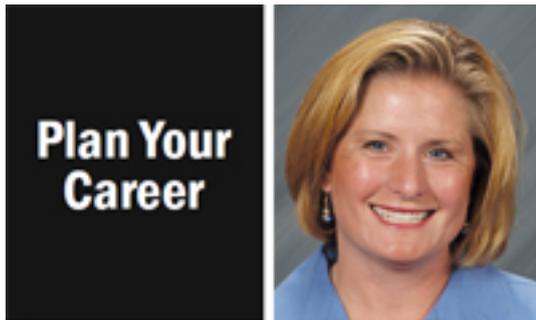


A New Decision

Written by Julie Desmond
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Negotiations rule number one is, “Never change your mind, and never ask anyone else to change his mind.” The only way to reach an agreement with an opponent is to make a new decision based on new information. If you are choosing not to agree to my terms, it might be that we need to explore different data. This approach works well in tough business conversations. However, this article is not about business. This one is about something entirely different: life.

Many of us awoke one recent Sunday morning with a plan. It might have been a plan to just do nothing for once, or it might have been plans to do some gardening, attend a church service, apply for a job, pick up some groceries. We likely had long term plans, too; maybe a vision of that garden in full bloom, leading the church choir, getting a promotion, opening a restaurant.

But out of nowhere, a wind tore through the sky, sirens howled and, in an instant, a whole community of people was forced to take in some new information. The new data came from every source. It came in the form of trees crashing onto cars, power lines in streets, gardens gone and homes with gaping holes in their sides. If it wasn't your house, your new information was that you were somehow spared, this time.

And with all of this new information, we have no choice as a community but to make new decisions. Some decisions will be epic: Where will people live? How will we get by? And some decisions will be simple: cook out on the grill and invite the neighbors, stepping over the rubble to get to the food.

North Minneapolis has long been a community of rich and varied fabrics, diverse opinions and a collective strength in times of struggle. Now there is an opportunity to leave the old plans behind and explore new possibilities. Some people will decide to live differently: embracing every moment, acting deliberately, arguing less, apologizing more often. Others will slip back into old habits of substance abuse, violence or despair.

Before the passion of this challenging time fades away, consider accepting the new information: that we all are vulnerable, that we must depend on each other, that the possibilities are great when a community comes together to rebuild.

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