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## Do not panic in the face of danger

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When Napoleon Bonaparte (1769-1821) escaped from the Island of Elba after his first term of imprisonment, he was accompanied only by a small group of loyal soldiers. Once dethroned, he now again aspired to the throne of France. But in the very first encounter, he found himself face to face with 20,000 French soldiers.

Napoleon, although considered one of the most courageous leaders the world has known, avoided a direct confrontation with his opponents. He did not make the mistake of foolishly ignoring his own military weakness. At the crucial moment, when he and his little band of men stood face to face with this enormous army, he stepped forward, completely unarmed and stood calmly before his enemies.

Then with great composure he unbuttoned his coat and bared his chest. In a voice now charged with emotion he addressed the great throng of soldiers — many of whom had served under him in the past: “Which one of you is willing to fire at the naked chest of his father?” The battlefield rang with shouts of “No one!” Almost all of the soldiers belonging to the enemy camp rushed to Napoleon’s side. So that despite his initial lack of military resources, Napoleon emerged victorious.

If, in the destitute state he was in at that time, he had attempted to do battle with the French army, he would surely have been slaughtered on that very battlefield.

Whatever a man’s resources, if he has to deal effectively with a situation, he must be able to make a proper assessment of it. And this he will not be able to do if he panics in the face of danger. It is only if he does not lose his nerve and keeps his mind open to what is practical that he will be able to overcome the obstacles in his path.

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