

Grounded
By David L. Peterson

Book Synopsis

Grounded is an encouraging, motivational book that highlights management techniques that apply to seasoned executives while providing insight and wisdom to future leaders or young entrepreneurs. It's a business book; yet, the true stories that serves as the basis of it reads more like a novel. People who wouldn't ordinarily be interested in a management / business book are saying that they really enjoyed reading *Grounded*. It is my hope that it will encourage and motivate current and future leaders to be more prepared to mitigate the negative effects of a future unknown event. And to be more thoughtful of whom they hire or with whom they associate. And maybe, to become better people.

Grounded at its essence is an adventure story, with learning lessons focused on what makes it possible for a person to mute the negative effects of a disaster. The backbone of the story is about three shipwrecks. The wreck of the *Alacrity* occurred in 1980; I was on that sailboat with my Dad and a high school friend. Through a series of unexplained events, we got lost in the Bermuda Triangle on a trip from West Palm Beach to West End, Bahamas. In the end, I fell asleep and the *Alacrity* drifted into an unnamed cay and was grounded on the coral reef. The boat was a total loss.

The other 2 shipwrecks occurred in 1864, on desolate Auckland Island in the South Pacific. The *Grafton*, with Captain Musgrave and a crew of 4, shipwrecked in January of that year. The *Invercauld*, with Captain Delgarno and a crew of 24 shipwrecked in July. Neither of the two survivor groups knew of the existence of the other. But they were on the same island with roughly the same circumstances. Yet the *Grafton* crew pulled together under Musgrave's strong leadership, survived; constructing a seaworthy vessel and sailing it to rescue themselves. Contrast that with the crew of the *Invercauld*; of the 19 that made it to shore, only 3 survived. Captain Delgarno was an ineffective leader, thinking only of himself instead of focusing on crew survival. Delgarno and the first mate Smith both survived, but only because a common sailor, Robert Holding, exhibited amazing individual leadership and took them under his wing.

The fate of all three ships hung on the anchors. The *Grafton* sailed with substandard anchor chain that was also too short for the conditions it would find itself. The *Invercauld*, not anticipating it would be anywhere near Auckland Island, had it's anchor lashed to the deck and was unavailable to prevent the shipwreck. On the *Alacrity*, when I first realized that we were close to the cay, I could have thrown the anchor overboard and stopped our progress towards disaster, but failed to do so.

An anchor is an inanimate object, its how its prepared for use, how its available for use and the strategic nature of its actual use that makes it a essential survival tool.

Using the powerful story of these shipwrecks, and interspersing my recollections of events that occurred during my 30 years of business experience, *Grounded* highlights the learning lessons of how disasters can be mitigated. I examine the two key behaviors of leadership and decision-making and how they manifest in a crisis. I synthesize that leadership and effective decision-making comes from essential traits that allow one to be in a position to be a leader or make good decisions in a crisis. Using the three anchors theme, I opine that there are three positive anchors that allow one to be a leader and make good decisions. These are the anchors that we need to be “Grounded In”. They are:

Grounded In – Calm Focus
Grounded In – Thoughtful Response
Grounded In – Regard for Others

I also discuss three negative anchors; traits that keep one from realizing their full potential. These are the anchors we get “Grounded By”. They are:

Grounded By – Lack of Courage
Grounded By – Lack of Initiative
Grounded By – Lack of Perseverance

By enhancing our “Grounded In” traits and minimizing our “Grounded By” traits, we can become great, strategic leaders that make effective decisions in a time of crisis.