1. "From the organizational side, if corporations ignore the darker under-belly of their employees' lives for a well-meaning approach, emphasizing only the positive, **they will be forced to rely on expensive management pyramids to manipulate their workers at the price of commitment**. Adaptability & native creativity on the part of the workforce come through the door only with their passions. Their passions come only with their souls. Their souls love the hidden springs boiling & welling at the center of existence more than they love the company."

> "Yet the sound & the fury of an individual's creative life are the elemental waters missing from the dehydrated workday."

2. "The poet needs the practicalities of making a living to test & temper the lyricism of insight & observation. The **corporation needs the poet's insight** & powers of attention in order to weave the inner world of soul & creativity with the outer world of form & matter. The meeting of those two worlds forms the very heart of this book."

3. "This **book does not offer easy answers** as to the way that home life & work life, career & creativity, soul life & seniority, can be brought together. What it does do is chart a veritable San Andreas Fault in the modern American psyche: the personality's wish to have power *over* experience, to control all events & consequences, and the soul's wish to have power *through* experience, *no matter what that may be*.... For the personality, bankruptcy or failure may be a disaster, for the soul it may be grist for its strangely joyful mill & a condition it has been secretly engineering for years."

4. "**The empowered manager** might be one who has some understanding of his or her own dark side & inner struggles. When she sees possibilities for failure in those she manages, *she does not mistake them as her own*."

5. "**For those attempting to travel with others across our now-troubled corporate landscape**: Stop treating people as if they are dangerous vehicles about to spin out of control unless you are constantly applying the brakes. Educate them into everything you know, ask them to learn more than you know. Show them not only how to find the brake but the accelerator as well. If their driving style is different, make sure they stop for red lights and know the rules of the road. If they don't like the justice of the road or the rules, let them attempt their own roads and their own rules. Be surprised. Let them experience failure if there is the least room for maneuver. Let them experience *you* experiencing failure with or without the least room for maneuver. Act as if your own internal soul images matter, and out of that surety stand in awe of what arises from the imaginations of others. Above all, have faith in those elements of the universe, nourishing or poisonous, that have *honored* you with their proximity. Do *not* form a flock!"

An Issue About The Practicality Of Human Values & PR's Conscience Role

CRISIS DEFINED: WHEN ORGANIZATIONAL VALUES ARE QUESTIONED

All crises, no matter how different, share something in common: corporate **values** being called into question, believes Mary Ryan, vp mgmt svcs, Waste Management (Oak Brook, Ill). "When crises aren't avoided & you're up to your neck in panic, I suggest you focus on only one issue: **the human values that are fundamental to your organization**." Her reasoning:

1. An organization's values "will very likely determine how we manage a crisis. Surely they will govern how we manage ourselves at crisis times."

2. The issues that "challenge us most will be those that call into question the character of the institution we serve."

3. Institutional character is measured by *community* standards. "If we're a local agency, our community is local. If we're a global corporation, our community is worldwide."

4. Reputation is what *other people* think -- "based on *their* standards."

THE LOOK OF A REAL CRISIS

They "don't involve a corporate dip in profitability or a public-agency decline in tax support, hard as those may be. Misquotations & stupid blunders happen, but they aren't crises. Layoffs & labor grievances are hard; strikes may or may not be crises. But we are clearly at a crisis -- full-blown, mean & sharp -- when the character of our organization -- our corporate identity & the values that shape it -- is being threatened."

WALKING THE TALK ON VALUES MEANS PR BEING THE CONSCIENCE

The "overblown promises" of **value statements** on our walls are not the organization's **real values**.

● **If we truly value customers**, we will "care not only about what they bring to us, but even more about what we bring to them."

● **If we truly value employees**, "then we will be deeply concerned for their families & their futures & their sense of well-being."

● Since they "need to be the ones who stand up for the organization's values at times of crisis," **practitioners are the conscience of the organization** -- "wrestling with values constantly."

- Not self-righteously or holier-than-thou but candidly, consistently, forthrightly being willing to say, daily, that **"this is who we need to be if our community is to trust us."** Pure practicality.

PUTTING VALUES INTO ACTION REQUIRES DOING VERY HUMAN THINGS

In short: crises are when the community calls into question the organization's very character. So "what's at stake is someone's ability to **trust us, and therefore to partner with us,** as colleagues, customers, neighbors."

Public relations folks are the ones who need to model this. "We're there to humanize the situation and, in that sense, to personify precisely the values that are being tested." While others gather the facts surrounding the crisis, Ryan suggests asking these "very human questions":

1. **Who is most at risk because of this incident? Who needs to be protected from harm?** Remember *all* of them -- & *talk about* your concern for them.

2. **Who's suffering and what can I do for them now?** Call the family of the person who died; bring some weary colleague coffee. Don't worry if emotion shows: If you can find some humor, treasure it. If there's genuine grief, experience it. Make a log of people who will suffer in the days ahead & contact them. Write notes, make calls. You won't need to do these things in public. By doing them at all, you'll stay focused on the human elements of the crisis & you'll reflect that focus in the emotion as well as the factuality of your own reporting. *Make people your priority*.

> "Crises provide us with unprecedented opportunities to prove values we say we hold. Until my neighbor knows I care, she will not believe my company is trustworthy."

3. **What can I say, truthfully, to hold trust?** If performance failed, talk about good corporate intent & real corporate grief at failure. Humanize the matter of trust by emphasizing your values; don't try sanitizing the crisis of all pain or grief or of anxiety at the very thought that you've failed the community's standards. Because that's the value that's needed to hold trust.

WHAT IF LAWYERS ADVISE SAYING "NO COMMENT"?
"All our colleagues, including our gifted attorneys, need to understand that we live in communities, not courtrooms; that our character is judged by community standards set by the marketplace, not the bar association; and that stock brokers and shoppers are full-time citizens in the courtroom of public opinion -- not the court of law."

RYAN RECOMMENDS   1. **"Develop a timetable & let everyone know when you'll have what information.** This brings structure & order to an unstructured moment of chaos. The first time you meet the schedule & keep your promise, you're modeling the value of trustworthiness that's critical."

2. **"Write down the positive human values that your organization really does embrace.** Compose the reasons why you've earned our trust. And then practice showing those values in every community you serve, so that -- when the crisis comes -- you are a familiar neighbor, not a stranger."

A HEALTHY ORGANIZATION DEFINED

According to M. Scott Peck, author of *The Road Less Traveled* & recently *A World Waiting to Be Born: Civility Rediscovered*, a healthy organization is "one that has a genuine sense of community." In *Business Ethics* (March-April '94) he describes it as a place where...

1. **People are emotionally present with one another** and aren't afraid to talk about fears & disappointments.

2. **There is authentic communication,** a willingness to be vulnerable, a commitment to speaking frankly & respectfully -- and a commitment not to walk away when the going gets tough.

3. Or as David Whyte describes it (see the next article), where the "soul" is invited into the workplace.

> ## A PRACTICAL DEFINITION:
>
> ### *PUBLIC RELATIONS...*
>
> creates opportunity
>
> or solves problems
>
> by applying knowledge
>
> and understanding
>
> of **human nature,**
>
> most effectively in a way that
>
> lets people participate
>
> in decisions
>
> that affect them

NEW REACTION OF EMPLOYEES & PUBLICS: REDISCOVER "SOUL"

For an organization to be healthy, with systems functioning as designed, it must *accept & respond to its employees' humanness*. Unfulfilled employees can thwart the most brilliant management & operational systems. A number of recent books address this theme. Rabbi Dosick's *The Business Bible* (prr 10/31) is one; *The Heart Aroused: Poetry & the Preservation of the Soul in Corporate America* (Doubleday, $22.50) by David Whyte is another.

- **As corporations struggle & streamline to regain & maintain control, a wave of change is moving among employees.** Many are resisting buying into the corporate "family" where they're not allowed to bring their humanness inside. **Where the talk isn't walked.**

- **Employees are choosing to unleash their "souls" at work rather than check them at the door.** They're choosing experiences that give depth to their humanness.

David Whyte, poet & corporate consultant, takes an in-depth look at this in his book. He advocates bringing our fears, dreams & passion into the organization with us because with them comes our creativity. His thinking: