



*As a youngster growing up in Brooklyn in the 1940s, my bedroom each evening was our hallway, converted by unfolding my bed – a military-grade cot. I would peek around the corner into the living room at night as I fought off sleep, straining to catch a glimpse of the newest technology, television.*

*My dreams then were simple. All I wanted out of life was to own a car, which in Brooklyn, was a big deal.*

*A leadership position is always interesting and challenging. Leading, almost by definition, means stepping forward into the future. During times of certainty, we often fool ourselves into believing we can know the future. However, during unprecedented times like these for our nation and our world, the illusion of foreknowledge vanishes. With so much uncertainty, anxiety reigns. Our society's foundations, certainties, norms and expectations seem to crumble under our very feet.*

*With a path into the future less clear, this is also a vital time for optimistic, positive leadership and this leadership is best coming not from my generation or even the one behind us – it is best emerging from my grandchildren, for the future truly belongs with them.*

*As a student of history who enjoys reading biographies, I look for lessons from other times of challenge and uncertainty when leaders like Woodrow Wilson, Winston Churchill, FDR and Harry Truman faced worldwide struggles with the lives of many millions in the balance. And while today's challenges can seem unprecedented, overwhelming and unending at times, when one studies all of the forces these great leaders battled in order to lead the western world into the future, you can recognize that these times, these struggles we face, may not be so very unique after all.*

*Consider, for example, Ernest Shackleton, whose expedition to cross the Antarctic continent faced challenges from nature never before confronted by man. Shackleton and his men showed amazing resilience and optimism while displaying impressive abilities to be innovative and flexible in the face of nature's greatest powers.*

*The lesson these examples have taught me is that during times of crisis the best and only path forward into the future is to stay the course, taking action and focusing on the fundamentals that have proven successful for leaders time and time again.*

*For me, these characteristics include:*

- *Courage in the face of adversity and uncertainty. Courage leads to action, and often any action, no matter its direction, leads to a re-birth in belief and confidence in yourself and within your group.*
- *Loyalty. During times of crisis, the loyalty and commitment to the team, to one another, proves invaluable when facing the unknown. Loyalty built over years of service together pays dividends during strife.*
- *Integrity. Whether your teammates, community leaders, partners and even competitors, people must know and trust your word, your honesty, your character and your vision.*
- *Communication. It is always best for an organization to have one singular message with one voice. Always communicate what you stand for rather than what you are against.*
- *Positivity reigns. The old saying is "nothing is as contagious as enthusiasm." This is never more true than during challenging times when positivity reigns. As a leader, I believe you can never be too optimistic in outlook and in words.*
- *Your team. As issues, decisions and challenges come flying at you in record time, you cannot possibly take ownership of all decision making. To succeed in these times, I believe that all leaders must delegate to their team, having already defined the culture, vision and direction for an organization so that all employees feel empowered to make decisions within a strategy already clearly defined for all.*
- *Vision. During times of crisis when the future can appear very cloudy, having defined goals and objectives is never more important. Outside influences will naturally force you to innovate and change your approach and tactics to ultimately reach your goals, but every person in your organization should understand how you collectively define victory.*

*Finally, over the decades, when facing difficult decisions or tumultuous times, I sometimes have been plagued by critics and others who ask "what if..." type questions. These challenges are usually negative or skeptical in nature and can be paralyzing if allowed to fester. Over the years for me in business, sports and even personally, we offer a half-joking response... "If all else fails, we get lucky." It is amazing how often this find-a-way attitude has worked for me over the years. So often, I have learned that when life delivers major questions and problems, the answers and solutions are hidden somewhere in the mess as well.*

A large, stylized handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jerry Reinsdorf".

Jerry Reinsdorf  
Owner

Chicago White Sox and Chicago Bulls