe storytelling as an effective way to “bring people together and build [community] loyalty” (Maxwell & Dickman, 2007, p. 67).

Simmons (2006), in *The Story Factor* discusses the story as a means of defining values, suggesting story as a way of making sense out of chaos by reframing difficult situation so they become growth experiences (Simmons, 2006, p. 37). Further, she continues this idea of story as a vehicle for defining values in *Who Ever Tells the Best Story Wins* (2007) stating “the stories and metaphors used in everyday communication lay the foundation of how we think about the world” (Simmons, 2007, p. 117). Putting this idea of storytelling and values into the context of leadership, she states that the leader’s goals in storytelling should be “to tell more stories about doing the right thing in tough circumstances” (Simmons, 2007, p. 119).

Denning (2005) also discusses this idea of story as a means of defining values in *The Leader’s Guide to Storytelling*, stating:

The use of narratives for instilling and transmitting values (and subsequent behavior) not only means consciously telling specific stories, but collecting and retelling the stores of the organization (Denning, 2005, p. 37).

Further, he states:

Transmitting values through narrative allows a leader to demonstrates a particular value and provide the meaning of that value, while at the same time allowing others to adopt their own interpretation of that value, it also allows the listener the opportunity to reflect on their relationship with that value and understand more about it (Denning, 2005, p. 138).

While the themes of building community and defining values are clearly present in the literature, perhaps the most pervasive theme in the literature on storytelling within the context of leadership is that of storytelling as a means of articulating vision. In *Who Ever Tells the Best Story Wins*, Simmons (2007) states “a good vision story builds resilience and optimism, [...] a good vision story validates the difficulties of achieving your vision” (Simmons, 2007, p. 101).

In *The Story Factor*, Simmons (2006) also discusses the function and importance of articulating vision through storytelling:

You have to take the time to find a story of your vision in a way that connects- a story people can see. The secret of a moving story is to tell it from a place of complete authenticity. [...] A vision story weaves all the pieces together, particularly the struggles and frustrations- so that they make senses. [...] Providing a story that adds a new view point to your listeners’ internal perspective helps them think about their choices within a novel context (Simmons, 2006, pp. 15, 17, 47)

Denning (2005) echoes this theme of articulating vision as he describes what he terms *springboard stories*. Springboard stories spark action, transmit values, foster collaboration, and lead followers into the future (Denning, 2005, pp. 12-17).

Maxwell and Dickman (2007) also discuss the theme of articulating values by way of context:

Stories don’t exist in a vacuum, they always occur within a context. If you understand your story’s context, it is much more likely that you will achieve the transformation you are aiming for (Maxwell & Dickman, 2007, p. 205).

Finally, Denning (2007) discusses the theme of articulating values with storytelling using language as the framework:

In the short run, it's what leaders say- or don't say- that has the impact. The right words can have a galvanizing effect, generating enthusiasm, energy, momentum and more, while the wrong words can undermine the best intentions and kill initiative on the spot. [...] The language of leadership is most effective when certain enabling conditions are in place, including a truthful commitment to a clear, inspiring change idea that is illuminated by narrative intelligence, appropriate body language, and an understanding of the audience's story (Denning, 2007, pp. 23, 27).

Part IV: Summary

The current literature on crisis management focuses on two broad categories: the nature of crisis in general and the role of communication in navigating a crisis situation. The nature of crises is dynamic and full of opportunity. This dynamic nature of crisis allows for crucial learning if managed appropriately. While crises are dynamic in nature, they also follow a predictable cycle that includes four phases: prodromal, acute, chronic and crisis resolution. During this crisis cycle, communication is key to successful resolution. The literature suggests that it is communication that moves the group through the stages. The leader is responsible for this communication and bears the responsibility of framing the meaning of the crisis event for their community and articulating the values that will guide their community through the crisis resolution phase.

The current literature on the role of storytelling within the context of leadership includes the three themes of community building, defining values, and articulating vision. These themes support the idea that communication moves a group through the crisis cycle found in the literature on crisis

management and that the leader is responsible for building community, defining values, and articulating vision by means of effective storytelling.

Methodology

Part I: Case Study Approach

For this research, a case study approach is used. The study focuses exclusively on the crisis and aftermath of the airplane crash that claimed the lives of the majority of the football program and many prominent community members. Because an interview with Jack Lengyel, the football coach who stepped in to coach the Marshall University team in 1971, was secured, the case study approach was decided upon as comparable data in the form of an interview with a primary leader was not available, making it difficult to compare and contrast different crisis situations.

Part II: Subject

Due to the scope of the loss, the primary subject is the community of Huntington, West Virginia during 1970 and 1971, which included members of the Marshall University football team, members of the university staff and members of the Huntington population. Information regarding the community of Huntington was obtained through analysis of newspaper articles, internet articles, books and documentaries produced that focus on the Marshall crisis and subsequent comeback. An interview was also conducted with Jack Lengyel, head football coach at Marshall University from 1971 to 1974.

Part III: Procedure: Case study information gathering

Review of Primary Sources

As part of the research method, a review of primary sources including newspaper accounts, internet articles, books and documentaries produced regarding the Marshall crisis was conducted. This analysis forms the basis for evaluating the Marshall crisis with respect to the Crisis Cycle. Three

documentaries about the Marshall plane crash have been produced to date: Marshall University: Ashes to Glory, Remembering Marshall: Looking Back at the Tragedy that Touched the Nation, and Return of the Thundering Herd: The Story that Inspired We Are Marshall. These documentaries give the most comprehensive picture of the Marshall crisis situation and its impact on the communities of Marshall University and Huntington, West Virginia. No transcripts of these documentaries were readily available at the time of this research so transcription of the documentaries was also conducted as part of the review of primary sources. These transcripts are included in the appendix to this paper.

Further, as these documentaries are an invaluable source of firsthand survivor accounts and reflections on the crisis, rather than summarize or paraphrase, the researcher has elected to include direct quotes from the documentaries in the “The Marshall Story” section of this paper. The use of direct quotations expresses the magnitude of the crisis in a compelling way that could not be achieved through paraphrasing or summarizing.

Interview with Jack Lengyel

Finally, as part of this case study, an interview with Jack Lengyel, the man charged with leading the effort to rebuild the football program at Marshall was conducted. The purpose of this interview is to authenticate the analysis of primary sources pertaining to the research.

Part IV: Procedure: Introductions of models used for analysis

As part of this research method, information gathered from primary sources and information gleaned from the interview conducted with Jack Lengyel was analyzed using two established models. The first model, Steven Fink’s Crisis Cycle model was used to analyze how the community of Huntington moved through the crisis situation. The second model, Terry Orlick’s Wheel of Excellence model was

used to analyze the transcript of the Jack Lengyel interview for the purpose of identifying instances of the leadership traits outlined in the model.

Fink's Crisis Cycle Model

As part of the analysis for this research, the researcher analyzed the Marshall crisis using the Crisis Cycle model outlined by Fink (1986) and introduced in the Review of Related Literature section of this paper. The model includes four phases: the prodromal phase, the acute phase, the chronic phase, and the crisis resolution phase. Definitions of these terms appear in the subsequent section: Definitions of Terms. Primary sources including newspaper articles, documentaries, and the Jack Lengyel interview transcript were analyzed using the Crisis Cycle model.

Orlick's Wheel of Excellence Model

Another part of the analysis for this research included an assessment of the Jack Lengyel interview within the context of Orlick's (2000) Wheel of Excellence model. Introduced in his book "In Pursuit of Excellence: How to win in sport and life through mental training," the model has seven elements. These elements include commitment, focused connection, confidence, positive images, mental readiness, distraction control, and ongoing learning. These terms are defined in the subsequent section: Definitions of Terms. During this research, the transcript of the Jack Lengyel interview was studied to identify instances of these seven elements.

Part V: Definitions of Terms

There are several terms that will be used throughout this paper. The follow is a list of terms used along with their definition and context.

Crisis Cycle

In his book *Crisis Management: Planning for the Inevitable*, Steven Fink (1986) describes crises as being cyclical in nature. According to Fink, crises have four phases: prodromal, acute, chronic and crisis resolution (Fink, 1986, pp. 21-25). The phrase Crisis Cycle in this research paper refers to Fink's description of the nature of crises.

Prodromal Phase

According to Fink (1986), the prodromal phase can be described as the warning stage of the crisis (Fink, 1986, p. 21). This phase in the cycle signals a period of time in which proactive measures can be taken to either avoid the crisis event entirely or mitigate the damage of the crisis event.

Acute Phase

Fink (1986) defines the acute phase of the crisis cycle as signaling the crisis event (Fink, 1986, p. 22). Whereas the prodromal phase is defined as a period of relative calm, this phase triggers the crisis cycle.

The Chronic Phase

Fink (1986) describes the chronic phase as occurring in the aftermath of the crisis event (Fink, 1986, p. 23). This phase in the cycle signals the time period after the crisis event in which damage is assessed and preliminary courses of action for rebuilding are explored.

Crisis Resolution Phase

The crisis resolution phase, according to Fink (1986), occurs when the situation normalizes (Fink, 1986, p. 25). This phase in the cycle signals the time period in which rebuilding occurs and a new normal standard is established.

Wheel of Excellence Model

In his book *In Pursuit of Excellence: How to Win in Sport and Life Through Mental Training*, Terry Orlick, PhD (2000), introduces the Wheel of Excellence Model. The Wheel of Excellence is a coaching model that details seven elements within the coaching relationship. The seven elements include: commitment, focused connection, confidence, positive images, mental readiness, distraction control and ongoing learning (Orlick, 2000, p. 3).

Commitment

The first element of the Wheel of Excellence model is commitment. Within this context, commitment refers to desire to pursue dreams, make meaningful contributions, strive for the best, develop mental, physical and technical aspects of excellence, set clear goals, overcome obstacles, continue to learn, and enjoy the pursuit of excellence (Orlick, 2000, p. 5).

Focused Connection

The second element of the Wheel of Excellence model is focused connection. Within this context, focused connection refers to being fully focused or completely connection (Orlick, 2000, p. 7).

Confidence

The third element of the Wheel of Excellence model is confidence. Within this context, confidence refers to a belief in one's potential, capacity to overcome adversity, focus, purpose, and teammates (Orlick, 2000, p. 8).

Positive Images

The fourth element of the Wheel of Excellence model is positive images. Within this context, positive images refers to using imagination to create a positive vision, develop goals, and build confidence (Orlick, 2000, p. 10).

Mental Readiness

The fifth element of the Wheel of Excellence model is mental readiness. Within this context, mental readiness refers to creating positive learning opportunities, taking advantage of opportunities, developing essential mental, physical, and technical skills for optimal performance, and effective planning, preparation and evaluation strategies (Orlick, 2000, p. 11).

Distraction Control

The sixth element of the Wheel of Excellence model is distraction control. Within this context, distraction control refers to developing skills to mitigate the negative effects of distraction that include gaining and maintaining positive focus as well as developing skills to regain positive focus when distractions effect performance (Orlick, 2000, p. 13).

Ongoing Learning

The seventh element of the Wheel of Excellence model is ongoing learning. Within this context, ongoing learning refers to assessing strengths as well as areas for improvement and using that assessment to improve future performance (Orlick, 2000, p. 14).

Crisis Leadership Model

The Crisis Leadership Model (CLM) is the model developed during this research. The CLM combines elements of the Crisis Cycle and the Wheel of Excellence model for the purpose of putting leadership elements into the proper context called for in the given particular crisis. The CLM focuses on the period of the Crisis Cycle Model between the Chronic Phase and the Crisis Resolution Phase.

Commitment to a Specific Purpose

The first component of the CLM is commitment. Within the context of the CLM, commitment is made to a specific purpose. This purpose is defined by a reframed definition of success brought about by the crisis.

Focused Connection

The second component of the CLM is focused connection to a specific purpose. As with the first component, within the context of the CLM, confidence in the purpose that is defined by the reframed definition of success brought about by the crisis.

Part VI: Analysis Method

Analysis of Marshall and the Crisis Cycle

The Marshall crisis was analyzed using the Crisis Cycle outlined by Fink (1986) as referred to in the previous review of literature. The crisis was tracked using the Crisis Cycle to determine best practices. The interview with Jack Lengyel was used to authenticate the analysis of primary sources with regards to the Crisis Cycle. Further, success factors will be identified during the analysis of Marshall and Crisis Cycle will then be expanded upon in the form of lessons learned. Application of these lessons in a broader context with respect to leadership was also discussed.

Analysis of Jack Lengyel Interview and the Wheel of Excellence Model

As part of this research, the interview with Jack Lengyel was analyzed within the context of the Wheel of Excellence model, a coaching model developed by Terry Orlick, PhD and presented in his book "In Pursuit of Excellence: How to Win in Sport and Life Through Mental Training." The Wheel of Excellence model details seven elements of coaching that are essential for success: commitment, focused connection, confidence, positive images, mental readiness, distraction control, and ongoing learning. The interview transcript was studied to identify instances of these elements.

Part VII: Development of the Crisis Leadership Model

The outcome of this research was the development of the CLM, a model that combines elements of the Crisis Cycle and the Wheel of Excellence model for the purpose of putting leadership elements in the proper context called for given the particular crisis. The analysis of the Marshall crisis and the Crisis Cycle model and the analysis of the interview transcript and the Wheel of Excellence model were combined to produce an analysis of the crisis using the CLM.

The Marshall Story

Part I: Proceeding Circumstances

“Marshall was getting in trouble with the Mid-American Conference because it didn’t have any facilities. It couldn’t host the spring championships. They could be held anywhere in the league but Huntington. The MAC was out of patience with Marshall. Marshall found itself in an impossible situation- no facilities, no money, no support. And the front office had no political clout whatsoever in the state capital.

The administration was very, very cosmetic. You couldn’t get Dr. Smith to do anything. That eventually led to his being retired. All these inner workings began to take place. I wouldn’t say that football or athletics was the only thing responsible for it. The whole school was in bad shape. You couldn’t get new buildings, the campus was falling apart. You had all these new students coming into town to enroll at this school and there was no place to house them, no place to teach them. So, as for Smith’s leadership, I think he was a prisoner of the situation itself. It was almost like an institutional change was beginning to take place, not just in athletics but in academics as well. The university status helped some, but despite all the excitement and all the celebration, nothing much happened on the campus for the next 10 years.

Nevertheless, because of Charlie Snyder, a sound, fundamental coach, who believed in well conditioned ball clubs, Marshall maintained a level of respectability in the mid-60’s and appeared ready to move up another level in the conference, except that two-platoon football killed him. The MAC voted not only to go along with the two-platoon system, but also voted to expand the number of sports it was going to sanction.

I remember riding back with Whitey Wilson from Columbus where the MAS had the meeting and he said, "This is going to kill us; you know that, do you? This is going to kill us. How in the hell are we going to keep up with these guys when we can't do it now. Thing is going to murder us unless a miracle happens." Now you have the seeds sown for scandal. How is Marshall going to catch up? What is it going to do? So, out of that came this beautiful idea to go underground and do it illegally.

After all the months in the shadows, 144 alleged recruiting violations were brought up at a meeting of the MAC Council of Presidents. I mean guys were getting paid, guys were on the payroll, guys were getting spending money, guys were getting car expenses. Every damned rule in the book was being broken. If you're going to cheat, you've got to know how to cheat. So, they threw Marshall out of the league indefinitely. And then, of course, the NCAA was brought in. This was all a result of the crash program and upgrading Marshall athletics and bringing it into the 20th century- that was the big term- and the school wound up in disgrace." - Ernie Salvatore, Sports Writer

Historically, Marshall University, a West Virginia public university, was underfunded by the state's legislature. In the 1960's the university's per capita funding placed them at the bottom of the scale in comparison to other state schools (Witek, 2000). This lack of funding affected the university as a whole. When interviewed for *The Marshall Story: College Football's Greatest Comeback*, edited by Joni Woolf (2006), Ernie Salvatore, sports writer for Huntington, West Virginia's Herald Dispatch, made the comments cited above. The school was in dire straits from administration to academics to athletics (Woolf Ed., 2006, p. 1).

This lack of funding forged a unique relationship between the university and the city of Huntington. "By the late 1960's, Marshall football faced an uphill battle for funding in its own state so the school looked to the city of Huntington, West Virginia. Huntington loved its Thundering Herd and many became passionate football boosters" (Witek, 2000). Chad Pennington, Marshall quarterback

from 1995 to 1999 and NFL quarterback currently with the Miami Dolphins, described this connection between the Huntington community and the school when interviewed for the Warner Home Video production (2006) *Return of the Thundering Herd: The Story that Inspired We Are Marshall*, saying, “Everything about the city was based around Marshall. It was a college town. Huntington and Marshall, they go together. They don’t exist separately. You think of Huntington, you think of Marshall. You think of Marshall, you think of Huntington.”

This lack of funding and the unique relationship that developed between the city and the school as a result of that lack, in combination with pressure from the Mid American Conference (MAC), the athletic league Marshall was a member of, to increase visibility through television contracts, created a situation that led directly to the ensuing scandal that would all but destroy the program by the time it was over.

The Scandal

During the 1960’s, television contracts for college athletics were becoming primary sources of revenue. In light of this new era, the MAC began a campaign to increase its visibility and prestige (Woolf, 2006). With existing members Miami of Ohio, Ohio University, Kent State, Toledo, Bowling Green, and Western Michigan experiencing growth in their programs, and other programs that included Ball State, Central Michigan, Eastern Michigan, Northern Illinois, Louisville and Cincinnati in negotiations to join the conference, Marshall began to feel the pressure of this new MAC (Woolf Ed., 2006, p. 4).

To make the football program competitive as quickly as possible in this new era of the MAC, a contingent of Marshall supporters implemented what would later be referred to as a “crash program.” In *The Marshall Story: College Football’s Greatest Comeback*, this crash program is explained as follows:

It seemed the only way to accelerate Marshall's so called "catch-up phase" to keep pace with the MAC's expansion. The worst case risk, of course, was exposure. But the plotters theorized that any National Collegiate Athletic Association punishment in the one to three year range would be worthwhile "incubation period" for securing Marshall's place in the conference. The underground operation would coincide with the overt fundraising of the Big Green Club and without, of course, the knowledge of certain "key" school officials (Woolf Ed., 2006, p. 4).

The decision to focus much of this energy on strengthening the football program was made. In 1968, as part of the overt revitalization of Marshall athletics, Perry Moss was hired as head football coach, bringing with him a win-at-all-costs philosophy. On the surface, the revitalization plan seemed to be working. The 125 football recruits Coach Moss brought into the program represented the best talent ever fielded in the school's history (ESPN, 2006).

Players Coach Moss brought to Marshall included Tedd Shoebridge, a highly sought after athlete from Lyndhurst, New Jersey who had received scholarship offers from universities around the country; several first generation college players from Alabama including corner back Larry Sanders, tight end Freddy Wilson, defensive tackle, Robert VanHorn, and running back "jolting" Joe Hood, who could run the 50 yard dash in 4.3 seconds and was scouted by several National Football Leagues teams. Running back Art Harris from New Jersey, kicker Marcello Ladderman of Argentina, receivers Jack Rapazi and Dennis Bleson, offensive guard Mark Andrews, quarter back Bobby Harris, defensive player and Captain Dave Griffin, all from Ohio, and defensive secondary Felix Jordan, nick-named "X-ray" for his uncanny ability to see through the line and make interceptions were also included in the line-up that Coach Moss brought to Marshall (Witek, 2000).

Beneath the surface, Coach Moss's win-at-all-costs philosophy would lead to the biggest scandal in the school's history. The violations uncovered in the wake of the scandal were determined to be:

- Special loans for student athletes arranged by the athletic department staff
- Money given to student athletes
- Junior college fees for prospective student athletes aid by the athletic department staff
- Special loans used to entice prospective student athletes to come to Marshall
- Improper communication with prospective athletes by athletic department staff (Woolf, 2006).

With 144 alleged recruiting violations discovered throughout the college's athletics programs, the ensuing result of the scandal was an indefinite suspension from the MAC and one year of probation with the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) (Woolf Ed., 2006, pp. 4, 11). Further, with 125 of the alleged violations attributed to the football program, Coach Moss was relieved of his coaching responsibilities (ESPN, 2006).

Post Scandal

In the wake of the recruiting scandal, Marshall promoted assistant coach Rick Tolley to the head coaching position. A former college and professional player, he was known to be tough and stern while also being approachable and ethical. "In 1969, Tolley and his staff took the reins of a losing program and attempted to turn it around once and for all. Having broken a two year losing streak, Marshall entered the 1970 season on a wave of optimism" with Tolley in command (Witek, 2000).

The wave of optimism did not last long though. The team was plagued with injuries that kept key players sidelined throughout the season. Having won three games despite injuries, Marshall needed to win what was left of the season to break even. The stakes were significant going into the East Carolina game scheduled for November 14, 1970 at East Carolina. While it was a close game, East Carolina prevailed (Witek, 2000).

After a tough loss in the fourth quarter, the team boarded the return flight home. As with other crisis situations such as the assassination of President John F. Kennedy on November 22, 1963, the Japanese bombing of Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941, and the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, where people can remember clearly where they were and what they were doing when they heard the news of these tragedies, the citizens of Huntington and people around the nation could clearly recall the evening of November 14, 1970. In several news articles written around the 35th anniversary of the crash, many survivors echoed this phenomenon.

Mary Lou Light has been behind the wheel for some difficult car trips. One of the most difficult for her occurred November 14, 1970. [...] “There were two guys behind us listening to a radio,” she said Tuesday night prior to Marshall’s game against Southern Miss at Joan C. Edwards Stadium. “We asked them if they had a score on the Marshall-East Carolina game. We yacked back and forth. It was a tease done in fun, but we never got the score.” Light, her son and two other young passengers got in her Toyota for the long trip home. She kept scanning the radio dial to get a score on the Marshall game. She found a station out of Atlanta and Jim Thacker, a former sports reporter in Huntington, was calling a game. “All of the sudden, he had word about a plane crash at Tri-State Airport and thought it was the Marshall team.” [...] “I kept listening for updates [...] it was a very sad trip back,” Light said. “The boys were crying. There was a heavy burden on the heart” (Walsh, 2005a).

When Allen Meadows was a Scott High School senior in Madison, West Virginia, he performed well enough on the football field to draw a look from college coaches. One school hoping to land the then 195-pounder was West Virginia and coach Bobby Bowden. Meadows made a recruiting visit to Morgantown on November 14, 1970, and watched the Mountaineers beat Syracuse , 28-19. His brother, Morris, was a student there, and after the game they went with

friends to a big party. It was at that party Meadows first received word about the Marshall plane crash. "Someone comes in the room and tells us about the Marshall plane crash. [...] The conversation turned to disbelief. Everybody was in a daze. You think about the impact it will have on Marshall" (Walsh, 2005b).

The need to complete a school assignment for graduation meant Joe Wortham couldn't perform a work assignment on November 14, 1970. At the time, Wortham was a Marshall senior and a student assistant in the sports information office. [...] Wortham had first choice for road trips, and the East Carolina game was most attractive, but he had to pass because the national teacher's exam he needed to graduate was scheduled that day as well. Student assistant Gary George made the trip instead. [...] "I was flipping through radio channels and heard a news flash that a DC 9 had crashed. [...] I knew the schedule and about the time the team was due back. Boom, my heart drops. I make calls to try and get more information. What I feared happened (Walsh, 2005c).

Community member Roger A. Hesson: "On the evening of Saturday, November 14, 1970, my wife and I had a living room full of neighbors waiting for Marshall's assistant football coach Frank Loria to get home from East Carolina." Roger A. Hesson of Barboursville wrote to The Herald-Dispatch. "He was to get home about 9 p.m., bring his wife and two little girls across the street to my house, sing happy birthday to Bernice, help cut the cake and enjoy his friends after a hard road trip. "A message came across the TV screen providing the terrible news. Bernice and I rushed across the street to be with Phyllis Loria, who was expecting another child the next month. When we arrived at her door, her phone rang and she at that moment received the news of Frank's death" (Kokar, 2005).

Coach Jack Lengyel had returned home from a successful day at the office. Lengyel, head football coach at the College of Wooster in 1970, directed the Fighting Scots to a 9-6 win at Oberlin College on the afternoon of November 14. At home that evening with his wife, Sandy, they saw a bulletin on TV about the plane bringing the Marshall football team back from its game at East Carolina crashing. “My heart just sank,” said Lengyel during a Huntington visit. “The atmosphere of players, coaches and fans. It’s like it’s your team” (Walsh, 2005d).

At 7:35 pm, Eastern Standard Time on November 14, 1970, flight 932 went down outside of Huntington, killing all 75 people aboard. In the aftermath of the crash, the football program, the university and the town were thrown into crisis.

Part II: The Crisis

“There were lots of people around that had gotten to the fire. We stood there, all we could was just stand there because the fire was so huge. We knew it was the plane, and we were there, and we watched the fire burn and we watched the fire burning for about an hour, and nobody could move.”

Nate Ruffin

In the wake of the crash, the football program, the university and the city of Huntington were thrown into chaos. In the documentary *Marshall University: Ashes to Glory* (Wintek, 2000), survivors recount the moments and days right after the chartered Southwest Airways flight carrying the team, boosters from the community, and the flight crew crashed, killing all aboard:

And the guys are crowded around a radio and ah, and a teletype setter. I said what’s wrong, they said a plane’s gone down at the airport, we think it’s a small plane. That was routine so we went about working. —Ernie Salvatore, sports writer

After dinner I got a call from Jerry Senator who was our reporter, anchor, on duty that night and Jerry said there's been a plane crash, I've confirmed that but I don't know anything else. Don't know the size of the plane, don't know what it is. -Bos Johnson, former TV news anchor

She just picked up the phone and called and said do you have your television on and I said actually I don't right now, we've just finished dinner and she just said a plane has just gone down. What time was Parker due to get back tonight? -Mary Plyde Bell, widow

We had the radio on in the car and we were about in Greensboro North Carolina, um, when we heard a special bulletin. - Red Dawson, former assistant coach

The first thing I did, I think I just sat on the floor. I was just so, I was just so stunned I couldn't really do anything and, and I just couldn't believe it. I was just in denial. -Mary Jane Tolley, widow

And we walked in the restaurant and everyone in the restaurant was talking about the plane crash, and of course I panicked and got a very sick feeling and I think I just knew, but nobody really knew at that time that it wasn't a good thing. -Kim Proctor Crabtree, daughter

At our house we kept waiting for someone to call us and tell us, you know, is it true, is it not true. -Kim Proctor Crabtree, daughter

Jack gets on the, sends captain over to phone me, "Ernie does the name John Young mean anything to you" I said "Yes it does, he's the tight end, he's a sophomore." They found his wallet and I said ok, it's the Marshall plane crash. So I identified the wallet for Jack and I looked over the desk and said it's the Marshall plane crash, send the disaster crew over, we have a major disaster on our hands. -Ernie Salvatore, sports writer

There were girls that rushed into the room because they knew my parents were up at the game. And the only thing I could say was I have to get to the airport, I have to get to the airport. I jumped in the car and two of my sorority sisters jumped in with me and when I got to the airport at the bottom of the hill there was a policeman there and he was not letting anyone up to the airport. And , um I just insisted that I had to be there and told him my parents were on the plane and he just stepped aside and let us drive on up there. When we got up to the airport we parked and just walked and walked and walked and walked. There wasn't anything else I could do. –Debby Chambers Shonk, daughter/cheerleader

We parked the car and there was, I guess it was an old logging road that would take you into the side of the mountain so that you could get down into that ravine. -Reggie Oliver, surviving player

We said man it can't be, it can't be. Maybe we'll just find them, maybe we'll just find them and they'll be alive. -Nate Ruffin, surviving player

We traversed down the side of the mountain, I mean, it's muddy, it had rained, it's foggy. –Reggie Oliver, surviving player

And when we got near, we could see, there it was. Ah, the biggest fire I've ever seen in my life, you could feel the heat up to the highway, that's how the fuel was burning. There were lots of people around that had gotten to the fire and were standing around. -Nate Ruffin, surviving player

They were all in tears, trying to console each other. You're shaking from the cold, you're shaking from the shock of it all. -Reggie Oliver, surviving player

We stood there, all we could do was just stand there because the fire was so huge. We knew, it was the plane, and we were there, and we watched the fire burn and we watched the fire burning for about an hour, and nobody could move. -Nate Ruffin, surviving player

At that point the fireman stopped us and said the best you can do for anybody right now is to get back to the campus and try to console some of your classmates and some of your friends there. -Reggie Oliver, surviving player

Calls were coming in from all over the nation, folks wanting to know about my child. -Nate Ruffin, surviving player

Girlfriends that you knew dated certain people, they were just bawling and just fell apart. I saw other people that had their best friends and we hadn't seen parents yet. -Tony Barile, surviving player

My mother called and she wanted to know was her some alive and they passed the call into me and I said mom, I'm ok, but the team, the plane crash occurred, I don't think there's any survivors and I gotta do some work. -Nate Ruffin, surviving player

It was absolute bedlam in the house. -Keith Morehouse, son

The enormity of it didn't really sink in for a long time, you knew this was the whole football team, you knew it was a non-survival crash, but you didn't comprehend. -Bos Johnson, former TV news anchor

At the Marshall Christian Center, immediately, the students, they just converged. They came together to give support of one another and especially roommates who were on that plane,

boyfriends who were on that plane, husband are on that plan, they knew everybody on that plane and they came together to pray but about all to give support to one another, it was something they could not comprehend, that they could not handle. -Father Bob Scott, former Marshall team chaplain

All the barriers were down, no race seemed to exist, no male, no females seemed to exist it was just one heart crying for what had happened. -Nate Ruffin, surviving player

It was as though the whole world had blown up in my face, you know everybody all my best friends and my husband in one fowl swoop. -Mary Jane Tolley, widow

It just wiped out a cross section of the community. Not only did we have the football team on the plane, but we had key administrators from the university, members of the Big Green Club, it was just devastating. -Mickey Jackson, former assistant coach

It wasn't just me, I mean the friends and neighbors around our house had lost not just Parker, but they lost lists of friends. It was so wide spread in the neighborhood, it effected everybody. -Mary Plyde Bell, widow

And to have pulled out as many doctors and businessmen and legislators, and mothers as we did, leaves a mark, a very deep gash in the community. And it did here. -Bos Johnson, former TV news anchor (Wintek, 2000)

Framing Meaning

"Then a very, very dramatic thing happened. They had a meeting in a classroom over in Gullickson Hall. And I'm in there with one of my staff writers and these freshman, who are ineligible actually, and these

survivors who didn't make the trip, wanted to play the game the following week against OU. And when they made the offer, everybody started to cry." -Ernie Salvatore

In the following days, the magnitude of the crisis became clear to the community members that were left behind. In the immediate aftermath of the crash, the community struggled to give meaning to their changed reality. Surviving members of the football team felt the weight and responsibility of honoring their fallen teammates while the entire community went into action to observe their loss. Several commentaries from the documentary *Marshall University: Ashes to Glory* (Witek, 2000) illustrate this initial framing stage:

Sunday morning everything was hit home because we knew nobody was coming back. -Rick Meckstroth, surviving player

The university, the whole community is indescribably shocked and my heart goes out to the relatives and loved ones of our players and our staff and the fans. -Dr. Donald Desmond, former President of Marshall University

President Kennedy got assassinated and you just didn't believe it. It's still unreal to me right now. I stayed up most of the night, just couldn't believe it, still can't believe it. -Greg Finn, Marshall University student

I lost some close friend, I lost my roommate. I lost the kid across the hall and I guess it's just something that, it's just a devastating accident that no could help. But I know they'll all be missed, very much so. -Ace Loding, Marshall University student

A real trauma for me was, ah, going back to the room. Hood and I were roommates, in my room, by myself with the door closed, and the reality is that Hood ain't coming back. Ya know,

Joe's gone, Freddy's gone, VanHorn's gone, Larry's gone, the Shoe's gone, they're all gone. All of the sudden you go from being an 18 year old kid, one of the youngest kids, players on the team, to now one of the oldest on the team in the blink of an eye. -Reggie Oliver, surviving player

Marshall University, in West Virginia, is still in a state of shock today following the terrible tragedy of last Saturday night's crash of a chartered airline. 75 people died in the wreckage, the football team, the coaches and some prominent residents traveling with the team. Today at the hillside near Huntington where the plane went down, investigators were picking their way through the mud looking for clues. -news reel footage

Meanwhile, football players that did not make the trip signed a petition to play the final game of the season against Ohio University. Coupled with the freshman team, many felt the game should be played as a tribute. -narrator

We thought we owed these boys something, you know these guys were our teammates. We're gonna carry on to the last game of the season, they deserved that. That's how we felt. -Rick Meckstroth, surviving player

It would have been another devastating defeat for those young men and as courageous as they were it would have been totally impossible to concentrate on football. That would have taken away from a situation that was going on that was bigger than playing Ohio University. -Mickey Jackson, former assistant coach

It just felt like I needed to be [at the memorial service] because it was more than my mom and dad on that plane. There were so many people that just wanted to how sorry they were and give us a hug and that was constant. -Debby Chambers Shonk, daughter/cheerleader

It was a somber mood, like a funeral shot over the entire area. This was a major body blow. In light over everything that had gone before it, ya know, all the trouble, all the problems, trying to put this thing together, trying to make this school mean something to the state, to realize what they had here. It was just very, very sad. It was on everybody's mind. In the aftermath, the starkness of what had happened began to materialize. -Ernie Salvatore, sports writer

Marshall University will commence regular activities at 8:00, Wednesday morning. We're going back to school and we're going back to school productively. We're doing this in honor of those who lost their lives Saturday night. -John Callebs, former Marshall University development director (Witek, 2000)

While the community attended to honor and reverence, in this particular crisis situation, the devastation of the triggering event, the crash, was not swift, but rather lasted for days beyond. While memorial services were planned and carried out, identification of victims and clean up of the crash site continued for days. The following commentaries from *Marshall University: Ashes to Glory* (Witek, 2000) illustrate the protracted nature of this crisis:

I think the thing that stands out in my mind most was waiting to have the bodies identified. They called me to ask if I could give them any help in identifying, like if I might know what they would have worn or jewelry, or anything that I could help them with. -Kim Proctor Crabtree, daughter

Usually when something happens like this you have a night of horror but this was a week of horror because so many people couldn't be identified and Rick was one of them. I just went through unbelievable agony with people coming and showing me rings to be identified and all

these charred things and it just seemed to never stop. I never thought it would. -Mary Jane Tolley, widow

My wife and I went to 13 funerals in three days, that's what sticks in my mind. I don't remember the job, I don't remember the broadcast, I just remember funerals. -Bos Johnson, former TV news anchor

I remember we went to funerals all over the United States. I remember going to Texas, I remember going to Florida. I remember going to Alabama where we buried four people from Tuscaloosa, Alabama. We went all over. I felt like a soldier dispatched from the service who now has to go and take the flag when somebody has been deceased and I felt like it was my job as one of their former teammates to take the burden of what the parents were going through and bring them the flag and say your son was a great guy. -Nate Ruffin, surviving player

After weeks of effort, six bodies could not be identified. And on November 24th, Marshall held a combined memorial service. -narrator (Witek, 2000)

A significant part of the new reality of Marshall and Huntington was the number of parents lost in the crash, leaving behind children. For those widows left behind with young families, this meant becoming both mother and father as well as sole provider for their children. Many other children lost both parents in the crash. The community rallied around these children to make sure they were all cared for but the magnitude of the loss meant that at times, surviving family members were separated, many of which were moved away from Huntington, adding to the loss for the community. For older children with younger siblings, the crash signaled a time to take their place as the head of their family at a very young age, along with all the responsibilities that came along with this new role. The memory of

those days remains clear to the surviving children, as is illustrated in the following commentaries from *Marshall University: Ashes to Glory* (Witek, 2000):

My mother's sister and her husband spoke up almost immediately and said that they wanted the kids to come and live with them. But my brother went to Florida to live with my dad's brother. And then I moved into the sorority house so in a way, we were split up, we just had to be. -Kim Proctor Crabtree, daughter

I remember helping gather up toys and things and it was incredibly difficult. The hardest part for me was distributing our animals to different people. We got rid of the guinea pigs, we got rid of the tanks of fish. Having Marco go to Camden Park was the worst. The know that that was our buffalo, that dad was so happy about and proud of, that was awful. -Courtney Proctor Cross, daughter

My mother's sister and her husband, my aunt and uncle were left in their will as our guardians if anything would ever happen and they lived in Lewisburg. And they bought a new house, a big house, and we moved to Lewisburg with them. I remember not wanting to leave. As we got older we wanted to move back. You know, we were wanting to come back to Huntington." -Debbie Hagley Morehouse, daughter

All the sudden you've got to take the responsibility to be in charge of somebody when you're 10 and he was 11 and, ya know, the whole world's watching as far as Huntington. They were all wanting to make sure that Jeff could do it and he gave up a lot for me. But you know, the people and the community, you know, they were all friends of my parents, watched out for me, didn't let me get into trouble. Cashed checks for me, were there when I needed them. -Kevin Heath, son

I still marvel at how she did it with six kids, and working a job as a nurse and trying to raise everybody and I don't know that she ever really fully recovered from it and she absolutely adored him. I guess some people you only get one shot at that in your lifetime and he was hers and when she decided to leave Huntington, it was to try to leave everything behind and move on. -Keith Morehouse, son (Witek, 2000)

Moving Forward

"We met over at the gym and we said, do we really want to continue this. And we said the fans of Huntington would not be the same without having to carry on the memory of this team and we can come up out of it and continue to play. The fans need it and we need it." -Nate Ruffin

Another dimension to the Marshall situation during the chronic phase of the crisis cycle was the question about the future of the football program. Among those that were lost in the crash of flight 932 were the college's athletic director, eight members of the coaching staff and 37 players from the varsity squad. Given the magnitude of the loss, the option of discontinuing the program was seriously considered. The following commentaries from *Marshall University: Ashes to Glory* (Witek, 2000) illustrate the complexity of the crisis and the magnitude of the decision to continue the program:

Walk away from 75 deaths, it's a heck of a way to pay them homage, isn't it? You give up something like that. The people that were saying that weren't the people who really understood Marshall. -Ernie Salvatore, sports writer

We believe that the next step is to rebuild. We're bound and determined to stay here, to help this school recover from the rubble, the ashes and try to reestablish a program here at Marshall. -Ed Carter, surviving player

I knew it was the right thing to do, yeah, I knew it was the only thing to do. -Rick Meckstroth, surviving player

I think it was one of the most courageous decisions ever made and it will go down in the annuals of college football as one of the greatest comebacks in the history of college football. -Mickey Jackson, former assistant coach

The crash was a turning point. There was first sympathy of the state for Marshall, second, there was an awareness of Marshall that had not existed before. -Bos Johnson, former TV news anchor

And that was really the beginning, the reincarnation of Marshall the night that plane crashed, so this was the relationship getting even stronger, and the determination to make it a better place grew even stronger. -Ernie Salvatore, sports writer (Witek, 2000)

Rebuilding

"The first order of business was to hire a new athletic director. Joe McMullen was appointed in February, 1971. [...] Then the search for a new football coach began. When Bob Phillips of Penn State, turned the job down, it was offered to Dick Bestwick of Georgia Tech. After meeting with the players, Bestwick declined the offer and the search for a coach was renewed again. On St. Patrick's Day, 1971, Marshall hired Jack Lengyel." -Marshall University: Ashes to Glory

With the loss of the majority of the coaching staff in the crash, the search for a new head coach was the crucial first step to rebuilding the football program. The position was offered to many coaches but the man that was eventually named head coach was Jack Lengyel, the head football coach at Wooster College in Wooster, Ohio. Unlike the other candidates for the position, Lengyel approached

Marshall about taking the reins of the program. Several commentaries from *Marshall University: Ashes to Glory* (Witek, 2000) suggest that by all accounts, he was the right man at the right time for the job of leading the rebuilding efforts:

And they couldn't have picked a better man. He was a humanist, a man struggling all of his life to elevate himself, and he had pulled himself up, to go to college, become a successful athlete, and an outstanding student. -Ernie Salvatore, sports writer

I can remember here on the door is a flyer that said Jack Lengyel from Wooster, Ohio is the new head football coach for the Thundering Hear and we're going Jack Lengyel, who is this, and where is Wooster? -Reggie Oliver, surviving player

He was the right man for the job at the time and he was the compassionate piece that we needed to glue these guys back together so we could start on this great page that was yet to come. -Nate Ruffin, surviving player

With spring practice scheduled to begin, Lengyel hustled to interview returning players and hire a new coaching staff. [...] Spring practice began on April 13th at Fairfield with 43 players on the roster and the Young Thundering Herd took the field for the first time. -narrator

Anybody who wanted to try out for that team just had to come in and try out. They were literally, not figuratively, starting from scratch in every position. But I never saw more spirit in workouts, I mean these kids were up to their necks involved in this thing. They had friends that went down in that plane. It was a very rare Marshall student that didn't know somebody that was on that plane who was an athlete and have some personal connection there. And so they all had their little missions in life. They were doing so many things in the names of these people,

most you didn't know because they didn't come out and announce it, but that's the truth.

-Ernie Salvatore, sports writer

When we started 1971, we ended up with guys on the team, there were guys that were freshman, there were walk-ons. We would take anybody, matter of fact we put it in the gymnasium and asked, anybody that would like to play, please come on out and Jack was really looking for people. He had a former basketball player, Dave Smith, he became a starting linebacker. -Nate Ruffin, surviving player

We had basketball players and had to teach them how to play football. I think we had soccer players, we had baseball players that could run the ball and catch the ball, and we had some football players, some pretty good football players. -Mickey Jackson, former assistant coach

And they had the heart and the commitment and the willingness to be a part of something that was very, very big to everybody, and interestingly enough, a lot of them came forward and accepted that challenge. I thought of them as a group of different football type players that all saw a common cause and made a commitment to something bigger than themselves. And for that, they were a group that came together like a fist and beat as one heart, even those that had never played the game before, that were basketball players. We had ex Marines, a soccer player. All these people said I'm going to make this work and help them because it is something I believe in and we owe this to those that went before us, we owe it to the community, to my university, etc. To me that was probably one of the greatest things that come out of this was all their commitments to come together and they were called the Young Thundering Herd. -Jack Lengyel, former head coach

Nothing was sacred, nor was it the same as it had been with any other coaching staff. We said we would throw caution to the winds. Anybody that had a good idea that I thought would help us win, we'd make the change now, and that's the way we operated. -Jack Lengyel, former head coach (Witek, 2000)

Rebuilding was more complicated than hiring a new staff and finding players though. Because the crash had such a devastating effect on Marshall and Huntington, there was an emotional component to the rebuilding process, as the following commentaries from *Marshall University: Ashes to Glory* (Witek, 2000) suggest:

We had to use the equipment that those players had used the previous weeks at practice before they went to play at East Carolina. So there were a lot of moving experiences there, people coming up to us and talking to us about their father or their parents or a friend that was on that plane. The stories went on and on and on. -Jack Lengyel, former head coach

A day never went by that there wasn't a flashback to some type of reminder. But we tried to encourage our kids to use this as a positive, have the spirit of remembrances to use as a positive influence in their life. -Mickey Jackson, former assistant coach

It was a very, very significant and important lynch pin to our development of this program. It made a statement, it gave hope for everybody, the coaching staff, the fans, the community, the spirit of what we were doing, the team itself needed that. And once we accomplished that I think it gave us "yes we can, yes we can." The spring game became to launch pad to the season and fortunately we won that game 26 to 0. -Jack Lengyel, former head coach (Witek, 2000)

Part III: Resolution

“You were always filled with hope every time they went out but it really did become more hopeful for some reason. Or at least you focused on that. Hope.” -Michele Prestera Craig

On September 25th, 1971, the Young Thundering Herd, the name given the team Jack Lengyel put together in the wake of the crash, opened their home season at Fairfield Stadium with a win. The previous week, the Young Thundering Herd lost a close game on the road but the fact that Marshall was able to field a team less than a year after the catastrophic crash that claimed the lives of the most the team and coaching staff was a signal of healing for the community. The following commentaries from *Marshall University: Ashes to Glory* (Witek, 2000) demonstrate this process of healing:

That was again, the start of something at Marshall University, football was back, we scored our first touchdown, we can play. -Jack Lengyel, former head coach

For the team that we had put together, it was with tape and bandages, and glue, just making a team out of nothing. We left the ballgame feeling like we were the winners. -Reggie Oliver, surviving player

For those in attendance on September 25th, it was an emotional event. Football was back at Marshall, but in a very different way. -narrator

It was difficult sitting there. It was almost too fresh, it was real easy to think about the year before. There was something missing. Then I realized there were so many missing. So many of our friends weren't ever going to be there again to enjoy Marshall football and it was painful.

-Mary Plyde Bell, widow

I do remember it being an emotional game just back at that stadium, the whole atmosphere was a little bit different. -Keith Morehouse, son

The assumption was, we were going to go through a simply awful year in terms of results but it will be interesting to watch because here will be a lot of people playing on raw nerve and emotion and desire. -Ernie Salvatore, sports writer

There was a quiet, somber mood, one of reflection and I think one of sincere, deep appreciation, that the President of United States thought enough to take the time to write to us about the significance of what we were doing. -Jack Lengyel, former head coach

When the football team came down that ramp, I mean that was an emotional experience. People in the stand began to weep. -Ernie Salvatore, sports writer

The last time that that had happened, here come the Herd, was when the varsity ran down that ramp. -Reggie Oliver, surviving player

I think we all realized there were some people watching us, pulling for us from a different vantage point. Ya know, they had good seats, they didn't have to fight the crowd getting in, they were pulling for us, because they had laid some ground work and didn't get to finish, they saw that we had picked up the ball and were running with us. I'm sure nobody would have been happier than they were. -David Walsh, former player

Then when we hit the field, I thought we were going to lose it because the crowd came into the game. -Mickey Jackson, former assistant coach

The crowd just erupted, it was like thunder, it was like thunder in the house. -Reggie Oliver, surviving player

It was like bringing the university back together. -Ed Carter, surviving player

I also remember Father Scott blessing the team as they were coming across the field; that was an emotional experience, he truly understood the mission of this team as well. -Jack Lengyel, former head coach

Hey, we've done something spectacular here. We're playing against a team that we're not even supposed to be close to and here we are three points up. -Debby Chambers Shonk, daughter/cheerleader

He gave us a resounding half time speech and he held his hand out and said gentlemen, you got it right there, he said you got it right there. He said if you'll go out and play for 30 minutes, if you'll give your all for 30 minutes, you will have the greatest upset in college football history. Chills just went over me to know that we got a chance. -Reggie Oliver, surviving player

There's a possibility here, ya know, we could do this. Look where we are, look where we've been, look how we've come to this place, this is a possibility, a real one. -Debby Chambers Shonk, daughter/cheerleader

Players crying, helmets are flying, everybody's throwing things up in the air. -Reggie Oliver, surviving player

It was just bedlam. -Debby Chambers Shonk, daughter/cheerleader

The stadium just exploded, it erupted and it was like, wow. -Nate Ruffin, surviving player

What a wonderful thing. Look where we've been, look what we just did. -Debby Chambers

Shonk, daughter/cheerleader

People went crazy in the stands. -Allen Meadows, former player

They poured out of the stadium. -Jack Lengyel, former head coach

I looked to the sky and knew that 75 people had something to do with that. We knew that the spirit of those ashes were now alive again. -Nate Ruffin, surviving player

It was a miracle, it was a miracle. -Ernie Salvatore, sports writer

I'd have to say it was a miracle. -Jack Lengyel, former head coach

I think it had more to do with just more than the eleven of us. -Reggie Oliver, surviving player

And then I walked back outside and the crowd was still in the stands, hugging, crying, talking to one another. -Jack Lengyel, former head coach

No other team had won a game under those conditions. I think that was the greatest football victory, period. -Ernie Salvatore, sports writer

It gave that little glimmer of hope that if we could do it there, we could do it again. -Debby

Chambers Shonk, daughter/cheerleader

Can these ashes live again, yes they can. Somebody was blowing the breath on those ashes and saying live, live, live. -Nate Ruffin, surviving player (Witek, 2000)

Part IV: Marshall Today

Since the crash of 1970, the Marshall Football program has had many successes, as illustrated in Figure 1. Marshall University had the winningest record of any college football program in the United States in the 1990s. These teams won six conference championships, took two NCAA national titles, made seven bowl game appearances, had three Heisman trophy finalists on their roster, and produced three players that went on to play in the National Football league including Tennessee Titan Randy Moss, Pittsburgh Steeler Byron Leftwich, and Miami Dolphin Chad Pennington. Just two decades earlier, in the wake of the crash, the suggestion to discontinue football at Marshall was seriously considered. None of the success the Marshall of today has enjoyed would have been a reality had the football program been discontinued in 1970.

Figure 1: *Marshall Football Timeline*

| Marshall Football Timeline Post Crash | |
|---------------------------------------|--|
| November 14, 1970 | |
| 1971 | Plane crash at Tri State Airport, Huntington, West Virginia. 37 players lost, 8 coaches lost, 25 community members lost, 5 flight crew lost. |
| September 25, 1971 | Marshall University hires Jack Lengyel, former head football coach at Wooster College, Wooster, Ohio as head football coach. |
| 1984 | Marshall defeats Xavier University in their first home game following the plane crash. |
| 1988 | Marshall ends the season with a 6-5 record, marking its first winning season in 2 decades. |
| 1991 | Marshall is home to NCAA Division I AA player of the year Mike Barber; claims its first Southern Conference championship; and holds the No. 1 rank in the nation for the first time. |
| | Marshall Stadium opens. |

| | |
|------|--|
| 1992 | |
| | Marshall wins its first NCAA Division I AA championship. |
| 1996 | |
| | Bobby Pruett, an alum of Marshall, takes over as head coach; Marshall finishes the season with a 15-0 record; Marshall wins its second NCAA Division I AA championship. |
| 1997 | |
| | Randy Moss is Marshall's first Heisman Trophy finalist; Marshall makes its NCAA Division I A and Mid-American Conference debut; Marshall claims another league championship. |
| 1998 | |
| | Marshall claims the Mid-American Conference Championship; Marshall earns a Motor City Bowl bid and its first bowl win. |
| 1999 | |
| | Marshall completes the decade with 114 wins, more than any other team in NCAA I A or I AA history; Chad Pennington is Marshall's second Heisman Trophy finalist; Marshall claims another Mid-American Conference Championship. |
| 2001 | |
| | Marshall wins the GMAC Bowl, 64-61, in double overtime. It is the highest-scoring bowl game in history. |
| 2002 | |
| | Marshall claims another Mid-American Conference Championship; Marshall has another GMAC Bowl victory. |
| 2003 | |
| | Marshall leaves the Mid-American Conference and joins Conference USA, a larger collegiate athletic conference. |
| 2004 | |
| | Bobby Pruett retires with a record of 94-23 and .803 winning percentage during his nine seasons. Pruett won more games than any other football coach in Marshall history. His teams won five Mid-American Conference championships, one NCAA Division I AA championship, and appeared in seven bowl games. |

(Herald, 2005)

Analysis of the Marshall Crisis

Introduction

As part of this research method, information gathered from primary sources and information gleaned from the interview conducted with Jack Lengyel was analyzed using two established models. The first model, Steven Fink's Crisis Cycle model was used to analyze how the community of Huntington moved through the crisis situation. The second model, Terry Orlick's Wheel of Excellence model was used to analyze the transcript of the Jack Lengyel interview for the purpose of identifying instances of the leadership traits outlined in the model.

Fink's Crisis Cycle Model

As part of the analysis for this research, the researcher analyzed the Marshall crisis using the Crisis Cycle model outlined by Fink (1986) and introduced in the Review of Related Literature section of this paper. The model includes four phases: the prodromal phase, the acute phase, the chronic phase, and the crisis resolution phase. Primary sources including newspaper articles, documentaries, and the Jack Lengyel interview transcript were analyzed using the Crisis Cycle model.

Orlick's Wheel of Excellence Model

Another part of the analysis for this research included an assessment of the Jack Lengyel interview within the context of Orlick's (2000) Wheel of Excellence model. Introduced in his book "In Pursuit of Excellence: How to win in sport and life through mental training," the model has seven elements. These elements include commitment, focused connection, confidence, positive images, mental readiness, distraction control, and ongoing learning. During this research, the transcript of the Jack Lengyel interview was studied to identify instances of these seven elements.

The Crisis Leadership Model

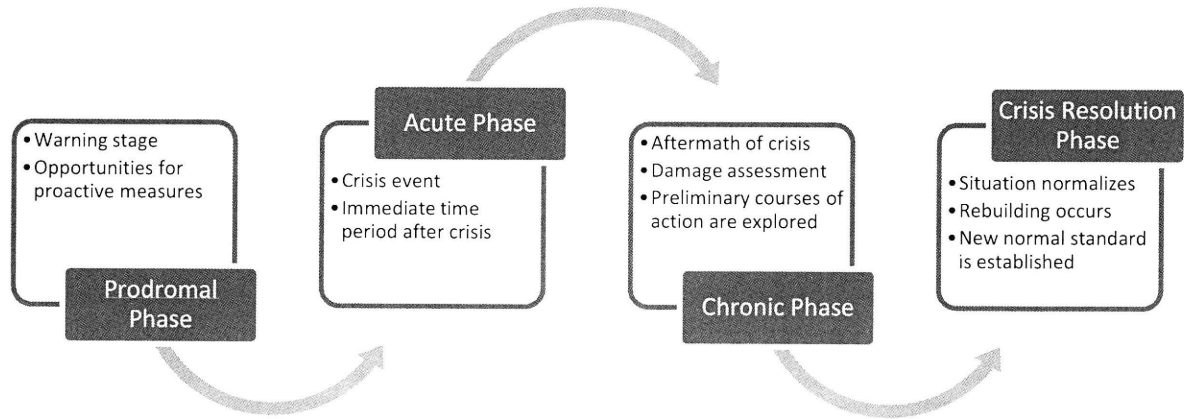
The outcome of this research was the development of the Crisis Leadership model, a new model that combines elements of the Crisis Cycle model and the Wheel of Excellence model. The purpose of the Crisis Leadership model is to put leadership elements in the proper context of the given crisis. The analysis of the Marshall crisis using the Crisis Cycle model and the analysis of the Jack Lengyel interview transcript using the Wheel of Excellence model were combined to produce an analysis of the crisis using the Crisis Leadership model.

Part I: Marshall and the Crisis Cycle

Introduction to the Crisis Cycle Model

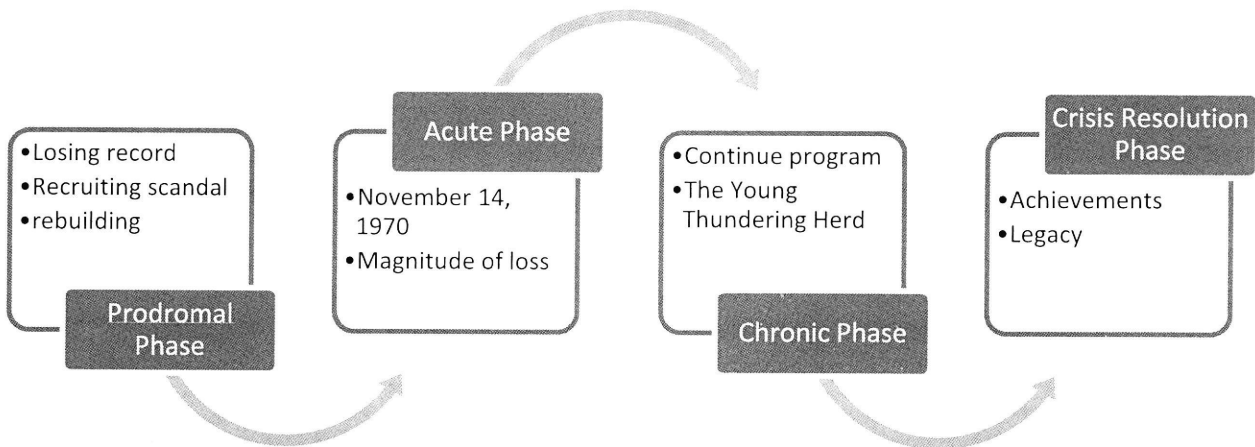
The question: what factors contribute to a group successfully navigating times of crisis and what role does the leader play in this navigation, is at the center of this case study of the Marshall crisis. To begin answering this question, the researcher analyzed the Marshall tragedy through the lens of the Crisis Cycle Model outlined by Fink (1986), and introduced in the Review of Related Literature section of this paper. The model includes four phases: the prodromal phase, the acute phase, the chronic phase, and the crisis resolution phase. Primary sources including newspaper articles, documentaries, and the Jack Lengyel interview transcript were analyzed to track the Marshall crisis using the Crisis Cycle Model. Figure 2 illustrates the characteristics of each of the four phases. Figure 3 identifies events in each phase that are specific to the Marshall Crisis.

Figure 2: *Fink's Crisis Cycle Model*



(Fink, 1986, pp. 21, 22, 23, 25)

Figure 3: *Marshall and the Crisis Cycle Model*



(Fink, 1986, pp. 21, 22, 23, 25)

Part A: The Prodromal Phase

According to Fink (1986), the prodromal phase is defined as a period of relative calm that creates an environment in which warning signs of crises can be seen most clearly and signals a period of time in which proactive measures can be taken to either avoid the crisis event entirely or mitigate the

damage of the crisis event (Fink, 1986, p. 21). Ideally, the prodromal phase is the phase in the Crisis Cycle that organizations spend most their time in. Given that Marshall was distancing itself from a major recruiting scandal that resulted in disciplinary actions from both the MAC and the NCAA, a recruiting scandal that occurred as a direct result of chronic underfunding by the State of West Virginia in comparison to other state funded schools, it is difficult to ascertain if the football program ever had a true prodromal phase prior to the crisis of the crash.

There are several factors that need to be addressed with respect to the prodromal phase and Marshall including chronic underfunding, the recent recruiting scandal and the challenge of rebuilding on the heels of that scandal. Further, another factor that bears mentioning is that the crash of flight 932 was an accident, and could not have been foreseen. Given that the accident could not have been forecast, the Marshall program did not fail to recognize the potential for this crisis and makes the fact that Marshall was in what could be best described as pseudo prodromal phase less relevant in determining how successfully the program and community navigated the Crisis Cycle.

Underfunding

As stated previously, Marshall University was continuously underfunded by the West Virginia legislature. Compared to other West Virginia publicly funding universities, Marshall ranked at the bottom of the scale in terms of financial support from the state. This chronic lack of funding coupled with changes in the Mid-American Conference set the stage for the ensuing recruiting scandal.

With respect to the prodromal phase of the crisis cycle, it is reasonable to conclude that this chronic state of underfunding made it impossible for Marshall to enjoy a true prodromal phase. However, this phase, in the case of Marshall, could reasonably be called a pseudo-prodromal phase, as chronic underfunding became the school's normal operating mode, regardless of the stress that could

be attributed to such lack. Further, the crisis with respect to this research is the plane crash and subsequent loss that brought Mr. Lengyel to Marshall.

Recruiting Scandal

The previously described lack of financial resources led Marshall to a scandal that would result in 144 alleged recruiting violations, indefinite suspension from the MAC and one year of probation from the NCAA. Further, three members of the coaching staff, including head coach Perry Moss were relieved of their duties and 42 players left Marshall as a result of the recruiting scandal (Woolf, 2006).

Again, with respect to the prodromal phase of the crisis cycle, it would also be reasonable to assume that such a scandal was itself a crisis, giving Marshall little time to recover before the crisis of the 1970 plane crash occurred. Rather than a clearly defined cycle, the scandal suggests that Marshall's crisis had areas of overlap.

Rebuilding

In the wake of the recruiting scandal, Marshall set about rebuilding the program by firing Perry Moss, the coach partially culpable for the scandal and promoting Rick Tolley, who was charged with restoring order. While the 1970 season opened with much optimism due to this change in leadership, the Thundering Herd entered what would be their final game in a position of having to win just to break even. The Herd lost that final game.

With regard to the prodromal phase, this rebuilding could be viewed as part of a chronic phase in the crisis cycle. Again, rather than a clearly defined cycle, this period of rebuilding that was occurring at the time of the crash suggests that Marshall's crisis had areas of overlap.

Part B: The Acute Phase

The acute phase of the crisis cycle is defined as the signaling event of the crisis (Fink, 1986, p. 22). Whereas the prodromal phase is defined as a period of relative calm, this phase triggers the crisis cycle. For the Marshall crisis cycle, the acute phase includes the crash itself as well as the magnitude of the loss that ensued. The triggering event for Marshall University occurred November 14, 1970, when Southwest flight 932 went down just outside of Huntington, West Virginia, killing all 75 persons onboard.

This airplane crash took the lives of 37 team members, eight coaches, and 25 community members, leaving a significant void in the Huntington and Marshall University communities, and decimating the football program. The crux of the crisis was the enormous scope of the loss. The fact that members of the football team, members of the coaching staff, and members of the community perished seemed to have a compounding effect. The sheer number of people lost across the university and Huntington communities meant that most people in these communities had a direct connection to those lost in the crash.

Part C: The Chronic Phase

Fink (1986) defines the chronic phase of the crisis cycle as the point in the cycle in which damage is assessed and preliminary courses of action for rebuilding are explored (Fink, 1986, p. 23). For the Marshall crisis cycle, the chronic phase includes the decision to continue the football program and the formation of the Young Thundering Herd.

Continuing the Program

By all accounts, the decision to continue the football program at Marshall was in question in the immediate aftermath of the crash. The magnitude of the loss made the question of continuing the program both logistical and emotional in nature.

Football programs are hierarchical in nature with athletes working their way up through the ranks, year after year as they improve their skills and gain the requisite experience. Captains, the leaders on a team that come from the athlete ranks, are typically upper classmen. At the time of the Marshall crash, the NCAA rule that Freshman were not eligible to be rostered members of the varsity team, reflected this philosophy. In 1970, Marshall's official roster had 40 players listed. The crash claimed 37 of those, leaving only three varsity players that had eligibility to play. While this loss alone would be enough to call the logistics of fielding a team into question, the crash also claimed eight members of the coaching staff, leaving only two, as well as the athletic director of the college. From athletes to coaching staff to administrative staff, the loss was profound. Couple the magnitude of the loss with the NCAA rule that freshman were ineligible to play and the logistical issues of continuing the program come into sharp focus.

The Young Thundering Herd

Ultimately, the decision was made to continue the program. After an exhaustive and unsuccessful search for a new head coach, Jack Lengyel approached the university about leading the program. This decision to continue the program was significant given the magnitude of the crisis. In putting the depth of this loss into context, he states that,

When I went down there, I thought that I was rebuilding a football team and I quickly found out that there were 24 boosters on that plane and there were four doctors and their wives, another

doctor, a state senator, a city councilman, Vice Presidents of corporations, the Dean of Admissions, the Director of Athletics, trainers, managers, radio personnel, 37 football players, eight coaches, and there were 70 children without one parent and 18 in the community without two parents [...] it took a wide swath out of the Huntington community (J. Lengyel, March 10, 2010).

The magnitude of the loss necessarily made the decision to continue the program more complex from an emotional standpoint, however the logistics of the loss compounded the challenge. In recounting this challenge of fielding this new team, coined The Young Thundering Herd because their average player age was younger than the collegiate football player age nationwide, Jack Lengyel says,

We had to look at it from the standpoint that we did not have all the tools that all the other teams that we were going to play in division I had. We were all freshman. But what was the value of success? [...] We were well conditioned, we were a disciplined football team, and were willing to take calculated risks and gambles and stunted a lot of those types of things but what we lacked in technique we tried to make up within our enthusiasm, perseverance and dedication, and commitment too. And the ability to come together as a team to play with reckless abandon (J. Lengyel, March 10, 2010).

The Young Thundering Herd had 24 returning freshman and three returning upperclassmen players when spring training started in April of 1971. In order to be competitive, Coach Lengyel pursued and received a waiver from the NCAA to be able to field freshman. While success in athletics is typically defined by winning seasons, success within the context of the Marshall crisis became playing the game of football for the purpose of continuing the tradition of the game at Marshall. In order to build a team, the coaching staff used this new definition of success to recruit freshman.

Once we got freshman eligibility, then we sold them on the idea that they could make a commitment to building the foundation and as I told them on the eve of the first football game [...] I would merely just tell them that [the players that died in the crash] are your teammates, this is why you're here, to contribute to making the foundation for football and bring football back to Marshall University and that while I can't promise you championships or all conference [...] I can promise you in future years when the teams are successful, you'll share in those successes (J. Lengyel, March 10, 2010).

Part D: The Crisis Resolution Phase

The crisis resolution phase is defined as the point in the crisis cycle when the situation normalizes (Fink, 1986, p. 25). This is the phase in the cycle when rebuilding continues and a new normal standard is established. In the Marshall crisis cycle, the crisis resolution phase is defined by the achievements of subsequent teams.

In the decade of the 1990's the Marshall University Thundering Herd enjoyed many significant accomplishments, chief among them, having the winningest record of any collegiate football program in the United States. During the 1990's, Marshall claimed six conference championships, two NCAA national titles and made seven bowl game appearances. At the individual player level, Marshall had three Heisman Trophy finalists on their rosters, and produced three NFL players during the 1990's. None of these accomplishments would have been realized had the football program been discontinued in 1970 in the wake of the crash.

Part E: The Marshall Legacy

As stated previously, success in athletics is generally defined by winning seasons however, success within the context of the Marshall crisis was defined by playing the game for the purpose of

continuing the tradition of football at Marshall without regard for record. Had success been determined by the traditional definition of winning records, the efforts of the Young Thundering Herd would have been described as unsuccessful given their records of 2-8 in 1971, 2-8 in 1972, and 4-7 in 1973 while Jack Lengyel led the program. By redefining success as rebuilding for the purpose of continuing the program, the efforts of the Young Thundering Herd can be described as successful. At a bare minimum, the fact that in 2011, Marshall still fields a team proves this success. Adding the accomplishments of the teams of the 1990's to this fact further substantiates the success of the Young Thundering Herd of 1971.

Reframing success to fit the context of the situation is the most important lesson to be learned from the Marshall Crisis. Had Coach Lengyel been inflexible and clung to the traditional definition of success, the experience of rebuilding the program would have been an exercise in frustration that would ultimately have to be describes as unsuccessful. By reframing success in this situation, Coach Lengyel was able to build momentum to achieve the ultimate goal which was the continuation of the program. The ability to reframe success to fit the context of the situation, particularly a crisis situation is a critical element needed to move a group or community from the chronic phase to the crisis resolution phase. Because part of the crisis resolution phase is establishing a normal, it follows that previous definitions of success will no longer be relevant to the new normal of a group or community.

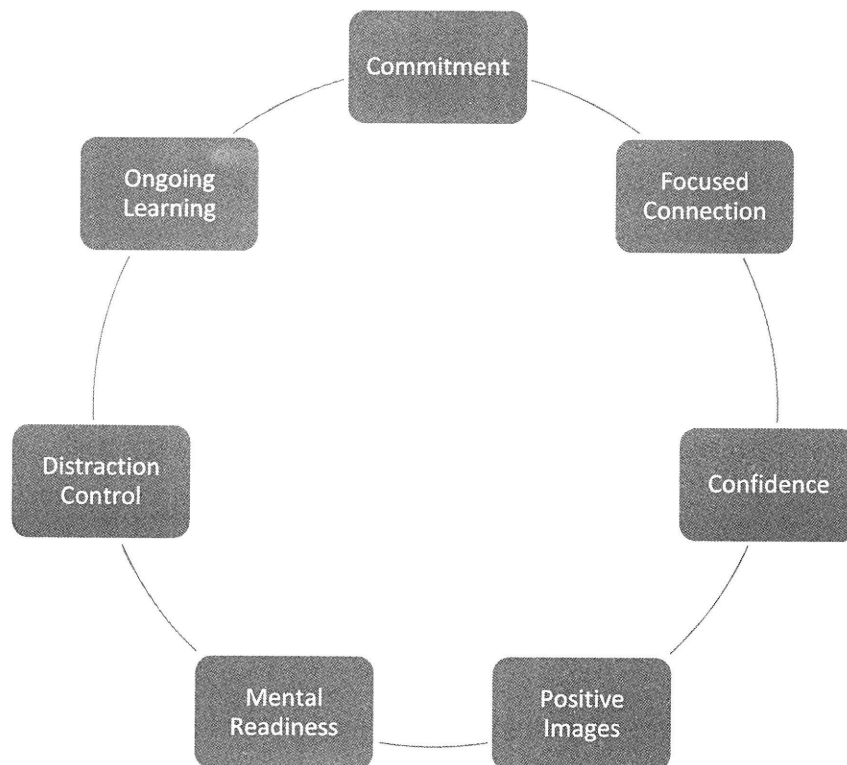
Part II: Jack Lengyel and the Wheel of Excellence Model

As part of this research, an interview with Jack Lengyel, head coach of the Thundering Herd from 1971 to 1974, was conducted. Mr. Lengyel responded to an email request for his participation in this research, agreeing to an interview with the researcher. On March 10, 2010, the researcher conducted a phone interview with Mr. Lengyel. The full transcript of this interview is included in Appendix A. The content of this interview was analyzed using the Wheel of Excellence Model.

Introduction to the Wheel of Excellence Model

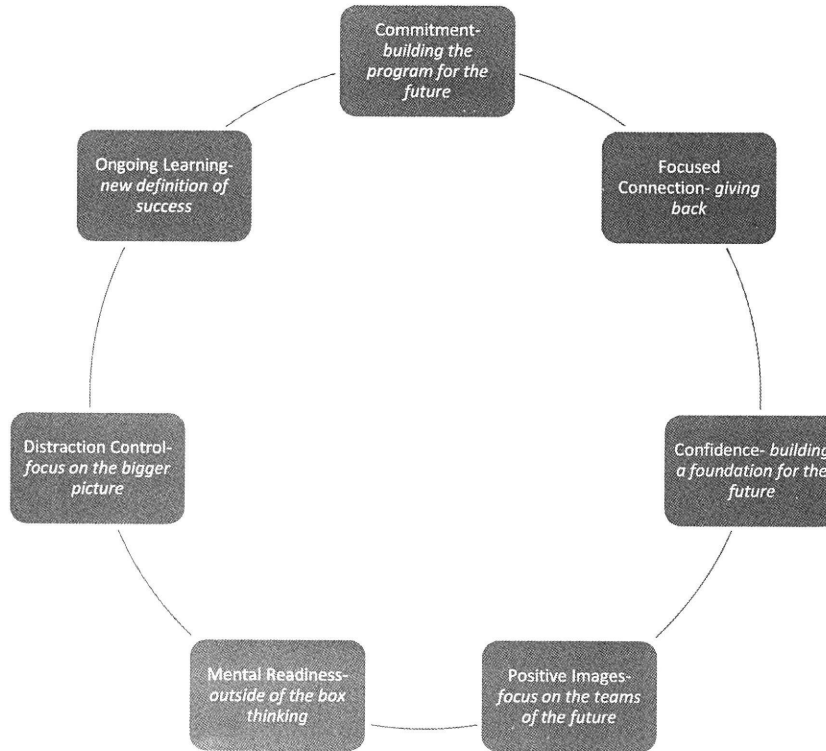
Terry Orlick, PhD (2000), in his book *In Pursuit of Excellence: How to Win in Sport and Life Through Mental Training* introduces the Wheel of Excellence, a model that illustrates the purpose of the coaching relationship. This model has seven elements: commitment, focused connection, confidence, positive images, mental readiness, distraction control, and ongoing learning. During this research, the transcript of the interview conducted with Jack Lengyel was studied to identify instances of these seven elements. Figure 4 illustrates the characteristics of the seven elements. Figure 6 identifies instances of the seven elements from the interview transcript.

Figure 4: Orlick's Wheel of Excellence Model



(Orlick, 2000, pp. 5, 7, 8, 10, 11, 13, 14)

Figure 5: Jack Lengyel and the Wheel of Excellence Model



(Orlick, 2000, pp. 5, 7, 8, 10, 11, 13, 14)

Part A: Commitment

Orlick (2000) identifies commitment as the first element of the Wheel of Excellence model.

Within the context of this model, commitment refers to the desire to pursue dreams, make meaningful contributions, strive for the best, develop mental, physical and technical aspects of excellence, set clear goals, overcome obstacles, continue to learn, and enjoy the pursuit of excellence (Orlick, 2000, p. 5). In analyzing the Jack Lengyel interview transcript for instance of commitment, making meaningful contributions is demonstrated.

During the course of the interview, when asked what his main goal was coming into his coaching position at Marshall, Coach Lengyel addresses the idea of making a meaningful contribution when he states

You know, the program had success but its success had many fathers. I was just the one who came in and laid the foundation. I promised [...] I'd stay a minimum of four years to put the crash pressure back together. [...] And I often talk about from the ashes to the pinnacle of success [...] [from] the Young Thundering Herd to Bobby Pruitt when they went 15-0 and won a national championship [...] that's quite a success story and an attribute to the leadership, all the people that participated and allowed them to achieve that particular goal (J. Lengyel. March 10, 2010).

Certainly, laying the foundation for the success of future teams can be described as making a meaningful contribution.

Part B: Focused Connection

Orlick (2000) identifies focused connection as the second element of the Wheel of Excellence model. Within the context of this model, focused connection refers to being fully focused or completely connected to the specific goal (Orlick, 2000, p. 7). In analyzing the Jack Lengyel interview transcript for instances of focused connection, complete focus on a specific goal is clearly demonstrated.

During the course of the interview, when asked what motivated him to pursue the head coaching position at Marshall, Coach Lengyel described his decision, stating

I got to thinking, well, maybe I can help. [...] There's an old Chinese proverb that says if you're ever given anything of value, you have a moral obligation to pass it on to others. Well, I had become a head football coach at the college level at the age of 29, and of course that's a very

young age to get a head coaching job and I was very appreciative of the opportunity and I thought to myself, well here's my chance to pay back to college football what it gave me (J. Lengyel, March 10, 2010).

Coach Lengyel's specific goal was to be of service to the sport of football and his motivation was born of his focus on that goal. The fact that this goal is beyond self interest is perhaps significant and presents a question for further research.

Part C: Confidence

Orlick (2000) identifies confidence as the third element of the Wheel of Excellence model. Within the context of this model, confidence refers to a belief in one's potential, one's capacity to overcome adversity, one's focus, one's purpose, and one's teammates (Orlick, 2000, p. 8). In analyzing the Jack Lengyel interview transcript for instances of confidence, belief in one's purpose is clearly demonstrated.

During the course of the interview, when asked if he had to adjust his style to meet the challenge of coaching in this situation, Lengyel spoke to purpose, stating

We made them stretch and reach for the goals we had to play a Division I schedule. You've got to do it to get the experience and you've got to reach. [...] You're setting goals, I know when I went to the first press conference, there weren't many people there, they figured I wasn't going to stay either and I was the third and last choice because spring practice was 31 days away. [...] After I gave my perfunctory remarks, Ernie Salvator, the sports editor said well what's your goal for the team and I said to go undefeated and he kinda smiled and he said Jack, isn't that a little unrealistic and I said it maybe seems unrealistic but the dedication and the experience and commitment necessary to succeed in the face of the unprecedented situation in the annals of

college football where we lost a whole team, if we do not have those characteristics and those commitments, we will never be successful in starting to rebuild this program (J. Lengyel, March 10, 2010).

The singular purpose for Jack Lengyel was to rebuild the program.

Part D: Positive Images

Orlick (2000) identifies positive images as the fourth element of the Wheel of Excellence model. Within the context of this model, positive images refers to using imagination to create a positive vision, develop goals, and build confidence (Orlick, 2000, p. 10). In analyzing the Jack Lengyel interview transcript for instances of positive images, creating a positive vision is clearly demonstrated.

During the course of the interview, Lengyel described how creating a positive image was part of his coaching practice. He started a tradition of taking the team to the cemetery where a monument to the people lost in the crash was before the first game of the season.

[...] as I told them on the eve of the first football game, I used to take them up to the [cemetery], there's a obelisk at the cemetery, [it's] up on a bluff overlooking the campus, downtown and the Ohio River, it's about 13 feet tall. It has all names of the players on the front and the names of the boosters on one side and the names of the 5 crew on the left side and out in front it has six blank markers, with a bronze plaque in the middle. Those six players were burnt beyond recognition. They didn't know who they were so they put a bronze plaque in there with their six names. [...] I took the team up there every year before we played the opening game of the season, I would merely just tell them that these are your teammates, this is why you're here. To contribute to making the foundation for football and bring football back to Marshall University and that while I can't promise you championships or all conference, I can only promise you what

Winston Churchill once said, you know blood, sweat and tears. But I can promise you in future years when the teams are successful, you'll share in those successes. And then some 20 years later, actually 12 years later, when they started having winning seasons, our Young Thundering Herd, all shared in those victories, they were a part of it. When they won the national championship, they felt a part of it (J. Lengyel, March 10, 2010).

Lengyel created a compelling positive vision that included the sacred purpose of rebuilding the program by carrying on the tradition of football in honor of the fallen team.

Part E: Mental Readiness

Orlick (2000) identifies mental readiness as the fifth element of the Wheel of Excellence model. Within the context of this model, mental readiness refers to creating positive learning opportunities, taking advantage of opportunities, developing essential mental, physical and technical skills for optimal performance, and effective planning, preparation and evaluation strategies (Orlick, 2000, p. 11). In analyzing the Jack Lengyel interview transcript for instances of mental readiness, taking advantage of opportunities is clearly demonstrated.

During the course of the interview, Lengyel described how taking advantage of opportunities was a component of coaching at Marshall by thinking outside the box in terms of building the team. Such tactics included lobbying the NCAA for freshman eligibility, taking walk-on players from other athletics teams that had never played football before, and working with the coach of a rival university on developing a defense that would work with this unorthodox team. The following passage from the interview transcript describes the development of that defense.

We had to change our offense and defense totally. We couldn't run the offense that I ran before so we had to find an offense that fit the material we had there. Bobby Boutan at West

Virginia was running the Houston Vere up in Morgantown, and that absolutely was the offense we could run because we had a few receivers and a quarterback, didn't have very strong lineman but if you put two wide receivers out they gotta spread their whole defense out so that opened up holes for rushing and running the options so the only problem was our quarterback was never an option player so he took a heck of a beating with that offense but, so we adopted their offensive philosophy and Bobby was very helpful in helping implement that and teaching it to us in three days, to really condition them and get em in shape and get them to buy in on trusting one another doing unorthodox things like throwing on first downs, throwing on fourth downs, things that you wouldn't expect a team to do to take the element of surprise and put it in our favor (J. Lengyel, March 10, 2010).

The nature of the crisis necessitated identifying and taking advantage of such opportunities if the rebuilding effort was to be a success.

Part F: Distraction Control

Orlick (2000) identifies distraction control as the sixth element of the Wheel of Excellence model. Within the context of this model, distraction control refers to developing skills to mitigate the negative effects of distraction that include gaining and maintaining positive focus as well as developing skills to regain positive focus when distractions effect performance (Orlick, 2000, p. 13). In analyzing the Jack Lengyel interview transcript for instances of distraction control, gaining positive focus is clearly demonstrated.

During the course of the interview, Lengyel cited gaining positive focus as a key component to his coaching philosophy and how his coaching philosophy is holistic in nature.

I think the success of a coach is one that teaches the character of the game, develops character, integrity, sportsmanship, teaches how to play and exceed what they think they can accomplish, teaches them how to be a part of a team, give up the "I" and the selfishness and have the selflessness to create a team that can be successful and attitude is more important than aptitude and all the valuable lessons, plus it's a physical game and you make a mistake and you got a bloody nose or broken nose, and in the context of football, all those lessons are well learned, particularly if you have success. I think those kinds of successes are then related to life, and life then is related to your success in your profession. So I think football contributes in all those elements, if you allow it and you become part of a team, to be a successful person (J. Lengyel, March 10, 2010).

Positive focus than includes, among other things, character development, integrity, and reaching beyond ones comfort zone to improve.

Part G: Ongoing Learning

Orlick (2000) identifies ongoing learning as the seventh element of the Wheel of Excellence model. Within the context of this model, ongoing learning refers to assessing strengths as well as areas for improvement and using that assessment to improve future performance (Orlick, 2000, p. 14). In analyzing the Jack Lengyel interview transcript for instance of ongoing learning, assessment of strengths is clearly demonstrated.

During the course of the interview, Lengyel discussed the idea of redefining success in terms of assessing the team's strengths.

In that case, we had to look at it from the standpoint that we did not have all the tools that all the other teams that we were going to play in division one had. We were all freshman. But

what was the value of success, we could predicate our success one number one, we could out-physical them and out-condition them, that was not an inherent difficulty even though we were freshman. So we were well conditioned, we were a disciplined football team, and we were willing to take calculated risks and gambles and stunted a lot and those types of things but what we lacked in technique we tried to make up with, in our enthusiasm, perseverance and dedication, and commitment to and the ability to come together as a team to play with reckless abandon (J. Lengyel, March 10, 2010).

Lengyel, by taking an inventory of what strengths the team possessed, and capitalizing on those strengths, Lengyel was able to move the team in a positive direction.

Part H: The Lengyel Legacy

In reviewing the transcript of the interview with Jack Lengyel, commitment to the purpose of rebuilding the football program with an eye toward the future is a recurring theme. This commitment, one of the elements of the Wheel of Excellence model, to this specific goal appears to have been a significant guiding principle during his three years at Marshall. The success subsequent Marshall teams enjoyed can be attributed in large part to this commitment. Without Lengyel and his commitment, football at Marshall would have been finished with the 1970 crash. Further, his ability to instill this commitment in his team through creating a positive image, another facet of one of the elements of the Wheel of Excellence is crucial to the team's success. Success as reframed by Lengyel as simply fielding a team to ensure the program continued required Lengyel's commitment and his ability to create a positive vision of the future.

Commitment to a specific goal and creating a positive vision that resonates with followers is the most significant lesson to be learned from analyzing the Jack Lengyel interview transcript. The synergy between coach and team occurs when commitment is instilled via a compelling positive vision.

Part III: The Crisis Leadership Model

The outcome of this research was the development of the Crisis Leadership Model, a new model that combines elements of the Crisis Cycle Model and the Wheel of Excellence Model. The purpose of this new model is to put leadership elements in the proper context called for given the particular crisis. The analysis of the Marshall crisis and the Crisis Cycle Model and the analysis of the interview transcript and the Wheel of Excellence model were combined to produce an analysis of the crisis using the CLM.

The research question: what factors contribute to a community successfully navigating times of crisis and what role does the leader play in this navigation, was initially analyzed using the Crisis Cycle Model and the Wheel of Excellence Model. The Crisis Cycle Model focuses on the crisis situation itself while the Wheel of Excellence Model focuses on aspects of coaching and the coaching relationship. The Crisis Leadership Model was developed by integrating elements of the Crisis Cycle Model and the Wheel of Excellence Model to illustrate the connection between crisis situation and leadership. The Crisis Leadership Model positions elements of the Wheel of Excellence Model between the chronic and the crisis resolution phases of the Crisis Cycle Model. The Crisis Leadership Model defines the momentum an effective leader creates to move a team or community from the chronic to the crisis resolution phase. The two components of the Crisis Leadership Model are commitment to the specific purpose and focused connection to the specific purpose. The specific purpose is determined by the reframed definition of success that is a result of the post crisis newly established normal. During this research, analysis of the Marshall crisis and the Crisis Cycle Model and analysis of the Jack Lengyel interview transcript and the Wheel of Excellence Model were reviewed to identify instances of the two components of the CLM. Figure 6 illustrates the characteristics of the two components. Figure 7 identifies instances of the two components with regard to the Marshall crisis.

Figure 6: *The Crisis Leadership Model and the Commitment to Specific Purpose Component*

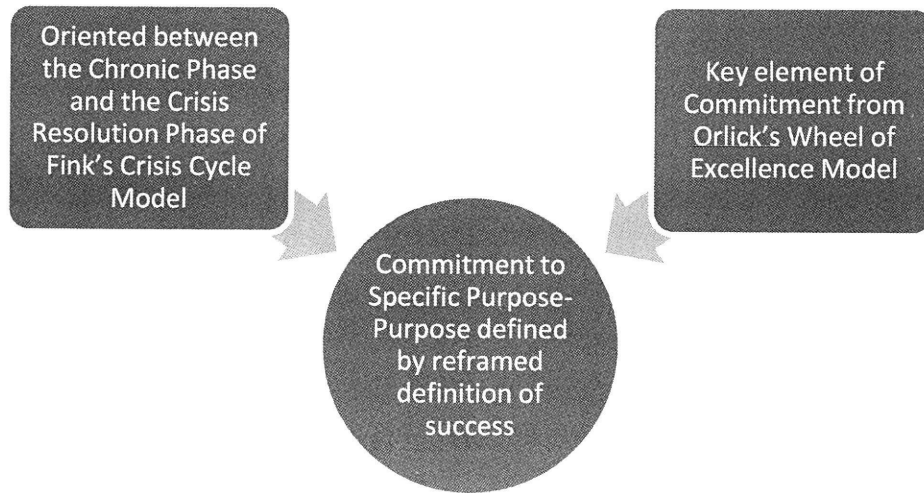


Figure 7: *The Crisis Leadership Model and the Focused Connection Component*

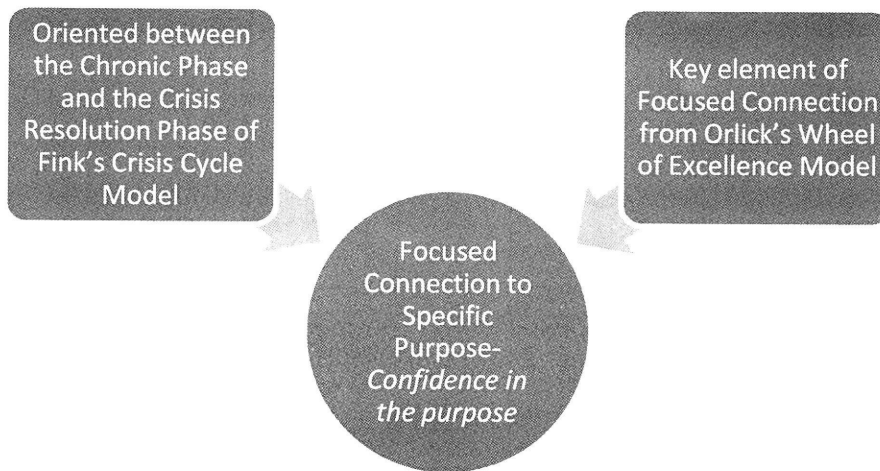
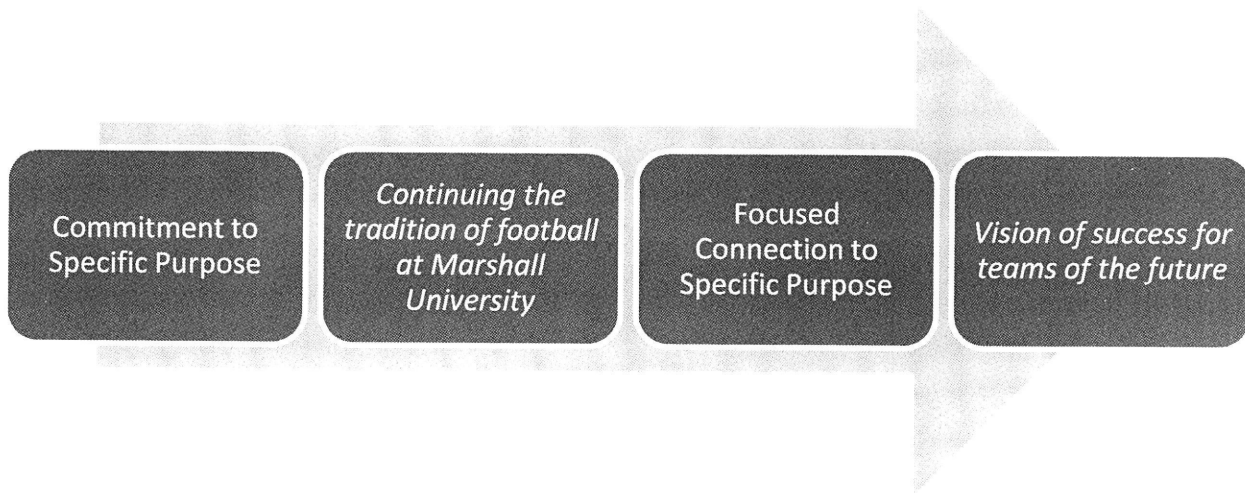


Figure 8: *Marshall and the Crisis Leadership Model*

The components of the Crisis Leadership model can be applied to the Marshall tragedy. The first component, commitment to a specific purpose, in the case of Marshall, is commitment to the continuing the program. This purpose stems from Lengyel's reframed definition of success. The second component, a focused connection to the specific purpose, in regards to Marshall is demonstrated in the compelling vision Lengyel created and instilled in his team.

Conclusion

This research started with the question: what factors contribute to a group successfully navigating times of crisis and what role does the leader play in that navigation. This summary will look at this question in the context of the review of literature, the Crisis Cycle model, the Wheel of Excellence model, and finally, the Crisis Leadership model.

During the review of related literature, it was determined that most of the current literature on crisis management focuses on two broad categories: the nature of crisis in general and the role of communication in navigating a crisis situation. The nature of crises is dynamic and full of opportunity. This dynamic nature of crisis allows for crucial learning if managed appropriately. While crises are dynamic in nature, they also follow a predictable cycle that includes four phases: prodromal, acute, chronic and crisis resolution. During this crisis cycle, communication is key to successful resolution. The literature suggests that it is communication that moves the group through the stages. The leader is responsible for this communication and bears the responsibility of framing the meaning of the crisis event for their community and articulating the values that will guide their community through the crisis resolution phase. The review of literature answers this question with the suggestion that groups successfully navigate times of crisis by moving through the crisis cycle, ending with crisis resolution and that the role of the leader is to help them move through the crisis cycle by framing the meaning of the crisis.

The literature concerning the role of storytelling within the context of leadership what found to include the three themes of community building, defining values, and articulating vision. These themes support the idea that communication moves a group through the crisis cycle found in the literature on crisis management and that the leader is responsible for building community, defining values, and articulating vision by means of effective storytelling.

Analysis of the Marshall tragedy using the Crisis Cycle model as a framework reveals that navigation through the crisis hinged on reframing success to fit the context of the situation. Had Coach Lengyel been inflexible and clung to the traditional definition of success the experience of rebuilding the program would have been an exercise in frustration that would ultimately have to be described as unsuccessful. By reframing success in this situation, Coach Lengyel was able to build momentum to achieve the ultimate goal which was the continuation of the program. The ability to reframe success to fit the context of the situation, particularly a crisis situation is a critical element needed to move a group or community from the chronic phase to the crisis resolution phase. Because part of the crisis resolution phase is establishing a normal, it follows that previous definitions of success will no longer be relevant to the new normal of a group or community. The Crisis Cycle model suggests that successful navigation of crisis situations requires moving through the cycle as well and that the roll of the leader is to establish a new normal for the group by reframing success.

Analysis of the Marshall tragedy using the Wheel of Excellence model as a framework points to commitment to a specific goal and creating a positive vision that resonates as the most significant lesson to be learned from analyzing the Jack Lengyel interview transcript. Synergy between coach and team occurs when commitment is instilled via a compelling positive vision. The Wheel of Excellence model suggests that the role of the leader in crisis navigation is commitment to the purpose and creation of a compelling vision that resonates with followers.

Finally, the components of the CLM can be applied to the Marshall tragedy as well as a framework for analysis. The first component, commitment to a specific purpose, in the case of Marshall, is commitment to the continuing the program. This purpose stems from Lengyel's reframed definition of success. The second component, a focused connection to the specific purpose, in regards to Marshall is demonstrated in the compelling vision Lengyel created and instilled in his team. The role of the leader

according to the Crisis Leadership model is to develop a commitment to a specific purpose and to create a focused connection through a compelling vision for the group.

As the literature regarding storytelling within the context of leadership suggests, articulating a vision for followers is crucial. As Simmons states, "A good vision story builds resilience and optimism, [...] a good vision story validates the difficulties of achieving your vision" (Simmons, 2007, p.101). Jack Lengyel, by reframing success, articulated a new vision story for his team, for Marshall University, and for the Huntington community.

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Appendix A

Interview with Jack Lengyel conducted March 10, 2010

Interviewer: I'm interested in looking at crisis leadership and crisis management but most of the work out there that's been written about this topic takes the perspective of what does somebody do when they are already in a leadership position when crisis strikes and I'm more interested in looking at what makes somebody step up to the challenge and assume a leadership position when there's crisis when they don't really have to. So getting into the questions I sent you, what motivated you to pursue the head coaching position at Marshall?

Coach Lengyel: Well I was coaching a football team in Ohio and we played for a championship and we lost the game and I was at home and I was watching television and a crawl came across the bottom of the screen that the Marshall University football team commissioned airline crashed, all 75 people aboard perished in the crash. And so my first thought was, and I'm sure every football coach that saw that that night said "there but by the Grace of God there go my football team and coaching staff. So I kind of watched it with great interest to see what was going to transpire. And about a month later, they had offered the job to a Penn State coach and he turned it down, they offered the job about a month later to a Georgia Tech coach, he took the job, stayed two days and resigned for personal reasons. And I got to thinking, well, maybe I can help. And ah, basically there's been, one of the motivations was, there's an old Chinese proverb that says if you're ever given anything of value, you have a moral obligation to pass it on to others. Well I had become a head football coach at the college level at the age of 29, and of course that's a very young age to get a head coaching job and I was very appreciative of the opportunity and I thought to myself, well here's my chance to pay back to college football what it gave to me. And that's why I went down and interviewed and accepted the job.

Interviewer: What was your main goal going into that coaching job, and was that different knowing that you'd be walking into a completely different situation?

Coach Lengyel: When I went down there, I thought that I was rebuilding a football team and I quickly found out that there were 24 boosters on that plane and there were four doctors and their wives, another doctor, a state senator, a city councilman, vice presidents of corporations, the dean of admissions, the director of athletics, trainers, managers, radio personnel, 37 football players, eight coaches. And there were 70 children in the community without one parent and 18 in the community without two parents. So what it was, was a community when those 75 people perished in that crash, it took a wide swath out of that whole Huntington community. So it was more than a football team and a university, it was a community, leadership in the university, football team and leadership of the football team so when I tell people about the We are Marshall story, I tell them this is not a football movie, this is really a movie about a community, a university and a football team exemplifying what I think is one of the greatest lessons I think there is in athletics and that's to face adversity and get back off the ground and go on to success. And, ah, so while it, ah, I talk about the Marshall University situation, you know the program had success, but its success had many fathers. I was just the one that came in and laid the foundation. I promised the governor I'd stay a minimum of four years to put the crash pressure back together. And then the next couple of coaches came in and about the third coach and the fourth coach had the first winning season about 12 years later, and he goes to Kansas State, and the next coach comes in and he goes to play for the national championship at Brocatelle, Idaho, that was George Chaump and Stan Perish was the first one that had a winning season at and George Chaump played for the national championship and lost it on about one of the last plays of the game. And they invited me back to the game so my wife and I went back for that game. And the next coach came in and that was Jim Donnan and he played four times for the national championship and won once and then went to Georgia and was very successful there and then Bobby Pruett came and went 15-0 his first year, won the

national championship and in the 90's, Marshall University was the winningest football program in the country, not Notre Dame, not Southern Cal or Ohio State, but Marshall University. And I often talk about from the ashes to the pinnacle of success and I certainly say with our group, the Young Thundering Herd, which we called them the Young Thundering Herd, we're really the Thundering Herd but because we were all freshman, we changed our name to the Young Thundering Herd, to Bobby Pruett when they went 15-0 and won a national championship and was the winningest team in the 90's in the NCAA, that's quite a success story and an attribute to the leadership, all the people that participated and allowed them to achieve that particular goal.

Interviewer: So it really does take a team, even if it's a team that spread over decades

Coach Lengyel: Yes, ma'am, 20 some years and as we always say, team isn't spelled with an "I"

Interviewer: What is your definition of success as a coach?

Coach Lengyel: I think the success of a coach is one that teaches the character of the game, develops character, integrity, sportsmanship, teaches how to play and exceed what they think they can accomplish, teaches them how to be a part of a team, give up the "I" and the selfishness and have the selflessness to create a team that can be successful and attitude is more important than aptitude and all the valuable lessons, plus it's a physical game and you make a mistake and you got a bloody nose or broken nose, and in the context of football, all those lessons are well learned, particularly if you have success. I think those kinds of successes are then related to life, and life then is related to your success in your profession. So I think football contributes in all those elements, if you allow it and you become part of a team, to be a successful person.

Interviewer: It doesn't sound like you had to redefine your definition of success when you went to Marshall.

Coach Lengyel: In that case, we had to look at it from the standpoint that we did not have all the tools that all the other teams that we were going to play in division I had. We were all freshman. But what was the value of success, we could predicate our success on number one, we could out-physical them and out-condition them, that was not an inherent difficulty even though we were freshman. So we were well conditioned, we were a disciplined football team, and we were willing to take calculated risks and gambles and stunted a lot and those types of things but what we lacked in technique we tried to make up with, in our enthusiasm, perseverance and dedication, and commitment to and the ability to come together as a team to play with reckless abandon and we had to change the style. I could not run my offense that I had run at the College of Wooster so I looked for an offense that would fit the material that we had. And obviously we only had 24 freshman and we started with about 39 but the rest of them had been...other teams had come in and picked them off and you know said "you don't want to play for a team that had an airplane crash" so we were left with 24 freshman, a couple of good receivers and one or two quarterbacks and that was it. Linemen were very thin, we had no defensive backs, etc. etc, etc so we had a lot of walk-ons, and then we went out and recruited freshman, and the next year we had 84 freshman for a game for opening our season. But what you could fault them for, you could never fault them for their commitment, dedication and perseverance and aggressiveness but you could fault them for their technique because of their inexperience. But with each game we got more experience, and I always treated them as varsity players, never as freshman. With a football team you have freshmen, sophomores, juniors and seniors for experience. The older they are, the more experience and the technique and they become the leaders. Leaders had to be born out of the freshman class without the experience, etc. They had the dedication, the perseverance and we tried to teach them and coach them up but what they did not have was the technique because of their inexperience. You could fault them for inexperience but you could never fault them for any other characteristics.

Interviewer: What were the main challenges you faced as a head coach at Marshall?

Coach Lengyel: Well, I think the challenge first of all was recruiting players to come to a school that had a major tragedy with their football team and an airplane.

Interviewer: How did you do that?

Coach Lengyel: Well, we finally got the NCAA to give us freshmen eligibility...till then we had a tough time. Once we got freshman eligibility, then we sold them on the idea that they could make a commitment to building the foundation and as I told them on the eve of the first football game, I used to take them up to the, there's a obelisk at the cemetery, the cemetery is up on a bluff overlooking the campus, downtown and the Ohio River, it's about 13 feet tall. It has all the names of the players on the front and the names of the boosters on one side and the names of the five crew on the left side and out in front it has six blank markers, with a bronze plaque in the middle. Those six players were burnt beyond recognition. They didn't know who they were so they put a bronze plaque in there with their six names. They didn't have DNA back then and so I took the team up there every year before we played the opening game of the season, I would merely just tell them that these are your teammates, this is why you're here. To contribute to making the foundation for football and bring football back to Marshall University and that while I can't promise you championships or all conference, I can only promise you what Winston Churchill once said, you know blood, sweat and tears. But I can promise you in future years when the teams are successful you'll share in those successes. And then some 20 years later, actually 12 years later, when they started having winning seasons, our Young Thundering Herd, all shared in those victories, they were a part of it. When they won the national championship, they felt a part of it. And when they won the national championship with Bobby Pruett, the students tore down the goal post and carried it to the cemetery and laid it on those six graves. And then our captain, Nate Ruffin, who did not make the trip because he was injured, stayed on and became my captain, and then

he became a community leader, and he always wondered why he was not on that plane. He was scheduled to be on the plane...that afternoon about 3:00 before the flight was scheduled to leave at 5:00, they called him in, because he was the captain, he was suppose to travel with them but they said "Nate we need your seat for some boosters" so he didn't go so he was watching the movie when he got the word that the plane crashed. He was always wondering why, wondering why, he didn't know. He came to the resolution that he had to change his philosophy about his future commitments and goals and he said "you know, I always talk about them, because if I talk about them, they shall never die and they will be remembered." And that was his philosophy. So as I say when he passed of cancer in 2001, he wanted to be buried with his teammates. And then there was another player, Eddie Carter, he was a sophomore, and his father passed away on a Saturday so he flew home to Texas for the funeral on Wednesday, he was calling Coach Tolley to meet the plane so that he could fly to East Carolina and play in the game and his mother started screaming and crying "son don't go, don't go, the plane's gonna crash." She was so hysterical he didn't go and of course the plane crashed. Two years later he was one of our outstanding players and Gil Brandt from the Dallas Cowboys wanted to sign him as a free agent and he said "Jack I'm over at ...meet me halfway at this little restaurant" to sign Eddie as a free agent so Eddie and I drove over there, he sat to my left, I talked to Gil, oh about four, five minutes and Eddie turned to me and said "Coach, I've made my mind up, I'm going to give my life to Jesus Christ" so we all shook hands and left and today Eddie Carter's one of the world's leading evangelists, and when Nate Ruffin passed in 2001 of cancer, he came back and was part of the eulogy, and after the services, I went up to Eddie and said "Eddie, tell me about your mother." He said she'd never had a vision before, she never had a vision after, but she had that vision.

Interviewer: Did leading in the situation seem natural to you? It seems like it's not a huge stretch to be able to adjust to situations like that for folks that do that.

Coach Lengyel: No, it was not an adjustment, it was merely hiring a staff and then moving forward and trying to determine what do you have and what do you need. What do you have to compromise. We had to change our offense and defense totally. We couldn't run the offense that I ran before so we had to find an offense that fit the material we had there. Bobby Bowden at West Virginia was running the Houston Vere up in Morgantown, and that absolutely was the offense we could run because we had a few receivers and a quarterback, didn't have very strong lineman but if you put two wide receivers out they gotta spread their whole defense out so that opened up holes for rushing and running the options so the only problem was our quarterback was never an option player so he took a heck of a beating with that offense but, so we adopted their offensive philosophy and Bobby was very helpful in helping implement that and teaching it to us in three days, to really condition them and get 'em in shape and get them to buy in on trusting one another doing unorthodox things like throwing on first downs, throwing on fourth downs, things that you wouldn't expect a team to do to take the element of surprise and put it in our favor. So we had to do a lot of those things and then continue to recruit and the tough part of the job was about the third year, you're a three year letter person because you played in these games and then my freshmen then, that we were recruiting were getting better and better and now the freshmen were beating out the three year lettermen, then the three year lettermen would come in and knock on my door and say "coach, you know I'm not getting enough reps, you know I was here when you needed me. I'm a three year letterman and it's not fair to me." And I would try to explain to them that football is a game where we play the best people. Sometimes you're a big piece in the puzzle and sometimes you're a small piece in the puzzle but we can't complete the puzzle called team and go for success without every piece of the puzzle. And you've got to learn to adjust and contribute, and as I say, there's no "I" in team and you've got to be part of the team. Well some of them bought in and some of them didn't and when they'd quit it would break your heart because they're good kids. That was the tough part, building the team in reverse. Freshmen, sophomores, juniors and

seniors, to the point where the ones you relied on felt that we owed them different consideration and I tried to explain to them that playing and commitment and talent is what it's all about, regardless if you're a freshman, sophomore or junior or what you're things were the previous year. You'd get an opportunity to play until someone beat you out. But if they beat you out, that's the way it is. You can't rest on the laurels of the fact that you were just here. And so that was a tough thing. It was tough on the coaches and tough on the players. We made them stretch and reach for the goals that we had to play a Division I schedule. You've got to do it to get the experience and you've got to reach. You know when you're setting goals, I know when I went to the first press conference, there weren't many people there, they figured I wasn't going to stay either and I was the third and last choice because spring practice was 31 days away. The sports editor there, there were just a few of them in the room, after I gave my perfunctory remarks, Ernie Salvatore, the sports editor, said "well, what's your goal for the team?" and I said to go undefeated and he kinda smiled and he said "Jack, isn't that a little unrealistic?" And I said it maybe seems unrealistic but the dedication and the experience and commitment necessary to succeed in the face of the unprecedented situation in the annals of college football where we lost the whole team, if we do not have those characteristics and those commitments, we will never be successful in starting to rebuild this program. It's like the poet Browning said if you can touch the stars what's the heaven for?

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