



INTRODUCTION

It is Thursday, December 8th, 2011, in downtown Chicago. I am in my window office at corporate headquarters on the 29th floor, and it is the end of a busy day. I was wrapping up some presentations I was preparing for my boss, which he would use to brief our executive leadership team. As usual, his request for updates came in at the last minute, which was urgent. I thought, *Why doesn't anyone plan these things in advance? Why does everything have to be needed at the last minute?* Everyone always seems to operate as if what they need is based on a life-and-death situation. But it was not and really never is. It was just another typical day in corporate America.

In the corporate world, some will tell you, if you want to get ahead, you must be willing to make personal sacrifices, work long hours, prioritize your company first over your personal life, including your family, and some of us will even prioritize work over our health. Your ability to move up through the ranks is often measured by the personal sacrifices you are willing to make for the top brass occupying the seats in the ivory tower.

It was easy for me to justify and buy into that mission statement. After all, what this company does is essential to the world. They save lives, the products they build defend nations, and their products connect and protect the world. The truth is, it is not unusual for company leaders to be found on Capitol Hill, in the White House, in presidential palaces, or in meetings with dignitaries, kings, princes, or sovereign royalty. Company leaders sit on the boards of top Fortune 100 companies and command billions of dollars and hundreds of thousands of people.

I got the updated presentation to my boss in time, demonstrating that I was reliable and always came through when needed. With another win for the day added to the books, I checked off my accomplishments and made a new list of what I needed to tackle tomorrow. I shut down my computer, gathered my belongings and backpack, and put on my winter jacket, gloves, beanie, and scarf. I made my way down the hallway of the 29th floor to the elevators. I started trying to decompress from a stressful day and think about the excitement of getting home to my family.

As I exited the high-rise building in downtown Chicago around 6 p.m., the sidewalk was crowded with thousands of people making their way to the train station, bus stops, and their apartments. They were bundled tightly in their winter coats, hats, and gloves. Christmas season was upon us, and store windows were trimmed with holiday decorations. People were always in a hurry to get where they needed to be. The streets were stacked with bumper-to-bumper cars and taxi cabs. In the distance, you could hear the trains screeching, horns beeping, fire trucks and ambulance sirens blaring, and crosswalk lights beeping. It was just another typical end of a workday in downtown Chicago.

Weaving in and out and in between the crowded sidewalks, I made my way to the bus stop on the corner of West Washington Street and North Canal Street. As I approached, I noticed a group

surrounding a man who had collapsed on the sidewalk. They were all staring at this older man who appeared to be in distress. A woman was sitting next to him in tears with a look of distress and fear on her face. I asked one of the bystanders what had happened. He said, "I don't know. All I know is this person collapsed." I asked the next person if anyone had called 911. Another person said yes, they were waiting. I am not sure what overtook me, but I knew I needed to do something, anything.