



Pinnacle
Communications Group

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Managing Your Personal Brand

If you didn't do
it, fight it.

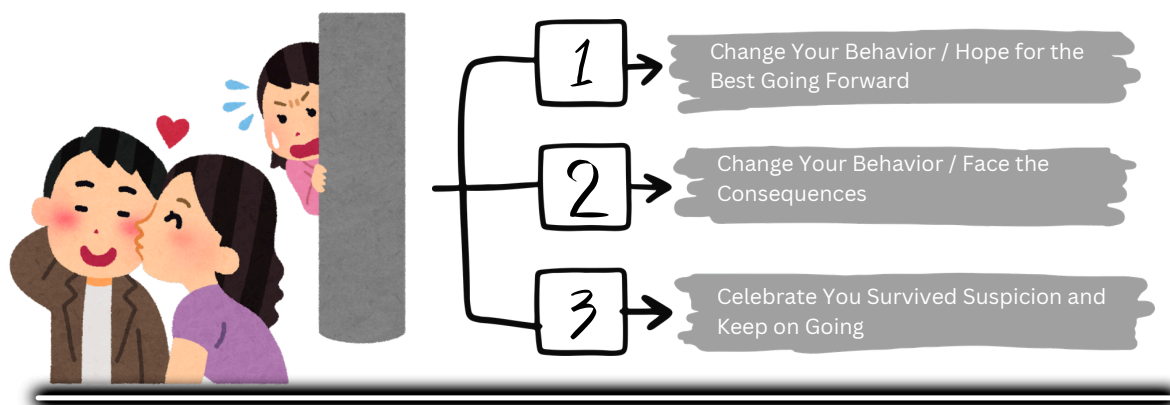


If you did, be
honest, first
and foremost
with yourself.

Humility is your most important attribute when your personal brand is in crisis. When faced with questions of impropriety or wrongdoing, the first question you should ask yourself is: *Did I do this?* It's four words, with no buts, maybes, or clarifiers. It's a question for yourself. What happens next depends on the specific situation, but the key is to be honest and direct with yourself and then with your stakeholders.

When faced with tough decisions about your actions or behaviors, it's crucial to set your ego aside.

If you're caught cheating on your spouse, I mean, really caught, like Coldplay concert jumbotron caught, the likelihood is that this is not the first time your conduct has aroused suspicion. When the initial suspicion surfaced, you faced a roundabout crossroads with multiple intersections.

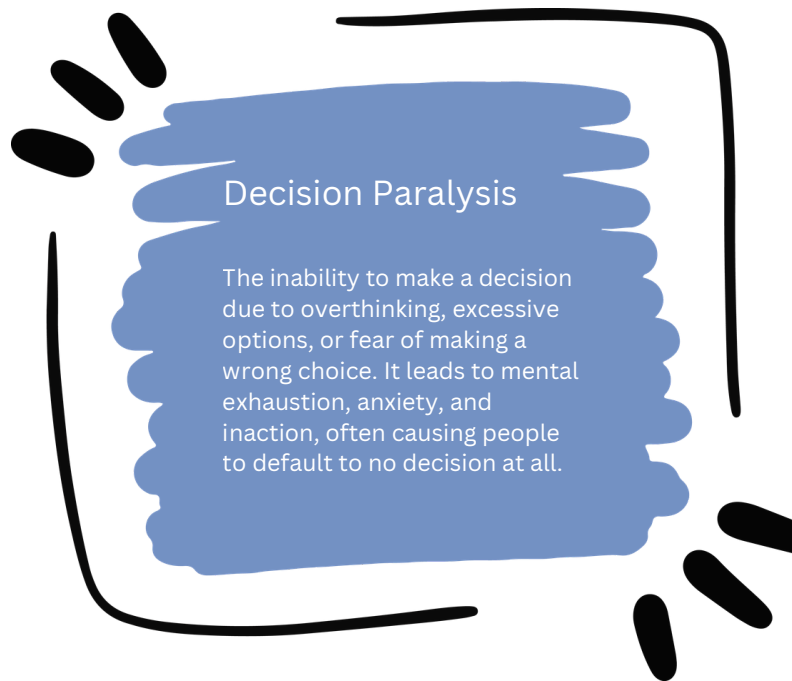


As Coldplay showed us, the truth will always come out, somehow, in ways you never anticipated. It is as inevitable as death and taxes. Our personal and professional lives are the same. The smartest behavior is *always* to be honest and do the right thing. If you choose not to be smart, you will eventually have to face the music, and how you handle it will be your album cover forever.

Doing the right thing does not mean making everyone happy all the time. The larger your organization, the larger your stakeholder pool, and the greater the impossibility of pleasing everyone. As inevitable as it is that the truth will come out, thinking you are going to make everyone happy will lead to decision paralysis.

Doing the right thing means making decisions with reasonable explanations within the bounds of your professional and personal narrative - mission and values.

This is the best way to avoid putting your personal brand in crisis.

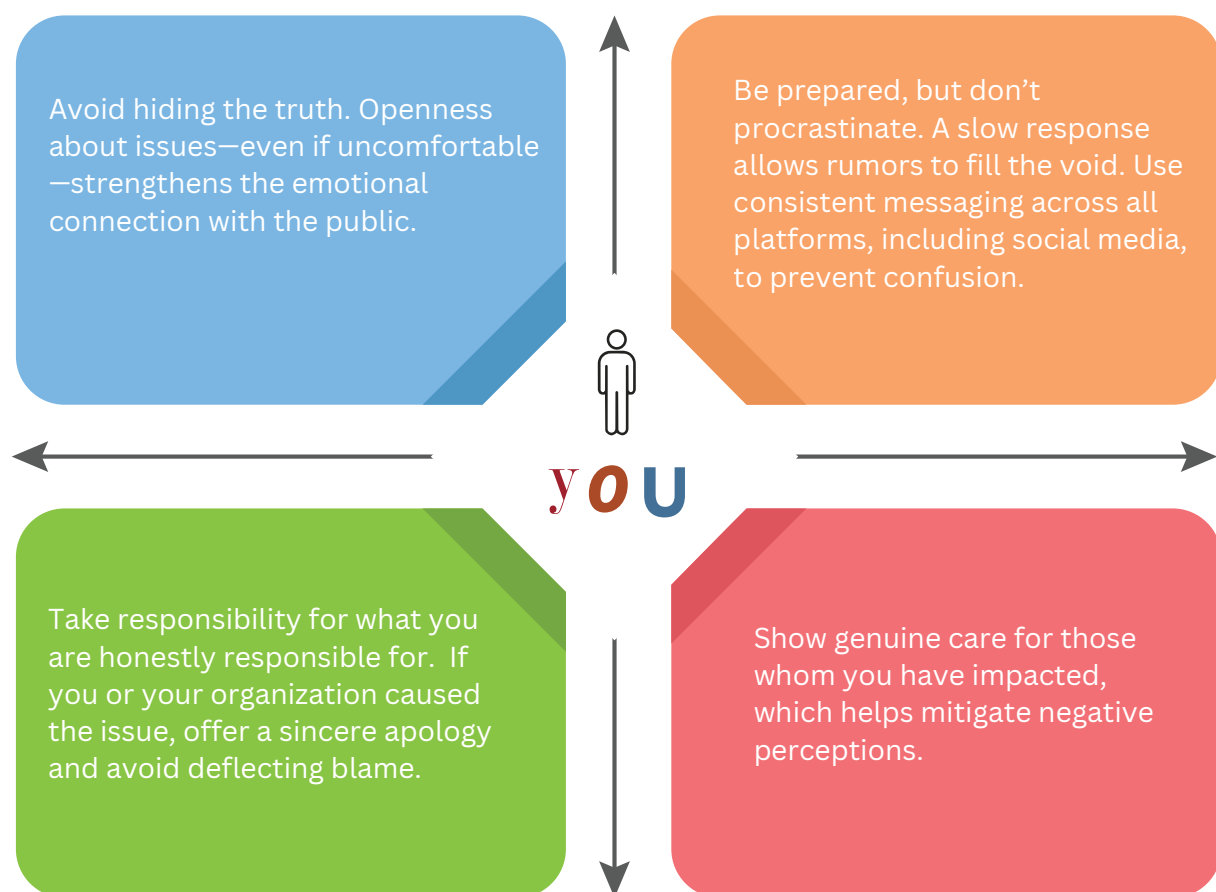


If you find yourself facing accusations, ask yourself this: ***Did I do it?*** Be honest with yourself. Facing this most important self-assessment, if your answer is truly no - fight it. If your answer is yes, consider taking that honesty to your stakeholders.

The stakeholder most needing your honesty is you. If you're not honest with yourself, nothing you do moving forward will ultimately succeed.

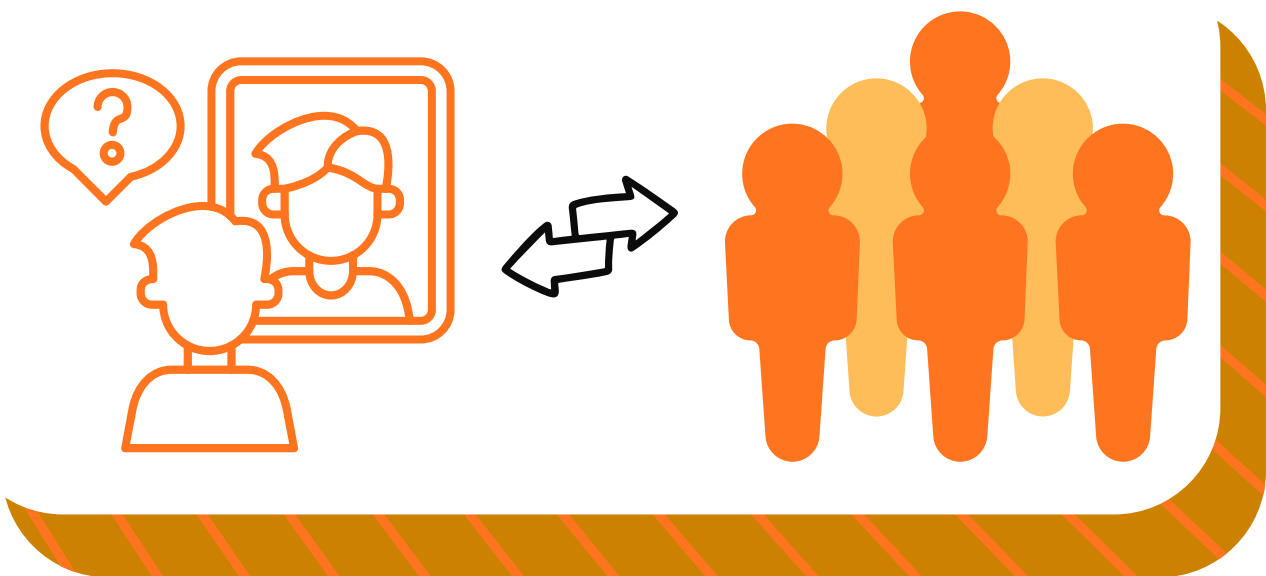
Often, during times of personal brand crisis, faux honesty leads to protracted investigations that end up furthering the damage.

If you think you've quashed a dirty secret, you're delaying, possibly intensifying the inevitable. If the news is already breaking, denying only magnifies the story threefold. **First**, the story of the impropriety is out there. **Second**, your denial becomes a new storyline. If you think the denial evens out perception, you're wrong. Because, **third**, when the dust settles, your dishonest denial becomes the third storyline that often lingers the longest.



There are exceptions to this rule. Often, there are legal arguments for protecting you or your organization's interests – even for pursuing counterclaims. Still, in these cases, you need to ask yourself the same question: *Did I do this?* Make sure the people managing your interests are considering the reputational cost of the court of public opinion.

Always maintain consciousness of your brand. It's not complicated - a mental blend of who you are and whom you want to be. Who you are is not determined by what you see in the mirror. It's determined by how others perceive you. Again, the stakeholder most needing your honesty is you. If you're not honest with yourself, nothing you do moving forward will ultimately succeed.





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