IDENTIFYING AN ETHICAL PROBLEM

PHI-204-2277-Ethics and Values-12/2015

Dec. 28, 2015

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**Personal Dilemma**

Recently, I encountered a personal dilemma when a friend of mine told me the following story; "I decided to take my family for a holiday at the beach. My daughter is eight years old and is a very close friend of my niece who is of the same age. My daughter pleaded that we let the niece accompany us. Since the two families are very close and for the sake of my daughter, I accepted to for I never saw any problem with the case.

After we had arrived at our holiday destination, we packed our car outside the house that we were to stay and which was located on the beach. The two girls requested to go swimming, but I declined and told them they can only swim after we have unpacked the car and changed in the house. However, I told the girls that meaning while they can only play within the compound. The two girls ran and started playing with sand just in front of the beach. Suddenly, I heard screams from the direction of the beach and it sounded like the girls.

I ran towards the direction that the screams were coming from and realized that it was the girls. They failed to listen to me and went ahead to the beach to swim. A strong wind had caught the girls, and now they were stuck in the rough water. The young girls were struggling especially my niece who was not a good swimmer like my daughter. I swim very first, but when I reached them, I realized I could not take both the girls to the shore alone at the same time.

I got faced with a very tough decision on which girl to rescue first. I was able to rescue both the girls but only one at a time. I looked at the two girls and realized that if I take my daughter to the shore first, there was no chance that I will find my niece who was struggling to hold her head above the water serving.

My daughter was also struggling, but she was a bit stronger. I estimated that if I take my niece to the show first, there was a fifty percent chance that she will continue to float on the water until I returned to her. I simply was not aware of the time she would be able to hold persevere. "

**After hearing your explanation, does he or she understand what the dilemma is?**

After I had explained to my friend, he answered that that was a tough decision to make. He said it was a matter of life and death that involved very crucial elements. My friend understood what the dilemma was as he said that the dilemma lay in two things. First, I had planned to save my daughter and by bad lack lose the niece, it could be a burden to explain the case to the parents of the young girl. If I decided to rescue that niece and, unfortunately, lose my daughter, it could be a damn sad moment to me. My friend said that the dilemma lay on the consequences of the decisions I was to make.

**Does he or she feel that you presented the dilemma in a non-prejudicial way (leaving bias out of your account)?**

My friend said that I was precise in the presentation of the dilemma. The choice of words that I had used was not offending anyone and the content of the text that carried the dilemma was straight to the point. He also said that during the presentation of the dilemma, I was not biased since I did not show any element of favoring my daughter.

**What questions, if any, does this person have? Is additional information that you didn't provide needed to make sense of the problem?**

After discussing the case with my friend, these are the questions that he asked; how did you get the girl out of the water? Did anything bad happen to the girls? How did the holiday continue? I told my friend that I decided to take my niece to the shore first. Fortunately, as I was almost halfway to the shore with the niece, another man appeared on the shore and saw the other girl struggling with heavy waters. Without inquiries, he dipped in the water and got hold of my daughter and brought her to the shore. I also told her that nothing bad happened to the girls although they were exhausted by the efforts they made to fight with water. After the incident, I said that I decided to terminate the holiday for it had turned sour on its onset. The problem presentation was in an efficient manner such that no additional information was necessary to bring sense to the problem.

**Professional Dilemma**

Recently, I faced a professional dilemma. I worked as an accountant in an organization where my boss had trusted me very much for my integrity in carrying out my duties. I was in my office carrying on my duties as usual when my boss entered my office. The event of my boss coming into my office was not usual because anytime he wanted to discuss anything with me; he would invite me to his office.

I was not surprised because I knew that I had created a good rapport with him. After a small discussion, my boss told me that he wanted me to sign gives him a big amount of money according to my assessment and experience with the firm. Because I was not aware of any bad motive, I told him that it was not a problem, and I was to process the transaction in the next two days.

My boss said that the transaction was to be between me and him, and it was also not going to follow the due process of the company. I did not expect such word from my boss, and I asked for clarification and as he repeated the word the second time, he seemed more serious. I tried to talk to the boss but this time, he walked out leaving me with the words that I had twenty-four hours to make the decision and reported back to him. He also added that the plan he had would not get stopped as he left my office.

**After hearing your explanation, does he or she understand what the dilemma is?**

After explaining my story, my friend understood the dilemma in my story. The reason I can tell that my friend understood the dilemma after I explained to him is because of the reaction and the questions that followed. My friend asked me straight away how I will handle the case since the boss has the authority to fire me and replace me with another person who will help him to execute his ill motives. My friend also said that it was very tricky because the boss might be trying to test my integrity with that challenging task.

**Does he or she feel that you presented the dilemma in a non-prejudicial way (leaving bias out of your account)?**

My friend feels that the presentation of my dilemma is non-prejudicial because of the presentation method that I have used and the word. The dilemma also does not show any contempt or hatred between me and my boss as it only comes in between a moment of friendship and understanding and me. My friend says that he did not expect such a thing to happen between two people who have been getting along well. The above words from my friend prove that he has not felt that the presentation of my dilemma to be prejudicial.

**What questions, if any, does this person have? Is additional information needed that you didn't provide to make sense of the problem?**

The following are the questions that my friend had for me after I explained my case; he asked me how I will deal with the issue at hand, my friend also asked me whether the same thing has ever happened to other accountants in the history of the company. Lastly asked me what I think might be the intention of the boss towards such a motive. Very little information in addition to the offered information was needed for my friend to understand the dilemma because my friend is conversant with the industry that I was working.

The above discussed are two types of dilemmas, personal dilemma, and professional dilemma. The dilemmas are all based on making decisions that might bring a lot of consequences. The personal dilemma involves matters of life and death; a wrong decision will lead to the death of one girl. The second dilemma, the professional dilemma involves consequences like losing a job or compromising the professional ethics.