



Stop the Bleed Discussion Guide

This guide is designed for executive teams, book clubs, MBA cohorts, and leadership groups. Use it to spark conversation, apply the MARCH framework to your context, and embed triage thinking into your organization's DNA.

Preface & Introduction

Aaron describes crisis leadership as “triage, not routine management.” How does that challenge your current approach to decision-making under pressure?

In your organization, what would qualify as a “massive bleed” versus a “broken arm?” Do you sometimes confuse the two?

How does your leadership team prepare for unexpected crises today? Is it proactive or reactive?

Part I: The Triage Mindset

Chapter 1: Leading in Crisis

- How do you personally respond to stress (freeze, over-control, or overreact)?
- Which systems or habits in your organization are designed to counteract those natural stress responses?

Chapter 2: Business as a Battlefield

- The book suggests you don't “rise to the occasion,” you “fall to your training.” What rituals or drills could your team adopt to build crisis reflexes?

Chapter 3: The Tactical Pause

- Have you ever skipped the “pause” and made a decision that worsened a situation?
- What micro-habits could help your team breathe and assess before acting?

Part II: The MARCH Protocol for Business

Chapter 4: Massive Bleeds (Hemorrhage)

- Where are your company's silent hemorrhages (costs, time drains, or distractions)?
- What would applying a "tourniquet" look like in your context?

Chapter 5: Alignment (Airway)

- Where does misalignment show up most in your organization (strategy, communication, incentives, etc.)?
- What is the vision in your organization?
- How could you adopt a PACE-style communication plan (Primary, Alternate, Contingency, Emergency)?

Chapter 6: Revenue Flow (Respiration)

- Do you track intake vs. conversion as carefully as you should?
- Where in your funnel are deals suffocating? Who owns clearing that airway?

Chapter 7: Cash Flow (Circulation)

- Do you manage by EBITDA and strategy decks, or by cash flow?
- What is your actual cash runway, and who is accountable for keeping the system alive?

Chapter 8: Human Resilience (Head Injury and Hypothermia)

- What invisible wounds (burnout, cynicism, disengagement) exist on your team right now?
- Which rituals (recognition, transparency, feedback) could you institutionalize to build resilience?

Chapter 9: The One-Pager

- Could your team summarize its crisis response on a single page?
- What would your own MARCH one-pager look like for your current business challenges?

Part III: Post-Triage Recovery

Chapter 10: Renewal

- Has your organization ever relaxed too soon after a crisis? What was the cost?
- How can you transform your “survival lessons” into permanent systems?

Chapter 11: Conclusion

- Which part of the MARCH sequence resonates most strongly with you as a leader?
- How will you integrate MARCH into your leadership rhythm (quarterly reviews, crisis drills, team offsites)?

Team Exercise: Running a MARCH Drill

- Pick a real or hypothetical scenario (supply chain disruption, legal crisis, major vendor loss, reputational damage, cybersecurity breach, sudden revenue drop, etc.).
- Use the examples in Appendix I-III for reference.
- As a team, run through each step of MARCH:
 - **M:** Where is the biggest bleed?
 - **A:** How do we open gain alignment?
 - **R:** How do we keep revenue breathing?
 - **C:** How do we extend our cash runway?
 - **H:** How do we protect resilience?
- Capture the key takeaways in a one-page MARCH field guide tailored to your organization.