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Three levels of moral dilemma pdf

March 29, 2018 8 min read Opinions from Entrepreneur contributors are their own. You read Entrepreneur India, an international franchise of Entrepreneur Media. Every year I meet over 500 mid-level employees across organizations within IT, Banking, FMCG and other industries. These are usually interactions I have at conferences/workshops or a deeper one-on-one conversation where I try to understand what they are doing at the moment and what would they like to do in the future. One of the common chorus I hear is the conflict between the security that a full-time job offer and the unspoken feeling (very few state it in clear terms) that the world passes us by. During these many interactions I have tried to explore these unplayed emotions. By documenting these and providing some suggestions, my intention is to increase the level of awareness and provide some important tips for you. There are 3 types of mid-level managers: Security Blanket: Typically, these are folks who value the safety of the job because they have at least one child, a non-working spouse and a home/vehicle loan. By nature they are very good in their work, diligent and perform routine tasks well. Fence Sitter: Has the above demographic traits (good job / a loan or two), but in addition he is also a social animal. He is influenced by stories of success and is tempted to start something on his own or participate in a start-up. However, he has yet to assess the risks of leaving his current job and will continue to push the decision-making point until tomorrow. I'm not in a good place: This type of person is not in a good place for two reasons. He is not in the job he loves and/or does not perform adequately in his job for a number of reasons. He also has family responsibilities, which contributes to his uncomfortable position. The interesting thing is that the third type of person is the one who is most likely to break the mold and be successful a few years down the line after he takes a leap into the unknown. The fence sitter continues in his own doubt until he moves upwards (yes . . . Up!) not to be in a good place. The safety blanket type is methodical, and while he takes longer to move to a discomfort zone, he creates the opportunity to plan it well. This is by no means an all-encompassing classification. There are many nuances, and I'm sure many other possible ways to look at the challenges and opportunities for mid-level leaders. But this classification in my mind helps me give more apt advice (when asked), which in turn resonates better with the individual and more likely leads to a proactive introspection. So here goes my advice - 1. Working in your strength areas: I had an opportunity to advise someone who was possibly one of the most intelligent people I had ever met. He was well read, strong with numbers, could predict trends by putting together several pieces of data and was very articulate and he was a disaster when it came to managing people and was constantly cribbing that he wasn't going up in the organization and was frustrated. The good news is that he was aware of his ability (or inability) in managing people, but it did nothing to temper his expectations, and he would constantly relate stories about how he had made an effort to overcome his weakness. But during the 3 years I knew him, he had not worked on his strength at all and was now not in a good place. The pressure from young people who were also equally analytical and more importantly had qualifications in the field of analysis was to push him towards negative behavior. Today the person is in a different role and is doing very well because he has qualified himself and is working in a role where he is a strong individual contributor. Not only that, people look up to him for his acquired skills and he feels respected and liked. He is able to manage tasks across teams by leveraging his analytical skills and guiding a team of over 15 domain experts, but not a single person officially reports to him. His pivot has turned to his abilities and not his lack of skills. His soft abilities are constantly improving as he matures into his role, and people reach out to him for his expertise. 2. Experience an interest area: Easier said than done, as most people slip through the jobs assigned to them. The first three years of your working life are crucial. Ideally, you should have rotated across as many different roles or departments as possible. But if that hasn't happened, don't worry. Identify 1-2 tasks or situations you think you've had and look for similar tasks. However, one of the young leaders I worked with identified a role that no longer existed at his level. Such roles are typical in an IT company where specific coding skills in the early years are important, but in recent years problem-solving skills become more relevant. The confusion between a role that you enjoy and the skill behind that role becomes more obvious as you progress in the middle of leadership levels. While you might think you enjoy coding, if you're really introverted you can find that you actually enjoy solving the challenges of creating a relevant output by writing a few lines of code. Many young managers typically of security blanket classification tend to enumerate a functional skill in their résumés, little to realize that their skills have led them to solve business challenges. Think about what problem you solved instead of the tool you used to fix the problem. Young leaders who are stuck in the tools thinking process would do well to take programs in management strategy, business model or just read books that give them a greater global perspective. Design thinking programmes are also useful as they tend to connect discrete dots to paint a brand new image. 3. an honest conversation: Have you had an honest conversation with yourself, especially if you are in a good place? Pressured by loans, family who deliver work projects rarely give a break to thinking. But this is where a good spouse, friend or even a boss comes into play. While frustrations have been building up, keeping the bottle up releases negative energy, even in a conversation with yourself. The worst thing is when you start to justify why you couldn't get anything done or why you were accused unfairly. If you find yourself going through any of these conversations with yourself, then it's time to have an honest discussion with yourself. Enlist a spouse/friend/colleague/boss to talk to and specifically ask them to hold up a mirror. When you talk to them about what worries you, ask them to reflect what they felt from you. . . . negative energy or positive energy. In all likelihood, what they reflect is what all your colleagues at work feel about you. The advantage you get by asking them to be honest is that you look yourself in the mirror. Go back to the basics when you do this exercise and have a conversation about your strengths. You will feel the energy that comes back in the conversation. Constantly, strengthen the positive energy conversations and not go back to interactions that make you feel negative. Very soon you will take proactive steps towards learning something new. Remember that the person who believes that he is not in a good place is most likely to take positive steps towards rebuilding his career. Despite the classifications that I've discussed above, the one factor that is common among all mid-level leaders is the slow death of curiosity and the beginning of excuses. In all my interactions, when the denial phase of excuses is over (trust me, it doesn't take time and it's not hard to get over this stage), the new energy phase starts when a person actively takes on a learning challenge – be it a new functional skill or just a new activity that brings another dimension of the individual. So regardless, if you are a security blanket, a fence sitter or if you are not in a good place just take the first step towards curiosity. Sign in to a new skill program that's up your alley or create an activity for yourself that looks interesting. You don't have to win the activity or be the topper in the new skill, but you just need to rediscover your curiosity. Reflecting your learning quotient and the world around you will reward you. In a perfect world, it is always clear what is right or wrong. In the real world, things are often not so clear. Someone is wrong may be your right, which means that your right will surely, at some point, be someone else's wrong. Most of the time the right choice can be subjective. At some point in our careers, most of us will have to make difficult ethical decisions. How do you investigate the problem and figure out what to do? We asked seven business leaders to share their stories and lessons. Sallie Krawcheck, Chairman of Elevate Network and Eleventh Asset After Krawcheck took over running Merrill Lynch's wealth management division, in the fall of 2009, she was told that stable value fund, a financial product Merrill had sold in 401k plans, was actually not that stable. The team had messed up, Krawcheck said. They had managed the money in a way that something that was supposed to be low risk and preserve its value had lost value. Photo: Via ElevateEven worse, the people who would suffer the most from the mistakes were low incomes who invested in the funds as part of their retirement savings plans specifically, Walmart employees, as the retail giant was the largest owner of these funds. There were two options, one of which was to say tough luck to Walmart employees who owned the Stable Value Fund, says Krawcheck. Or putting money in, to increase [the fund's] value. Krawcheck, who had just been fired as head of Citigroup's wealth management division to reimburse clients for their losses, quickly felt a sense of deja-vu in his new role. I had lost my job once to do this . . . I wanted to do it again?, she remembers. And the answer is, I did. She adds: 'It wasn't many sleepless nights. In a way, I had set a precedent for myself on this. I set a precedent at [Smith] Barney's that I was willing to lose my job for it. I had lost my job once to do this . . . Would I do it again? The answer is, I did. When Krawcheck came forward with his proposals, there was a lot of back and forth because the banks didn't have lots of money at the time, she says. What I would say is that Ken Lewis, who was the ceo at the time, supported us in making what I thought was the right decision. I wasn't fired from it. In fact, you'd never read about it before today. Her advice: We all need to find this line for ourselves and examine the downside. Are you comfortable with the downside? I didn't love the thought of losing my job, but it was less painful for me than thinking about telling Walmart employees that we had lost money that they had thought could not be lost. The lesson: Know what your indicator is. My indicator has always been my stomach. When my stomach starts to hurt, I know something's wrong. Binta Niambi Brown, CEO and co-founder of Fermata Entertainment Ltd. and lawyer Photo: via TwitterFifteen years ago, hours before closing a \$3 billion asset purchase, Brown, who was a senior executive in her late 20s, received some information that could have sabotaged the entire deal. At the time, her partner was unavailable, and Brown had a choice to make: either tell his client and risk losing the deal, or keep quiet until the papers were signed. She chose to tell the customer. It was early in my career, she says. Even if the deal had been blown up for good, honest reasons rooted in decent integrity and morality, there is always the fear that you will be associated whose agreement blew up and now everyone is talking about how the lead person was not around 'You're Goody Two shoes, and you ruined the deal. After passing on the information she revealed to her client, Brown was able to help both sides come to a settlement, and eventually, a deal was finalized. Her ability to have good judgment, do what she thought was right, and not let fear drive her decisions are lessons Brown has carried with her throughout her career. Sometimes the things we think can really bother us become our most glorious moments end up. Without a doubt I have repeatedly in my career seen that to be the case, just to go from a place of love and integrity and to seek to solve the problem and to move the ball forward, as opposed to fear. Because usually when there is a moral dilemma like this, the most important thing that stands in the way of the ability to make a good decision is that we are motivated by our fears, she explains. Her advice: This is the moment when we start giving in to our fears, it's when people start making really bad decisions that can be very hurtful and harmful to others. People are afraid that their piece of cake will be cut up and given to someone else, and so it motivates some of what you see in the business context. The lesson: Sometimes the things we think could really hurt us or bother us end up being the things that become our shiniest, most glorious moments. When Gerber found out that one of his employees was clocking in his wife, who wasn't actually showing up until three hours later, the company immediately fired the employee. Afterwards, the employee came in with his father, who has worked for Gerber for two decades, and the two asked for a second chance. He explained that he had a newborn son and that his wife could not leave for work until he came home. Although it was a difficult decision, Gerber and his business partner decided to give the employee a second chance, mainly because his father had been a loyal employee for so long. [We] made the decision to [rehire] him, says Gerber. The decision was extremely difficult because we caught him technically stealing from the company and we generally have a zero-tolerance policy for such behavior. But because his father has worked for us for over 20 years and vouched that his son would never do it again, we decided to give him another chance. The lesson: Loyalty and longevity still matter at some companies. Laurie Peterson, founder of Build & ImagineToys When Peterson started working for big toy companies more than 10 years ago, she wanted to get young girls excited about science. Somewhere along the way, she forgot her mission and found herself-like most in the industry-advocating for toys catering to boys simply because they are more profitable. Photo: via Build & ImagineThinker was that if we design it for boys, then the girls will just play too, she says. But if we do the opposite and design it for girls, we not whether boys want to play. By default, the job was to design the toys for boys. I found that being moral not but I definitely advocated what I thought was right for the company, to lead with boys, because we found that it's a more healthy business decision, continues Peterson. There I was year after year, representing this position, that the best business decision we can make is to design toys for boys. I was never my authentic self because of it. Peterson has since founded her own toy company to teach STEM skills to both girls and boys, featuring adventurous female lead roles. Now I have the opportunity with my own start-up to make the rules and we are allowed to decide what is important, she says. We decided to take our industry standard and turn it upside down. Instead of designing products for boys and then looking for opportunities to invite girls to play, we design for girls and then look for opportunities to invite boys to play. The lesson: You need to be the change you want to see. Kathryn Minshew, CEO and co-founder of MuseMinshew's toughest ethical decision, involved firing a company they had signed up to do business with. They had already paid us for muse recruit product, but treated our team so badly during onboarding that it just didn't feel like how I wanted to do business, recalls Minshew. To make matters worse, they were really nice to me. It was just the junior staff they treated badly. To make matters worse, Muse was just getting started at the time and was really in need of revenue. Still, it felt wrong to work with a company that behaved so badly, says Minshew.She adds: In the end I gave them a warning, and then, when it continued, told them nicely that it doesn't make sense to work together anymore and refunded the unused balance in their money. They tried to argue, but at the time, my mind was made up. I didn't realise how relieved my team was and how much they appreciated it until after it was all done. The lesson: I think supporting your team in situations like this is really important, but it's not always easy. Especially when you're early on stage. Anthony Soohoo, co-founder and CEO of Dot & Bo: My time as product manager on Apple's PowerBook team, we were ready to launch a new product. As part of the test, we had found that a very small sample size was flawed and could be harmful. I was under enormous pressure to make a decision on whether or not to hold off to bring the product to market. And there were good arguments on both sides. Photo: via Dot & Bo: On the one hand, the weaned sample size was small and not statistically significant, and millions of dollars would be lost by keeping the shipment away. On the other hand, Soohoo considered that the risk of long-term impact was high. If the error was greater than we thought, it could have caused a huge loss of with our customers, he says. When there is a difficult decision to make, it does so based on what would create long-term value instead of getting the short-term gain. In the end, Soohoo decided to postpone the launch of the In the end, it came down to taking a long-term perspective and it just made more sense to delay the launch, he says. When I put myself in our customers' shoes, I think that's what they expected Apple to do. Not a popular decision at the time, but it was the right decision for the company. The lesson: Trust your gut to do the right thing for customers. When there is a difficult decision to make, it does so based on what would create long-term value instead of getting the short-term gain. I've been with that lesson throughout my career. Trae Bodge, spokeswoman and senior editor of RetailMeNot.com and co-founder of beauty brand Tre Custom Color Specialists White started her company Three Custom Color Specialists back in the 90s, there were very few products for women of color. And there was a reason why. Creating makeup for darker skin tones was more expensive. Bodge explains: A fair-skinned woman can have eight different tones on her face, while a dark-skinned woman can have 25 different tones on her face, so it becomes very difficult to cater for a darker-skinned client. So many brands do not have darker skin colors because it is very difficult to have a variety of colors for these women. It's hard, from a business perspective, to have so many nuances available, but we made it a priority. I always understand when I see a larger company that doesn't have darker skin tones because it's very hard to wear those tones and monetize them, but I think it's important and I think that larger companies should be willing to take a hit in an effort to meet the needs of women of color. From day one, Bodge says her company has made it a priority to introduce a wide range of nuances. Today she is grateful to see other makeup brands make it a priority to be inclusive of women of all skin tones. The lesson: If you look at your bottom line as a business, part of that equation should be, am I catering to all consumers? And yes, certain shades will be more profitable and certain shades will be less profitable, but there is a middle ground there. It is a mistake from a PR and customer service perspective not to cater to all consumers. Consumers.

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