

MoS Rapid Response Transcript – General Stanley McChrystal

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GENERAL STANLEY McCHRYSTAL: You've got to very carefully create a nuclear reaction to create nuclear power. Get it wrong, you're going to melt down or explosion or something terrible; get it right and you produce this amazing amount of power, but it's a managed effort. It's not something that just happens. Leaders have to understand that what they're trying to do in an organization is to create this equivalent.

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[THEME MUSIC]

BOB SAFIAN: That's [Stanley McChrystal](#), the retired U.S. general who led counterterrorism efforts in Iraq and Afghanistan for more than 7 years. He now provides leadership advice to executives across industries.

Stan's advice in this moment is about both calming down and speeding up, it's about discipline as well as intuition. When stakes are high, he explains, you have to be more intentional than ever, about every step you take. "If you have 20 priorities," he says, "you don't have any priorities." And if you think you've figured out this crisis, you're wrong.

This is Bob Safian, your host for Masters of Scale: Rapid Response.

McChrystal's deep study of the history of crisis and his own personal experience have given him a foundation that we can all benefit from, whether you're at the helm of a major corporation or a nascent startup, or simply doing your share of the task, as he puts it.

Let's listen in.

SAFIAN: I'm Bob Safian and I'm here with General Stanley McChrystal, retired U.S. Army General and former Head of Joint Special Operations Command, JSOC. In the mid 2000s he oversaw counter terrorism operations in Iraq, and then operations in Afghanistan. He's also the author of several bestselling books, *My Share of the Task*, a memoir, as well as *Team of Teams*, and *Leaders*. Stan is now a partner at the McChrystal Group, which provides leadership

and crisis advising to organizations and executives. He's coming to us today remotely from his home in Virginia as I ask my questions from my home in New York. Stan, thanks for joining us.

GENERAL McCHRYSTAL: It's an honor. Bob, thanks.

SAFIAN: You've operated in some of the most ambiguous and dangerous environments imaginable in wartime, against an enemy determined to destroy you. Many of us are eager to tap that experience right now because we feel under assault, on a certain wartime footing. I wanted to start by asking you about this coronavirus and when you personally realized that this was going to evolve into something ambiguous and dangerous for so many people and organizations. How did that come to you, that realization?

GENERAL McCHRYSTAL: I was interested when I started to see the reporting in early January. I was actually in the hospital in Hawaii, so I had a lot of time to watch TV and I got to watch the initial reporting of this. And it was pretty obvious from the beginning of this thing as it grew in China that there was something that was dangerous feeling about it. And although there were attempts to dismiss it early, I'd say probably the end of January it really started to bother me because you start to have the idea that we don't have our arms around this.

SAFIAN: So "leadership in crisis" is a common phrase right now. And I know you've said that that isn't necessarily meaningful, that leadership is leadership. Can you explain what you mean by that?

GENERAL McCHRYSTAL: We try to differentiate the two because we tend to think that on a daily basis leadership feels a bit like management. You just sort of move things along. You do positive leader things, which we all know we should do. And then in a crisis we suddenly look for a strong visionary, committed woman or man to sort of stand up and say, "Okay, everybody go west." And the wagon train goes west – or "circle the wagons" or whatever's appropriate at the time.

What I would argue is organizations need that in the moment. But what organizations really need is to prepare themselves in the normal moments so that they have a level of adaptability. The popular word now is resilience – and it's an appropriate word – so that the organization can respond to crises. Crises are inevitable. Everybody says, "If I do good analysis, I can dodge crises." That's absolutely wrong. Crises are going to come of every kind. and they're going to hit you.

And the reality is the difference is what organizations are able to respond to them effectively. And so building that capacity is the kind of leader that's needed on a normal basis – and then in the moment of crisis to help shape that to help focus people's minds.

SAFIAN: Businesses like using military metaphors and one of them is, “Oh sometimes, you need a peacetime leader and sometimes you need a wartime leader.” And I'm curious when you look at businesses what that differentiation is or is that not necessarily the way to be thinking about it?

GENERAL McCHRYSTAL: Yeah, that's really a great point to bring up because there are probably different levels on this. The first obvious one is we say we go to a wartime setting, then suddenly it's all hands on deck. Everybody works 24/7, we use every resource we can to focus on something, and we do it until we have won or the war is over. And so that's kind of one facet of that.

So the second part of the leadership is, what kind of leader can bring every aspect of an organization into focus, give them clarity on what the situation is, give them clarity on what the strategy is. It's going to be prosecuted, maintain their focus on that and maintain using all of the parts of the team. And the team is often wider than the people just in that organization. It can be – in a business sense – it can be your suppliers, it can be your customers, it can be different partners. So you're talking about a wider community, all of whom have to be brought into the conversation. They have to be focused, they have to be inspired. You have to build the teamwork all the time.

Think of the greatest wartime leaders that we think of in the United States. Clearly George Washington begins it – and he lost almost every battle, but he kept the Army and he kept the Congress all on sides. Abraham Lincoln kept a nation together, even though reverses on the battlefield time and again said that the North might want to just give up. And then of course Franklin Roosevelt pulled a nation out of the depression, but then worked this coalition to keep all the different elements moving forward in what he thought was a national effort.

So when I think of leaders now in the equivalent of wartime, it's not just the person who's the hardest person, who's got the squarest jaw and stands up there and says bellicose things. It's the person who gets as many different parts on board, as many pieces of the puzzle together. So that it's a truly unified effort.

SAFIAN: As you describe that, it sounds to me a little bit like, well, wouldn't that be what every organization and every leader would be wanting to do all the time, to have that kind of high level of integration and intentionality?

GENERAL McCHRYSTAL: You'd think, but what happens is, integration and collaboration is not the natural state of things. You can have different parts of an organization and as it gets bigger it develops into HR, finance, sales, research and development, and they develop their own physical spaces. They develop their own cultures, they often develop their own career paths up in that. And it's not that they don't like each other or don't wish each other well. It's just, they by nature, go off into their

corners. It just is the atomization of organizations. And so getting them all integrated on a constant basis is a little like holding magnets together, but not magnets attracting, magnets in opposition. It requires you to put pressure to hold it together.

Another comparison might be a nuclear reaction. You've got to very carefully create a nuclear reaction to create nuclear power. Get it wrong, you're going to melt down or explosion or something terrible; get it right and you produce this amazing amount of power, but it's a managed effort. It's not something that just happens. And so I think leaders have to understand that what they're trying to do in an organization is to create this equivalent, the level of integration and collaboration that a war requires and is sort of self evident to most people. People sort of show up, report for duty when they think there's a war on. But on a constant basis to create this without creating the frantic activity that exhaust people really quickly.

Because you can say, "Everybody report to work Saturday morning, we're going to work till we drop." And that'll work for a week or two. You've got to create this steady marathon pace of energy, of collaboration. And then when a crisis comes, the interesting thing about it, a crisis is just: Okay, we're operating the way we operate and we're just going to deal with this crisis. One of the things that was so unique about Joint Special Operations Command is when we change the command so fundamentally, we basically went into a crisis mode and stayed there in perpetuity. But we stayed there at a marathon pace so that we could deal with whatever came up, and it turned out to work really well.

SAFIAN: I mean, it sounds like, right now, organizations, obviously they are in a crisis, they're dealing with some very difficult things, but a crisis can be a terrible thing to waste too. And there are new muscles, new ways of operating that we can, I guess, all learn in this. That can persist beyond this, right? Whether you're in a crisis or for whatever crisis comes.

GENERAL McCHRYSTAL: Yeah. I think that's very true, the hardest thing about changing an organization is overcoming the inertia – and the inertia is there for lots of reasons. If something is working pretty well, why would people change? And so you get used to it. You develop expertise, skills, just ways of doing stuff, and so that inertia becomes very powerful. It's not evil, it's natural.

When you've got a crisis, you have an opportunity to overcome that inertia because the argument you can make is that the status quo isn't working. This is the burning platform idea. The one course of action on which we have data is the status quo. We are failing. Therefore, let's overcome the inertia. A great saying came from a guy who worked for me once. It says, "You can't steer anything until it's moving." And so the key is to get it moving, a crisis can often do that.

Now, the thing about once you've got a crisis, you may not know where to go. You may not know what the right answer is – and this is where leaders sometimes feel very uncertain or insecure, because they think that they ought to be the leader with all the answers. They ought to be able to see the future, they ought to be able to write out: “This is exactly when the markets are going, this is what we need to be six months from now, 12 months from now, six years from now.”

The reality is, nobody can do that. They can pretend to do that, but the reality is they can't do that. So I think it's much more honest in today's world to be a little bit humble about it and say, "I don't know. All I know is what we're doing isn't going to be the right answer in the future. So we're going to have to change. So we are going to have to figure our way out. We're going to have to iterate to the right answer."

SAFIAN: There's so many things you said there I want to dig into a little more. I want to ask you about your experience when you took over JSOC in Iraq, so you knew exactly what the strategy was when you were there. You were like, “I know exactly what to do” or were you in the same way iterating your strategy? I mean you come in as a new leader and everyone wants you to tell them what to do. Right?

GENERAL McCRYSTAL: I didn't have a clue, Bob. I took over Joint Special Operations Command in the fall of 2003. I'd grown up in the organization, but when you become the commanding general, all eyes are on you and you feel a lot of pressure and you feel like you should be the person with the answers because you're in charge. I got there... the one thing I could tell when I first took over was, Iraq is about to get much worse. This war's going to get much more difficult. Didn't have to be brilliant to see that. Then beyond that, I didn't have a clue how we would deal with that. I had a sense that it was going to take a much greater effort, but I didn't know.

So rather than try to deceive anyone in the command – because most of them knew me from growing up in the command, I wasn't going to pretend I was smarter than I was – I sort of made the case to everybody: We know that this is going to get much worse, therefore we know we're going to have to perform differently. We as a group are going to have to figure out what that right answer is, so here's what we're going to do. Our strategy is going to be to do what works. I can't tell you what works. You are going to have to help figure out what works. Everything that we do, we're going to try everything we can. Everything that works, we'll do more of until it stops. Everything that doesn't work, we'll stop. So don't be afraid of trying stuff and have it not work because that's part of figuring out what will and will not.

I felt very uncomfortable because I'd gone into command and that's a very tribal organization, the special operations world, and I was from one tribe, I was a ranger. So the other tribes look at you with a fair amount of skepticism. And so, I first worried about my legitimacy and then I said, "Well, if I stand up and tell people I got no idea what we

should do, I'm not going to get this huge vote of confidence." I think what happened was I think people, one, understood how confusing it was and two, appreciated that I didn't try to BS them. That I didn't try to say, "Okay, here's the deal." And they also liked to be part of the solution, because talented people in an organization want to have some say in how things are done. They were the people with the most expertise, and the most experience, not me.

SAFIAN: You started doing an hour and a half daily meeting – and for seven and a half years you were running this meeting when you were running counter terrorism, and then in Iraq and then Afghanistan. How do you avoid burnout when you're on that kind of intense footing for that long? How do you turn from being a sprinter to a marathoner without slowing your pace?

GENERAL McCHRYSTAL: Yeah, that's a great question. I'll go on a personal level and I'll go on an organizational level as well. On a personal level, what I found was I had to devote myself completely to it. I took this command, it was supposed to be two years. I stayed for five in JSOC, and then I came back for 10 months and I went back and took Afghanistan. I felt that during that period that command needed all of me. I basically went and stayed deployed. Part of that was because to keep my own focus, and part of that was to demonstrate to the command that I was that committed, it was that important. I couldn't ask them to do things unless I was willing to do it. I'm blessed with a wife that her calculus on this was: I understand this, do this until the task is done and then come home.

I tried to set myself a complete focus, but then on a daily sort of cyclic basis, I knew certain things were critical to me. I knew I have to work out every day. If I don't, I'm an ugly person and I'm not that good anyway. So it's better if I do. So I had to set aside about an hour and a half to work out every day. That starts my day whenever it was. In Iraq that happened to be late morning because we worked all night, went to bed right at dawn, and then I'd sleep until late morning and then workout. That sort of put me in the right mindset and then I do operations and connect with people.

I would try to pace myself so that I got a predictable amount of sleep. It was only about four hours a night. But in that environment that felt about right. I tried to keep my focus even keeled. To be honest, I didn't do much back home. I had my son in college and my wife back. I emailed my wife once a day, but I didn't do any other distractions because in my standpoint, that was very important for me to focus.

Now for the command, this was even more important because different from most forces, special operating forces are in the war all the time. So what they do is you have these elite forces and you rotate them by squadron. They'll go over there for four months at a shop and they'll come home, but they'll be back on alert back when they're in the United States. So they're really not unplugging from the war. What you had to do was try to set it up so that everybody sprinted when they were in the area of operations in Iraq or

Afghanistan. Then when they're back there, you try to set it so that the pace is slow enough so that they could meter that with their families – and physically.

On one hand, it got hard. On the other hand, it was easy because it was simple. We fought the war, we worked out, we ate, and we slept. We didn't do anything else. There was no other foolishness involved. Now you can't do that in most jobs, but there are times when you take incredible focus on the part of an organization, and at that time, I think one of the key things for a leader to do is to offer real priorities. When I say "priorities", someone says, "Well here's the priorities of what I want the organization to... here are the top 20 priorities." And I just start laughing. If you have 20 priorities, you don't have priorities. If you've got three, you've got priorities.

The real courage in a leader is not in telling people what to do. It's telling them what it's okay not to do, because there's a whole bunch of other things that they kind of think they should do and the leader has to sign up and say, "If you don't do any of these, I'm okay with that, as long as you do these things that really matter."

SAFIAN: Prioritizing at these times becomes more and more essential and being intentional about every step that you're taking. I can already sense in some of my conversations with executives, I don't know whether you feel this at all, but a sense that they've absorbed the first blow, the first shock of the crisis, right? They've kind of settled into this new reality, like they figured it out, and maybe the urgency and the speed that mark the first few weeks is slowing down a little bit. I'm curious, is that a trap? How do you instill agility that's not transient, but that is this sort of constant marathon approach?

GENERAL McCHRYSTAL: Bob, that's exactly what we're seeing. We describe it as "at the end of phase one." What happened is, we had this approaching pandemic and economic impacts and then everybody had to work from home and revenues stopped for a lot of companies. They did that and there was a period of two, maybe three weeks, and then suddenly people were able to communicate from home. They could get their systems to work and a lot of normal things that they were doing seemed to work. So everybody kind of pats themselves on the back and go, "This is not that hard. I got it."

I think two things. One is in many cases organizations aren't doing a lot of things that have to be done long term. They are doing sort of the basics right now. The bare minimums operating from home. They haven't yet been developing strategy. They haven't been doing longer term leader development. They haven't been doing things that have to be done over the long haul, and they haven't dealt a lot with, in many cases, customers. They haven't tried sales over this. So I think that it is a trap.

You start to say, "Well, okay we got this." The reality is that the economy's in this hiccup right now and as soon as it starts to sort itself out, certain organizations are going to sprint ahead because they've been figuring it out. They've been going to school on this,

they've been preparing for a change to market, and they are going to come out of the starting gates. Some are going to try to go back to status quo ante and they are going to be absolutely crushed, because they're going to go back to a time that no longer exists.

Others are going to dog-paddle in circles kind of where they are now trying to figure out what works and they will be left at the starting gates. I think that organizations have got to understand now that there's a temptation to focus on the here and now, the crisis. The crisis is true, but you still have to do all of the long term things. You still got to push the organization forward for the future, and I think people have got to put senior leader eyeballs and the focus of the organization on that kind of forward movement.

SAFIAN: It's almost like you see there's going to be sort of three different groups, right? The folks who are really getting this are going to be that much further ahead when we get to the other side; some folks are just not going to make the transition at all; and others are going to become secondary also-rans, because they didn't really adjust to the new reality.

GENERAL McCHRYSTAL: I think that's exactly right, because many things of the new reality are more subtle than we think. They're not just working from home and talking to people on your computer. They are doing many things about product development this way, about building teams, because we're still operating off muscle that was built up before. Many organizations went home and they're working from home, but they all know each other. They spent years together in offices. They built up relationships, they built trust, they built things they do.

Take this a year or two in the future or create an organization in this model, you don't have any of that shared background. You don't have those relationships. Suddenly there's a different dynamic that's got to be used. Same with dealing with customers, buyers, suppliers, the longer we go from what was before, the more we've got to be adapting to what we think will be the new normal.

SAFIAN: You talk a lot about leading with compassion, and in this time there's a tension because you feel like, "Oh this is a do or die moment. If there's any time that I should go all in and work 24/7 and ask everything of my people, now is it because there may not be a tomorrow for my business." On the other hand, you want to take care of your team, you want to be compassionate. You understand that people are stressed out. How tolerant can or should you be? How do you find that line?

GENERAL McCHRYSTAL: I think leaders now, it's a careful balance point because we send people home and we may go home to a pretty nice home office and we're pretty well situated. But what if your employee goes home and you say, "Well, they've still got a job. They should be thankful for that." What if they've got two or three kids whose schools have closed? They live in a small apartment so the kids are underfoot. Their

spouse has lost their job. A parent has COVID-19. Suddenly it's a much more complicated environment for them.

And working from home is not that easy. Now work is at home, so you're always at work. So I think it first takes a fair amount of empathy that people are actually under more difficult working conditions than they were in an office or a plant or whatever. Even though they might not be directly exposed to the danger, to COVID-19. So you start with that empathy, but empathy only gets you so far. Empathy is not sympathy. Empathy is being able to put yourself in the other person's position to understand it.

Good leaders in the military have to understand how a private feels when they don't know what's going on, they're frightened, their feet hurt, they're carrying a heavy load. It's really hard. The leader still has to say, "This is what we have to do. This is the task in front of us. I can't make the hill any smaller. I can't make your pack any lighter. I can't make the enemy any less dangerous. All I can do is tell you that's what we have to deal with." So, I think leaders do have to be tough enough now, but a lot of that starts with being absolutely upfront with people. I think in small organizations now, every small business is under pressure. You have to get in front of your people. We got in front of the people in my company and said, "Here is the economic reality. Here are all the numbers, exactly what it is. Here's what we have to do. Everybody needs to understand that. And if that changes, we'll let you know."

And so I think leaders have got to be brutally candid with their team members, but not to the point of being unable to either make tough decisions or push people when we need to push hard.

SAFIAN: You've used this phrase "creating a shared consciousness" among your troops. It's not something people expect to hear from a lifelong military man, that kind of phrase. But this idea of common purpose you feel like is particularly valuable in getting teams to operate and getting organization to operate under any kind of crisis or any other conditions.

GENERAL McCHRISTAL: Absolutely. My father, he was a soldier as well as his father had been. So we had a lot of old barracks sayings. And one of them, my dad used to joke, he says, "Put your brains in the footlocker or I'll do the thinking around here." But it was the opposite of the way my father really was and the opposite of what works with soldiers. If you tell everybody what task to do but don't paint them a picture of what you're trying to do, what the purpose is, what the intent is, then it's really hard for one, to them to believe in their task – because it may seem narrow and mundane – but also they can't adjust. So what we found is if you give people a contextual understanding of the situation, of what we're trying to do and what a good outcome would look like, and then they go forward to execute, in many cases, what you might've envisioned them doing for specific tasks may be very different from what was really needed.

In Afghanistan, we developed this rule – because we knew that we came up with this brilliant strategy in Kabul and we sent it out to everybody. But when you get in the hills and valleys of Afghanistan, the conditions are very different than we might've envisioned. And so we said, "When you get on the ground, if the order we issued you is wrong, execute the order we should have issued you." And you're saying, "Wow, that's requiring them to use their judgment." Well that's right because they've got a lot of judgment, but only if they understand the big picture. And so in today's world, I just think it's incredibly important to create this shared consciousness as an organization so people can all figure out what the right thing to do based on that understanding is.

SAFIAN: In one of the reports that you guys issued recently about COVID, toward the end, you have this box, this conclusion that I love that says, "This may seem obvious and that's the point, that operating in a crisis is about the basics." There's an honesty to that and also a, I don't know, surprise that it shouldn't be complicated. It feels complicated.

GENERAL McCHRISTAL: No, that's so true. It's funny. People, they get in a crisis and they want to open this special book with crisis instructions or a box of crisis tricks. We used to say that you have these set of soldiers and you go to war and suddenly they're going to get smarter, braver, more focused. No, they're going to be the same people they were before. They may get a little more excited when things are that way, more dramatic, but the same with the crisis here. You've got to lead with the same things that motivate people on a normal basis – integrity, candor, commitment, inspiration, and then the ability to make decisions. You don't make better decisions in a crisis because it's a crisis. You've still got to think. You've still got to go through those processes. They may just be faster.

SAFIAN: Another thing you said was that employing intuition in high-stress environments becomes harder. Why is intuition important?

GENERAL McCHRISTAL: It's funny. There's a lot of talk about data and predictive ability and all of these things. And what we've learned about probability and data is there are limits to it. You can get a lot of good information. You can tell what happened in the past. You can figure out the probability of something, but you can't figure out what's going to happen. You don't know what's going to happen on the next coin toss. So, intuition is really a product of experience. You've done something a number of times or you've done similar things. You know your organization, you have a sense of what is happening. Your judgment, as you can call it, becomes extraordinarily important. And you've got to respect that.

And an organization will have an intuition as well, sort of a wisdom of the crowd intuition. And if you're able to talk to people about it, they'll give you a sense. It's terrible to do an operation, have it go bad, and then afterwards you talk to everybody and they go, "Yeah, we kind of figured that that was going to happen."

SAFIAN: Is there a corporate equivalent of post-traumatic stress? Like is there something that, as organizations look to the future, they should sort of be expecting? How do you plan or think about that sort of post-traumatic ongoing long term impact of being in stress like this for a long period?

GENERAL McCHRYSTAL: I'm sure that there is the equivalent, because stress is stress. And this is one of the things about leaders. I think first, at a work level, there's the stress of, suddenly your revenue could stop in all these businesses, and that creates unbelievable stress, not just for the CEOs and owners, but people who have jobs, who are trying to do certain things.

Then remember, as we talked earlier, people's lives are more stressful now. There's so many aspects of it that they have to worry about, the health part of it, the small inconveniences, kids not in school and that sort of thing. All of those things are cumulative. And so a person suddenly gets to the point where, "Wow."

When you're working from home, it's actually harder to vent that stress. You don't want people venting it on their spouse. You can be in a room, you really can't go out and do all the things you did. I think you can start to look at the same walls over and over and that just starts to go through the roof.

I think leaders have got to be very intentional about trying to help people through it now, and also to recognize it. We put a thing in our company where every day we do our call for the whole company, so everybody connects and we cover key things, but then I've asked everybody to call two other members of the company; not their big close friends, do a video call with two other members every day, different members, and just get an eyeball to eyeball connection so that people are getting their attitude checked. Plus, when you are reaching out to someone else, if you've got a really bad attitude, you suddenly feel like I'm doing something for someone else and it actually improves you. You are a caregiver, not just a care recipient. And so, I found over time that that can be really helpful.

SAFIAN: One bit of advice you've given of late is that the camera is your new best friend. We all have to get used to these cameras, whether for Zoom calls or anything else, right?

GENERAL McCHRYSTAL: Yeah. And most of us hate the camera. You know, you give people the opportunity, they'll put the camera off, they'll say it's not working, "I'm on my phone because my bandwidth is low." They will find every excuse not to be on camera for a couple of reasons. One, people feel uncomfortable being looked at. The second is it's exhausting. When you're on camera, you are focused on that and you've got to be more expressive than you are typically because you've got to try to create that human

connection through digital means. You can't multitask. You can't be looking around doing other stuff because it's so obvious and disrespectful.

But there's no other way to create it. You know, I joke with people, what do doing push-ups, eating ice cream and cutting your toenails have in common? All things I've done on conference calls. And it's kind of gross, but the reality is so has everybody. The beauty of the video is it creates that human touch, it can create some empathy, and of course engagement.

SAFIAN: Well I appreciate your empathy and your time with us. I wanted to make sure, is there anything that I didn't ask about, other things that you might want to mention that you think people should be most mindful of at these times?

GENERAL McCHRYSTAL: Yeah, I think building teams is a key one, looking at your organization and building teams' connections. Because as everybody goes off, you're not sitting in conference rooms, cubicles, things like that, there will be a tendency to give people tasks and just assume their information will come in and come in to some great big product outcome. I think you've got to intentionally create teams, intentionally create interaction with them, cause them to have meetings virtually, and put them on a disciplined operating with them to do that.

Communication is much more important than ever because much of what you did in an office or in a plant or in a store was nonverbal. You know, people could look at you and you give them a thumbs up and say, "Good job," or touch him on the shoulder, or they could watch a peer or a slightly more experienced person do their job and they would learn how to do their job that way.

That's not happening right now. And so that whole body of communication and reinforcement is gone. We've got to replicate it digitally. And it gets back to what we talked about earlier about people were living off muscle built up before this and they may not know what they've lost as time passes if they don't think about it.

SAFIAN: Because we've all kind of become lone wolves in a way, right? We think we're part of a team, but it's harder to feel like you're part of that team in this environment.

GENERAL McCHRYSTAL: Exactly.

SAFIAN: Do you have any other advice for folks who are particularly stressed right now, how they can manage or help their teams manage their stress as they work through this strange time?

GENERAL McCHRYSTAL: Yeah. I think it's discipline, and what I mean by discipline is the discipline to put some time for you, and fence it off. Put it on your calendar, be very

disciplined about when you work out or whatever's important to you, because if you don't do that, you're not able to segment working and home life like we used to. Put that in there very carefully and hold yourself to it. Think about the relationships that matter a lot and maintain them. Spend time, whether it's video calls, whether it's email, whatever it does. Because if you don't do that, I think you could just find yourself in a downward cycle, you know, a decaying orbit. You get a little sloppier, a little lazier, a little everything, and that's not a good outcome.

SAFIAN: Well, I will try to be more intentional with you in mind. Stan, thank you again for sharing your thoughts and your time with us. I'm Bob Safian. And thanks everybody for listening.

GENERAL McCHRYSTAL: Thanks, Bob.