

PANIC MODE TO PROFIT

Transforming Enterprises with Startup Tactics

How to Turn Your Enterprise's Biggest Crisis Into Its Greatest Opportunity

EMAD MASOUD

CEO IN JEANS

— ABOUT THIS PREVIEW —

This is an unauthorized preview edition of Panic Mode to Profit by Emad Masoud, containing the front matter, foreword, and opening framework from the forthcoming book. It is shared for the purpose of letting prospective readers evaluate the work before purchase.

The complete book — including all chapters, named anchor cases, appendices, and the full Panic Mode System — will be available in print and eBook editions through major retailers worldwide.

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For the full edition and updates from the author, visit emadmasoud.com

PREVIEW
EMAD MASOUD · NOT FOR REDISTRIBUTION

— ACKNOWLEDGMENT —

To my son.

One day you will be old enough to read this book. I do not know exactly when—maybe when you are a teenager trying to understand what your father spent so many hours building, or maybe when you are a young man facing your first real challenge and someone hands it to you and says this might help. Whenever that day comes, I want you to know something before you read a single page.

I wrote this for you.

Not only for the executives and the CEOs and the organizations in crisis. I wrote it for the version of you that will one day face a moment when everything feels uncertain, when the path forward is not clear, when the weight of what needs to be done feels heavier than what feels possible. I wrote it so that when that moment comes, you will have a father's thirty years of hard-won understanding in your hands.

Here is what I most want you to know:

Every crisis has a root cause that predates it. Every difficulty in your life will have something in it worth reading—a signal about who you are, what matters to you, what you are being asked to build. The people who grow through hard moments are not the ones who manage them most smoothly. They are the ones who ask what the difficulty is revealing, and who build from the answer.

You came into this world with more energy, more curiosity, and more light than I knew was possible in one small person. The late nights on this manuscript, the early mornings with the frameworks and the drafts and the revisions—you were always the reason it was worth finishing. Every page I wrote, I thought about the day you would read it.

I hope this book makes you proud.

I hope it tells you something true about who your father was and what he believed and how much he loved you while he was building it.

The crisis is not the problem. It is the X-ray. Read it. Build from what it reveals.

I love you more than any framework I have ever built. More than any book. More than any crisis I have ever helped anyone survive.

To my everything.

This book exists because you exist in my life.

Thirty years of crisis work. Dozens of engagements. Hundreds of flights. The early mornings and the late evenings and the weekends that disappeared into drafts and frameworks and the specific obsession that comes when you believe something is worth getting exactly right. You were there for all of it. Not just present—sustaining. The kind of presence that makes a person believe the work is worth finishing when they are no longer sure it is.

There were moments in this project—and you know which ones—when the manuscript felt too heavy, the argument too ambitious, the distance between what was in my head and what was on the page too wide. You did not tell me it was fine. You told me to keep going. That is a different thing entirely, and it is the thing that mattered.

Your energy is in every page of this book. Not because you edited it or argued with it or shaped its frameworks—though your instinct for what is true has shaped everything I have ever built. But because the person who wrote it was only capable of writing it because of you. Because of who I become in your presence. Because of what you make possible simply by being in my life.

I do not know how to adequately thank someone for that. I have been trying to find the right words since before this book began. The closest I can get is this:

This book is for you. Because without you, it never would have been finished. And without you, finishing it would not have mattered.

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YOUR CRISIS WAS SCHEDULED.

Not by the market. Not by a competitor. By your organization.

Through the decisions it deferred.

The signals it filed instead of acted on.

The realities it processed too slowly to act on.

This book is the system for reading it—and building from it.

There are leaders, and there are those who lead.

We follow those who lead not because we have to, but because we want to —

not for them, but for ourselves.

This book is for those who lead.

For the leaders who will use this framework in rooms I will never enter,
in crises I will never know, facing organizations I will never see.

And for my family—who always knew this book was coming.

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— FOREWORD —

What Experience Looks Like

Emad Masoud

There are books about crisis written by people who have studied it from a comfortable distance. They are not without value. They develop vocabulary, occasionally genuine insight, sometimes a framework useful enough to survive the distance between the page and the room. But they do not prepare you for the room itself.

And then there are books written by people who have been in the room. Not as observers. Not as researchers. But as the person leadership teams called when they could no longer navigate alone—when the board was asking questions that had no comfortable answers, when the leadership team had stopped being honest with each other about what they were actually seeing, when the gap between the public narrative and the operational reality had grown too wide to manage and too dangerous to ignore.

Panic Mode to Profit is the second kind of book.

Emad Masoud has spent thirty years in the rooms that most crisis consultants observe from outside. Healthcare networks at the edge of regulatory collapse. Defense contractors watching foundational customer relationships restructure overnight. Semiconductor manufacturers seeing supply chains that took decades to build dissolve in weeks.

The frameworks in this book were not developed in theory. They were built under pressure, refined through the specific friction of real organizations facing real consequences, and validated by the outcomes they produced in conditions that left no room for elegant constructions that only work in the absence of adversity.

I want to say something about the central argument before you begin, because it is more consequential than it might initially appear.

The claim that your crisis was scheduled—not by the market, not by a competitor, but by your own organization through the decisions it deferred and the realities it processed too slowly—is not a comfortable claim. It assigns organizational accountability that is harder to sit with than the alternative narrative, and it does so with conviction.

It is also, in my experience, correct.

The organizations I have watched navigate genuine crisis transformations and emerge stronger were not exceptional in their resources, their leadership quality, or their strategic intelligence. They were exceptional in one specific capability: the willingness to read what the crisis was actually revealing, rather than

managing what it was presenting.

That distinction—between treating the crisis as the problem and treating it as the diagnostic—is the spine of this book and the most important distinction available to any leader who finds themselves in the room.

The Panic Mode System, fully deployed, gives organizations the complete operating architecture for making that distinction in real conditions, under real pressure, at the speed that crisis conditions demand.

From the first diagnostic conversation—three questions, one-on-one, designed to surface what everyone knows and no one is saying—to the final institutionalization of a permanent transformation capability, every step is specified, sequenced, and measurable.

The organizations that read this book before the next crisis arrives will not merely survive it. They will build something from it that the pre-crisis environment never demanded and could never have produced.

That is the transformation. I hope you use it.

Emad Masoud

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— STRUCTURAL NOTE —

How to Use This Book

HOW TO USE THIS BOOK This book is designed to be read in two modes, and I encourage you to use both.

The first mode is linear—front to back, in sequence. If you have the time and relative calm to read this way, I recommend it. The book is structured as a building argument: each chapter assumes and builds on what came before, and the cumulative effect of reading sequentially is an integrated mental model that is more powerful than any individual framework read in isolation. The case studies from healthcare, defense and aerospace, and semiconductor manufacturing gain their full meaning only when you can see how they connect across chapters. The personal stories gain resonance only when you can see the pattern they collectively reveal. Read it in sequence if you can.

The second mode is as a field manual. If you are reading this book because something has already gone wrong—if you are in a crisis right now and need tools today—go directly to the Quick Reference in Appendix A, identify the framework most relevant to your immediate situation, and use it. Then, when the acute pressure eases, come back and read the context. The frameworks will work without the surrounding narrative. They will work better with it.

STRUCTURAL NOTES EACH CHAPTER OPENS WITH AN EPIGRAPH THAT DISTILLS THE ESSENTIAL ARGUMENT OF THAT CHAPTER. READ THESE CAREFULLY. THEY ARE NOT DECORATIVE. EACH CHAPTER CONTAINS ONE OR MORE NAMED FRAMEWORKS PRESENTED IN STRUCTURED VISUAL TABLES. THESE ARE THE OPERATIONAL CORE OF THE BOOK—THE SPECIFIC TOOLS THAT CAN BE DEPLOYED IN REAL SITUATIONS. EACH CHAPTER CONTAINS AT LEAST ONE EXTENDED CASE STUDY DRAWN FROM REAL TRANSFORMATION ENGAGEMENTS ACROSS THE THREE INDUSTRIES THIS BOOK DRAWS FROM. IDENTIFYING DETAILS HAVE BEEN CHANGED WHERE CONFIDENTIALITY REQUIRES IT; THE ESSENTIAL DYNAMICS AND OUTCOMES ARE TRUE.

You will also encounter, throughout the book, four types of specially marked content. Story boxes—marked with a star—are personal narratives from my own career: the mistakes, the crises, the moments that built the frameworks you will use. Framework boxes are the operational tools. Contrarian truth boxes are the ideas

most directly challenged by

conventional wisdom and most consistently validated by experience. Research boxes provide the empirical foundation, sourced from studies and surveys across organizational behavior, crisis leadership, and strategic management.

This book contains opinions stated as facts. This is deliberate. The positions I take on organizational design, culture change, decision-making, and the nature of leadership are positions I have arrived at through thirty years of direct experience, and I hold them with conviction. You may disagree. If you engage with that disagreement seriously—if you push back against the arguments rather than simply accepting them—you will be developing precisely the kind of rigorous leadership thinking that the frameworks in this book are designed to produce. The goal is not that you agree with me. The goal is that you develop a position you can hold and defend under pressure, when the room is quiet and the stakes are high.

That is when it matters.

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— WHERE THIS BOOK SITS —

How Panic Mode to Profit differs from the books you already know

Every new book exists in relationship to the books that preceded it. Being direct about where this one stands relative to the books executives already cite helps you understand what it is for and where it will live in practice.

The system companies use when things go wrong—and when they don't want it to happen again.

That is the positioning. Not a leadership book. Not a strategy book. Not a startup playbook. A crisis-to-transformation operating system—deployable in 72 hours, designed to produce permanent advantage rather than managed recovery.

The system companies use under pressure. Not to cope. To build.

That distinction—under pressure, not just when things go wrong—matters. Most organizations in crisis are focused on stopping the bleeding.

The Panic Mode System is built for the leader who, at the moment of maximum pressure, is simultaneously reading the X-ray, acting at crisis speed, and building something the pre-crisis environment never demanded. That is not crisis management. That is crisis leadership. And it is available to any organization with the framework and the will to use it.

The honest assessment: each of those books is better than this one at what it does best. Zero to One is more quotable. Good to Great is more empirically grounded.

Chip War is a more compelling read. None of them will tell you what to do on Tuesday morning when the board meeting is in six days and the crisis is real. That is the gap this book fills.

You already built something more useful than those books. You just haven't made it as easy to spread, remember, and prove. That is what this edition addresses.

— THE 30-PAGE FAST TRACK —

If You Read Only This, Read This

"A book that cannot be entered quickly will not be entered at scale. The fast track is not a summary. It is a second door."

— Emad Masoud

This section is the complete operational system in thirty pages. Every tool, every framework, every deployment instruction—at the density required to act today, not the density required to understand deeply.

If you have thirty minutes, read this first, then act. If you have three hours, read the full book. Come back here when you need to move fast, brief a team, or prepare for a board conversation.

READ IT. MOVE FAST. BUILD PERMANENT.

READ IT means Stages 01 and 02—diagnose the crisis before you respond to it. MOVE FAST means Stages 03 and 04—act at crisis speed before the window closes. BUILD PERMANENT means Stages 05 and 06—use what the crisis revealed to build something the pre-crisis environment never demanded.

Everything here works without the chapters that built it. Everything works better with them.

1. THE ONE IDEA THE ENTIRE BOOK IS BUILT AROUND

Your crisis was scheduled. Not by the market. By your organization.

Every genuine enterprise crisis I have encountered in thirty years across healthcare, defense and aerospace, and semiconductor manufacturing was visible in advance—not in hindsight, but in signals the organization was filing rather than acting on, in structures that had drifted past their design parameters, in cultures that had calcified around beliefs the environment had already abandoned.

The crisis arrived as a surprise. It was not a surprise. It was the scheduled consequence of decisions deferred and realities processed too slowly.

I want to be precise about what that claim does and does not mean. It does not mean every organization in crisis is culpable in a simple or morally clear way. Organizations facing genuinely novel disruptions—a pandemic, a geopolitical rupture, a technological discontinuity with no historical precedent—are not simply

reaping what they sowed.

The claim is narrower and more operational: within the crisis, there is almost always a root cause that predates it, and addressing that root cause is both possible and transformative in ways that symptom management alone never is.

That is the claim. Everything else in this book is either the evidence for it or the response to it.

The crisis is not the problem. It is the X-ray. It reveals pathology that was already present and developing beneath the surface of adequate performance. The leader who treats the crisis as the problem aims to return to the pre-crisis state.

The pre-crisis state was the incubator of the crisis. The leader who reads the X-ray builds something the pre-crisis environment never demanded and could never have produced.

2. THE SYSTEM IN THREE WORDS

Six stages is the operational architecture. Three phrases is the memory architecture. The stages are what you deploy. The three phrases are what you recall in a board meeting two weeks from now.

3. READ IT: THE DIAGNOSTIC PROTOCOL

Before strategy. Before structure. Before any stakeholder communication. Three questions, asked one-on-one, in this exact sequence, never in groups. Run a minimum of twelve conversations with mid-level operators two to three levels below the C-suite.

State at the start of every conversation: everything you share is completely confidential, I will not attribute any statement to you. Mean it. Break it once and the system collapses.

4. READ IT: THE THREE ROOT CAUSES

In my experience across thirty years in three regulated industries, every enterprise crisis I have been brought into traces to one or more of three underlying root causes. I hold this model with conviction—and I hold it provisionally, the way any serious practitioner should hold a diagnostic framework.

It is the most useful lens I have found for thirty years of crisis work, not a universal law immune to counter-example. If your crisis has a root cause that does not fit any of these three categories, I want to hear about it. Until then, start here. Most crises are compound—two or three root causes simultaneously active.

5. READ IT: SEPARATE FACTS FROM FEARS

This step takes forty-five minutes and changes everything that follows. Write three separate documents before any strategy discussion. The Confirmed Facts paragraph: one paragraph, only what is factually verified—no inferences, no fears, no likely.

The Material Unknowns list: everything that matters and is not yet known. The Named Fears list: the scenarios the leadership team is afraid of, explicitly labeled as fears, not facts.

Most leadership teams discover they have been making decisions for weeks based primarily on the Named Fears list. The separation corrects this immediately.

6. MOVE FAST: THE DECISION VELOCITY SYSTEM

Decision Velocity is one system with three dimensions. Deploy all three. Deploying only one or two produces partial results. The system only works when all three dimensions are simultaneously in place.

7. MOVE FAST: THE PIVOT FRAMEWORK

Five steps. Always in sequence. Skipping any step is the primary failure mode of crisis decision-making.

8. MOVE FAST: CULTURE REWIRE

You have the diagnosis (READ IT). You have the decision architecture and the first strategic actions underway (MOVE FAST). Now the organization itself has to change—not its communications, not its stated values, but the actual behavioral patterns that will determine whether the transformation holds at week nine or reverses quietly back to the pre-crisis baseline.

This is the Culture Rewire Protocol. It is the most commonly underinvested stage in enterprise transformation, and the one with the highest leverage.

Culture change programs fail at a consistent rate for a consistent reason: they change what the organization says it values without changing what it actually rewards.

9. BUILD PERMANENT: WHAT THE FIRE REVEALS

The goal is not to survive the crisis. It is to outgrow it.

Every genuine crisis creates three categories of opportunity that did not exist before it and that close as conditions stabilize.

10. BUILD PERMANENT: THE LEADER'S CODE

11. THE FIRST 72 HOURS—DEPLOYMENT CHECKLIST

HOW TO DEPLOY THIS IN YOUR COMPANY: 30 DAYS

The plug-and-play version. Week by week. Output by output.

This section is for the CEO or senior leader who wants to deploy the Panic Mode System inside their organization without reading every chapter first. It is a four-week activation sequence. Each week has a specific set of actions, a specific set of participants, and a specific output that must be produced before the next week begins.

This sequence works in parallel with normal operations. It does not require shutting down regular business. It requires approximately six to eight hours of senior leadership time per week, distributed across the team. Week Four produces the outputs that make the transformation structural rather than episodic.

WEEK 1—DIAGNOSE REALITY

You cannot aim at the right target until you know what you are actually looking at.

Who is involved: Senior leader plus whoever has access to mid-level operators across functions.

WEEK 2—ESTABLISH DECISION VELOCITY

Process protects people. Decisions move companies.

Who is involved: CEO plus direct reports who have decision authority over the crisis response.

WEEK 3—FIRST STRATEGIC MOVES

The first action is not the entire strategy. It is the signal that the transformation is real.

Who is involved: Full leadership team plus the Twenty.

WEEK 4—LOCK BEHAVIOR

Organizations don't resist change. They resist exposure. The culture signal is what makes exposure safe.

Who is involved: CEO plus the leadership team visible to the broader organization.

THREE PROOF SNAPSHOTS

Before and after. Hard numbers. What actually happened.

Proof Snapshot 1—Industrial Manufacturer (The Manufacturer)

Proof Snapshot 2—Regional Hospital Network

Proof Snapshot 3—Defense Components Manufacturer

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— AUTHOR'S NOTE —

Why I Wrote This Book

A Legacy, Not a Resume

"A framework that requires its creator to deploy it is not a framework. It is a dependency. The goal was always to build something complete enough to work without me."

— Emad Masoud

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— WHAT SARAH SAW THAT I MISSED —

Thirty days into an engagement at an advanced semiconductor manufacturer, I was certain I had the right diagnosis. A specialty chemical supplier was failing. My plan was technically sound: alternative supplier qualification, dual-sourcing protocols, procurement restructuring. I was confident.

I was wrong. Not about the supply chain problem—that was real. I was wrong about what the supply chain problem actually was.

Three weeks into execution, a process engineer named Sarah stopped me on the plant floor. We were between two fabrication lines, standing in the kind of ambient noise that makes people lean forward when they talk. Eleven years with the company.

She had a clipboard she didn't look at once during the conversation. She had the look of someone who has been waiting for the right question—specifically, someone who has learned not to wait for that question in a meeting.

"You know this isn't really about the supplier, right?"

My first instinct was to tell her it was. I had been in this organization for thirty days. I had read everything. I had the engagement plan on a whiteboard in the project room two floors up. The supply chain diagnosis felt solid.

But there was something in the way she said it—not challenging, not tentative. Certain. Like someone correcting a wrong turn before it gets expensive. So I stopped, and I asked her to tell me what she meant.

She told me what had actually happened. Two years earlier, her team had flagged the single-source dependency. The concern traveled up the chain correctly—filed, acknowledged, reviewed.

It came back labeled 'acceptable risk.' The problem: nobody had told the people who approved that designation what 'acceptable risk' actually meant in practice. It meant thirty percent of the plant going dark if the supplier had a bad quarter. The decision had been made by people who never understood what they were deciding.

The supply chain problem was a symptom. The actual pathology was a decision architecture that processed risk as compliance rather than as operational reality requiring judgment. The information had traveled up the chain perfectly. It had died at the layer where it needed to generate action.

That single conversation reoriented six weeks of subsequent work. I went back to the project room that evening and sat with it for a while. Not because the insight was complicated—it was not. Because of what had almost happened.

I had been three weeks into executing a well-designed response to the wrong problem. Three weeks of procurement analysis. Three weeks of supplier qualification planning. Three weeks of building a solution to a symptom while the actual pathology continued to develop, unfound, unchallenged, producing the next crisis on schedule.

Another three or four weeks and the window would have closed. The supply chain would have been shored up, the crisis declared resolved, and the risk assessment architecture that produced it would have gone back into operation—unchanged, unexamined, ready to produce the next version of the same crisis, more severe this time because the organization had learned nothing from the first one.

Sarah prevented that. Not through heroism. Through eleven years of pattern recognition and one question asked to the right person at the right moment.

The Diagnostic Protocol exists because of that evening—because I needed a system that gets to that conversation in week one, not week four. Before the window closes. Before the supply chain is shored up and the crisis declared resolved.

— THE CLAIM THIS BOOK MAKES —

Your crisis didn't happen to you. It was scheduled—by your organization, years before it arrived.

That is a difficult claim for most leadership teams to accept. It assigns organizational accountability that is harder to sit with than the alternative narrative: that the crisis was external, surprising, essentially unforeseeable. The external narrative is almost always available and almost always partly true.

But it is not an explanation for why the organization was not ready. The structural drift that left the organization misaligned with the regulatory environment had been building for years. The competitive threat had been signaled repeatedly by the people closest to the market.

The supply chain vulnerability had been filed as 'acceptable risk' by someone who did not understand what they were accepting. The external event pulled the trigger. The organization loaded the gun.

This is not blame. It is the most useful diagnostic frame available, because it points to something actionable. If the crisis was external and unforeseeable, the only response available is better crisis management.

If the crisis was an organizational failure to process available reality at the speed required, then the response is a permanent upgrade to the organization's reality-processing capability. The crisis becomes not just a problem to survive but a curriculum to complete.

WHY I WROTE THIS BOOK A Legacy, Not a Resume “A framework that requires its creator to deploy it is not a framework. It is a dependency. The goal was always to build something complete enough to work without me.”

T W O T H I N G S I W A N T T O T E L L Y O U T W O T H I N G S B E F O R E T H I S B O O K B E G I N S .

The first: over thirty years of working inside organizations navigating genuine crises—hospital networks at the edge of regulatory collapse, defense contractors watching their foundational customer relationships restructure overnight, semiconductor manufacturers seeing supply chains dissolve in real time—I have worked alongside leaders who were brilliant, experienced, courageous, and genuinely trying. And I have watched some of them fail. Not because they lacked the right instincts or the right intentions or the right capabilities. Because they did not have a system. They had advisors and experience and, in some cases, extraordinary intuition. But they did not have a complete, repeatable, transferable framework for reading what a crisis was actually revealing and building something lasting from it. They managed the crisis. They did not transform through it. And when the next crisis arrived—as it always does—they were no better equipped than they had been for the last one. The cycle repeated. More severe each time, because each unread crisis deepens the organizational pathology it was designed to expose.

The second thing I want to tell you: I will not always be there.

That sentence is the reason this book exists. Not the consulting engagements, not the speaking invitations, not any commercial motivation. This book exists because of a specific confrontation I had with myself on a flight from Toronto to Frankfurt in the autumn of 2019, somewhere over the dark Atlantic, looking at twenty years of notes accumulated across dozens of engagements in three industries. I realized with uncomfortable clarity that everything I knew—every diagnostic pattern, every framework for decision-making under pressure, every insight about how crisis creates the conditions for transformation that

ordinary times make impossible—existed only in my head and my files. The moment I was not in the room, the system stopped working. Every organization I had ever helped would eventually face another crisis without the benefit of what I had learned from the last one.

I did not want to write a book that documented my career. I wanted to leave behind a framework that outlasts it—one designed to work in rooms I will never enter, in crises I will never personally know, deployed by leaders I will never meet.

That is the purpose of this book. Not to make you dependent on a consultant. Not to sell a methodology that requires ongoing licensing or certification or the continued presence of its author to function. To give you something complete—a system you can deploy yourself, adapt to your specific context, teach to the people in your organization, and hand to the leaders who come after you. The Panic Mode System is that framework. It was built from thirty years of pattern recognition across three of the most demanding organizational environments that exist—healthcare, defense and aerospace, and semiconductor manufacturing. It has been tested in real crises with real stakes. It has been refined by the failures that inevitably accompany learning under pressure. And it is now yours, without condition.

WHAT THIS BOOK IS BUILT TO DO THERE ARE BOOKS WRITTEN TO BE READ, AND BOOKS WRITTEN TO BE USED. MOST BUSINESS BOOKS ARE IN THE FIRST CATEGORY. THIS ONE IS BUILT TO BE BOTH—BUT IF YOU MUST CHOOSE, USE IT. THE FRAMEWORKS, THE WORKSHEETS, THE VISUAL MODELS, THE DIAGNOSTIC PROTOCOLS, THE TWELVE-WEEK SEQUENCE, THE CRISIS READINESS ASSESSMENT IN THE APPENDIX—THESE ARE NOT TEACHING AIDS. THEY ARE OPERATING INSTRUMENTS. THEY ARE DESIGNED TO FUNCTION AT THE MOMENT OF MAXIMUM ORGANIZATIONAL PRESSURE, WHEN THERE IS NO TIME FOR ELEGANT REFLECTION AND THE QUALITY OF THE NEXT DECISION IS THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN AN ORGANIZATION THAT TRANSFORMS AND ONE THAT MERELY SURVIVES.

This book is also built to be assigned. The leader who reads it alone benefits. The leadership team that reads it together and deploys its frameworks collectively benefits more. The CEO who gives it to their direct reports with the instruction to read it before the next quarter's strategy session, and who uses its vocabulary in that session, and who references its frameworks in the decisions that follow, has made an investment in organizational capability that compounds. That is the Chip War model—a book so densely useful that it becomes institutional vocabulary, reference language, the shared operating system of a leadership team.

This book is written at that level of ambition.

T H E R E A R E L E A D E R S , A N D T H E R E A R E T H O S E W H O L E A D I W A N T T O S A Y O N E M O R E T H I N G A B O U T W H Y I W R O T E T H I S B O O K , B E C A U S E I T I S T H E M O S T I M P O R T A N T T H I N G .

There are leaders, and there are those who lead. The distinction is not about title or authority or years of experience. It is about the choice made in the specific moments when the comfortable option and the correct option diverge—when telling the truth is more expensive than managing the narrative, when moving is more frightening than waiting, when holding the standard requires absorbing the discomfort of the people who preferred the old one. Leaders hold positions. Those who lead make choices. We follow those who lead not because we are required to but because their choices—made under conditions that would justify lesser choices—produce something we want to be part of.

I have been privileged, across thirty years, to work alongside people in that second category. They did not all have the most impressive credentials. They were not all the most analytical people in the room. They did not all have the most experience. What they had was a prior decision about who they were going to be in the moments that tested them. And that decision—made before the crisis, held during it, honored in the weeks after when the temptation to return to the comfortable is greatest—is what produced the transformations this book describes.

The framework gives you the system. That decision is yours to make. This book is written for the leader who is ready to make it.

Toronto, Canada, 2026

— THIS IS WHERE THE PREVIEW ENDS —

The complete book begins on the next page with Chapter Zero: The Panic Mode System.

For the full edition — including all six stages, thirteen chapters, three named anchor cases, and the complete deployment toolkit — visit:

emadmasoud.com

If something in these pages landed for you, write back. A single line means more than a review ever could.

— Emad Masoud, Toronto, 2026