

Since Friday's incident, **Tiger Woods** vs. hydrant and tree (and possibly his wife), he has steadfastly stonewalled police and media; refusing to comment on a quickly escalating personal crisis. He even dropped out of his own annual charity golf tournament this week, certainly to avoid media scrutiny.

Is he fair game? He is the world's highest paid athlete (\$110 million in the past 12 months), much of that from endorsements because companies buy his credibility/reputation to pitch their products.

His silence has led to the inevitable:

- The media have dug relentlessly for any and all information.
- The story has made headlines for six consecutive days (and we thought the economy was news!).
- Speculation about his extra marital affairs (at least two) is rampant.
- The media have found more ammunition, highlighted by today's released tape of Tiger leaving a voicemail three days prior to his "accident" to a woman he is alleged to have had a 31 month affair with. He asks her to remove her name ident from her cell phone as his wife might be on to something.

To be determined:

- Will Tiger's family stand by him?
- Will his multi-million dollar sponsors stand by him?
- Will the public lose respect for a man who until now everyone looked up to?

With the pressure mounting to an explosive force, he finally released a statement today on his website [www.tigerwoods.com](http://www.tigerwoods.com) , *"I have let my family down and I regret those transgressions with all of my heart"* but, he still has not made himself available.

Could some of this pain and damage have been avoided? I certainly believe so.

Here's what **David Letterman** did in early October, before any news had surfaced about his transgressions. In fact, there was not even a hint of any David Letterman misdeeds when he unexpectedly came clean.

- He used his own TV program (thus directly faced his public) to provide a 10 minute explanation of how he had been blackmailed for doing "terrible things".
- He immediately admitted to having sex with members of his staff.
- He immediately apologized and expressed heartfelt regret.

The result:

- He completely diffused the situation before it erupted into a full-blown crisis.
- He admitted to everything so there was no dirt to be found.
- His ratings have soared.

There's is no magic to Crisis Management. It's all about showing concern and being transparent, no matter what the short-term pain may be. It is about protecting your Reputation, at all costs.

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