

Winning the “Devil’s Bargain”

Sustaining Purpose & Integrity in Corporate Life



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Elizabeth Doty, WorkLore



- *Recovering "reengineer"*
- *12-year hotel veteran*
- *Harvard MBA*
- *Compulsive interviewer*

Unleashing collective competence
to achieve what really matters

Organizations

- Learning from experience
- Recurring issues, systemic patterns

Individuals

- Tapping your full capability
- Influencing systems in positive ways



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An Appreciative Inquiry into the “Dark Side”

- Is there tension between our work personas and our core values as people?

- 45 mid-level business people
 - Directors, executives (VP + up), frontline managers, new professionals, retired, on sabbatical
 - Large public and private companies, startups, professional services
 - “Realists” -- impact on policies & products, not in limelight
- 3 questions and a conversation
 - Story of work journey & what guided important choices
 - “Realities” you have learned about corporate life
 - Passions/concerns as a human being & how relate to your work



Pressure to compromise

Word

They made me a liar.

Relationships

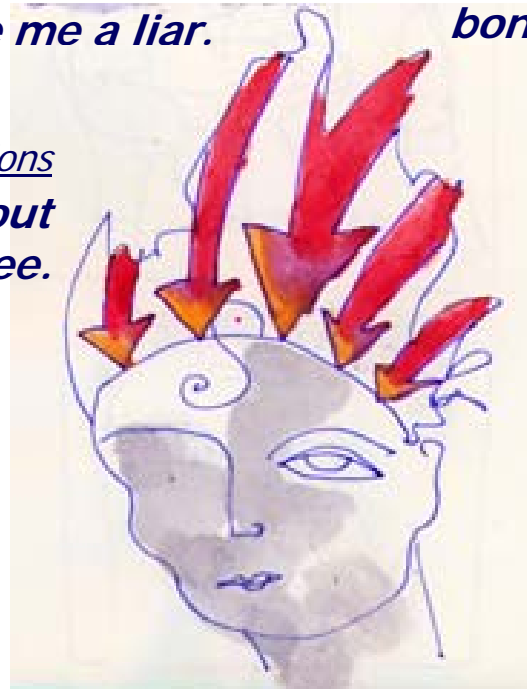
That team earned a bonus, not a layoff.

Perceptions

You can't be honest about what you think or see.

Character

I became a very competitive person.



Sense of purpose & pride

They don't really believe what they're saying.

Image courtesy of Mark Wagner <http://www.heartsandbones.com>



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Poll

- **Where would it be easiest to compromise in your work?**
 - Your word – speaking the truth
 - Perceptions – keeping your own perspective
 - Relationships – meeting obligations & promises
 - Sense of purpose – pride in doing worthwhile work
 - Character/style – being the person you want to be
- **How intense is the pressure to compromise?**
 - Scale of 1-5 (five is highest)



Cognitive Dissonance

- ☛ The state of tension that occurs whenever a person holds...
 - Two cognitions (ideas, attitudes, beliefs, opinions)
 - That are psychologically inconsistent*



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Do I have to sell my soul?

"I got 'sucked in'. There was a time at my last employer when I was 'hooked'.

"You always wonder if maybe you've made a deal with the devil."

Devil's Bargain:

Trading whatever is most sacred
For worldly gain,
Wittingly or unwittingly,
In a way that we ultimately regret.



Question:

- ☛ Is there a way to fulfill our desire for success, security, and challenge...
 - While keeping our deepest values intact
 - And still being fully honest with ourselves?

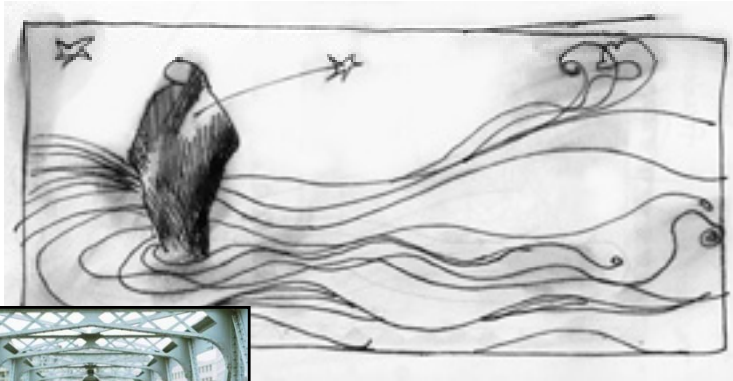


What most of us do...

Strategy	Focus	Dilemmas
Play to Win	☛ Go ahead, make a deal. Defer what really matters, until you get "yours".	☛ Depth of compromise. "Am I a good guy?" Miss out on life.
Play to Live	☛ Make a deal, but keep something off-limits. Compartmentalize work/life.	☛ Stress of the split. Depth of compromise when at work.
Play for the "Good Guys"	☛ Make a deal, but with an organization you can believe in. Help them "win".	☛ Greater disappointment. Or, forced to choose between "winning" & what matters.
Leave	☛ Check out. Go make pottery somewhere.	☛ Resources, respect, impact.



Playing a Bigger Game



*None of this can
be meaningless.*

More altruistic AND more realistic

- Facing the realities of the situation
- Committing independently to a purpose
- Using all available degrees of freedom
- While sustaining yourself

Image courtesy of Mark Wagner <http://www.heartsandbones.com>



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Four Elements

☛ Face the dissonance

- Question the deal (threats/rewards)
- Make your own connections

☛ Write your own contract

- Choose what you're serving
- Needs, non-negotiables, how you'll keep score

☛ Build your strength

- Teammates, new allies, family
- Skills for staying power, influence, both/and solutions
- True needs & what is "enough"

☛ Set triggers for re-evaluating

- When terms change, when learn something new



Stories



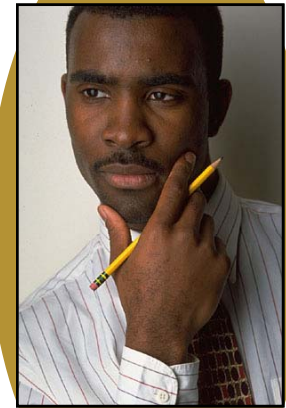
I put my badge on the table.



None of this can be meaningless.



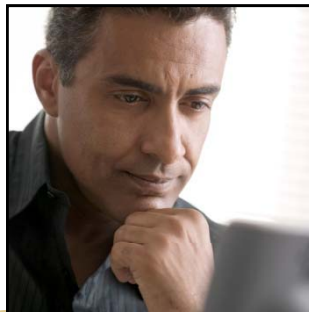
I've only quit on moral grounds twice.



How do I show the opportunity?



This is practice for democracy.



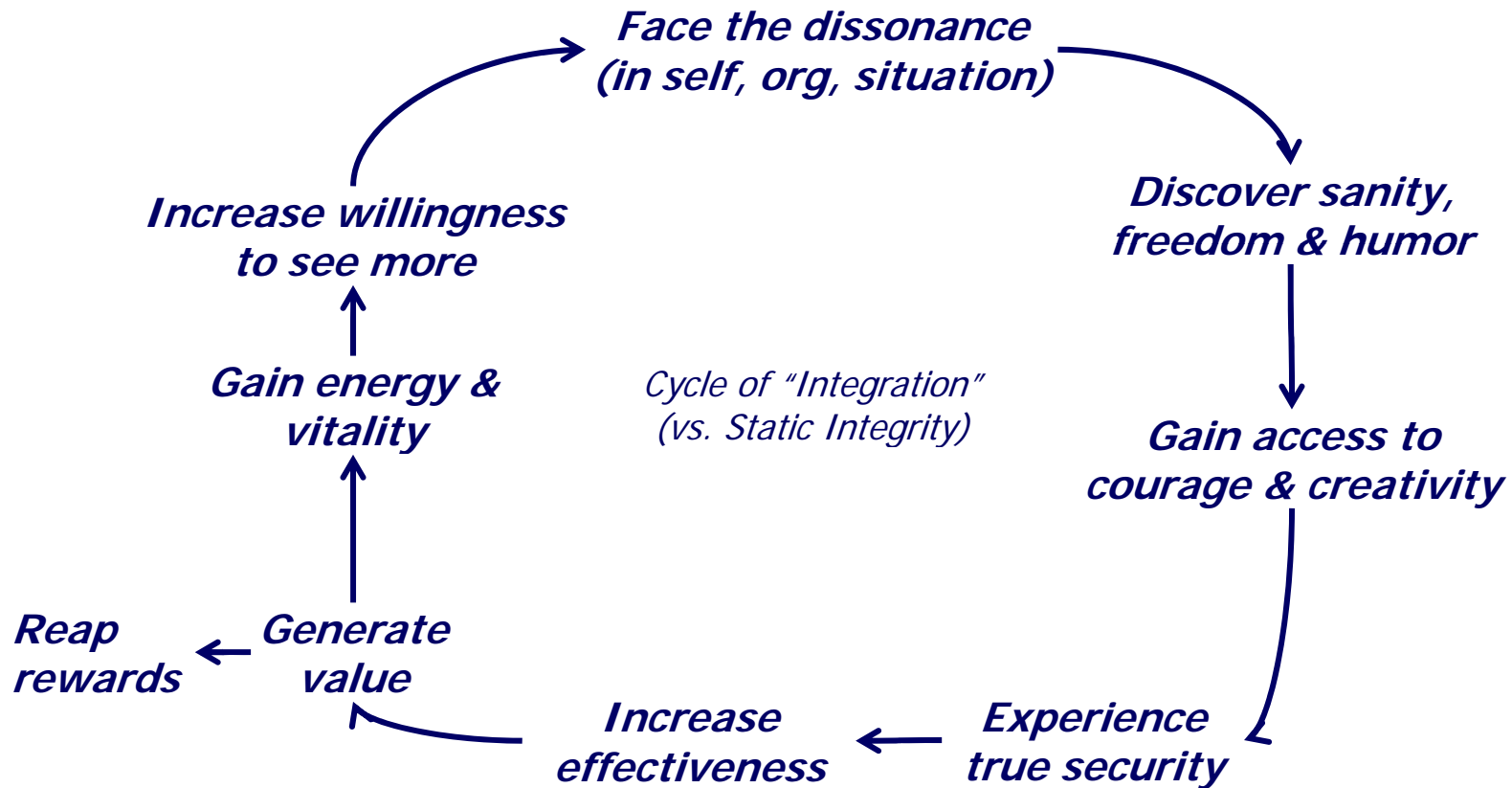
Well, I guess I'm about to get fired.



"But, you're the ringleader, boss."



Reinforcing Cycle



Questions

Whatever you would like to discuss, and perhaps:

- **What drew you to this topic today?**
- **Do you have a sense of your bigger game?**
 - What has to be resolved for you to pursue it?



*Working Title: "Winning the Devil's Bargain"
Or, "Did I Just Sell My Soul?: Sustaining
Purpose & Integrity in Corporate Life"
-- Expected mid-2009*

Further Resources

- WorkLore <http://www.worklore.com>
 - Blog: <http://devilsbargain.wordpress.com/>
- Strategy + Business
 - "Winning the Devil's Bargain", by Elizabeth Doty
When the business world compromises an individual's values, courage and climate can make all the difference.
<http://www.strategy-business.com/press/article/07101?pg=all>
 - Slides and Recording: A recording of this event and a PDF of the presentation slides will be posted at: <http://www.strategy-business.com/webinars/archive>
- Related Books & Articles
 - "Corporate Integrity" – Marvin Brown
 - "Questions of Character" – Joe Badaracco
 - "Crossing the Unknown Sea" – David Whyte
 - "The Courageous Follower" – Ira Chaleff
 - "The Empowered Manager" – Peter Block
 - "7 Life Lessons from Chaos" – Peat & Briggs
 - "The Dance of Change" – Peter Senge et al
 - "Who Really Matters" – Art Kleiner
 - "Seeing Systems" – Barry Oshry

