# Twitter Thread by Michael Dearing



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## An irony of facebook's situation.

## Sheryl got her MBA at Harvard. One of the most famous cases (Extra Strength Tylenol) in one of the most famous classes (Business History) she took: in 1982, someone put cyanide in Extra Strength Tylenol capsules and killed 7 people in Chicago.

What do you do when someone turns your product into a weapon? When they use the system you built to harm? James Burke, CEO of J&J, was shockingly open with the public, he pulled the product and made significant packaging changes to make product safer (but not tamper-proof).

He over-shared every step along the way re investigation, redesign, stood up as both CEO and human. The reintroduction of new Extra Strength Tylenol succeeded. Burke saved the brand.

But four years later it happened again. A killer put cyanide in the capsules, this time a woman in Yonkers died. Same CEO, Burke, pulled the product again, completely changed the form factor from capsule to caplet and relaunched *again*. It worked *again*. How'd they do that?

Burke (CEO) tapped J&Js goodwill bank account w/ the public. Two big withdrawals from that bank account in four years + 8 dead bodies! But his honesty, openness, humanity (choked up about the deaths more than once), humility kept the goodwill bank balance positive the whole time.

I'm sure Sheryl aced that case on Extra Strength Tylenol and the biz history class. If I remember right, she aced everything at Harvard.

And if ever you want to see the difference between school work and real work, it's right here. Real work is harder.

If you're wishing a punishment for Mark or Sheryl for slowness, tone-deafness, obsession with how *they* appear to the public rather than what's right for colleagues and users, don't bother.

My hunch is they are suffering plenty. When people who crave public worship get the opposite, that's a punishment like poison to them.

Avoid this pain. Be like Burke. Be human, say the truth no matter how it makes you look, invest in your goodwill bank account w/ public, fix the product. And even if it's a mask, speak out like you feel *something* about the people who suffer because your product was abused.

What I see and hear from people who know inside and outside the company, Mark and Sheryl have done just the opposite of what Burke did. Which is sad because at least one of them had a practice run on this case back in the late 90s.

If you are lucky enough to do the Burke case in school, or the now-inevitable Sheryl Sandberg case(s) on this mess, take good notes. If you get your career heart's desire, you might find the notes helpful.