

# Ease and Do<sup>©</sup>

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## **The Path of Least Resistance**

**Great for electricity, but for business?**

Whether you hail from the Commonwealth of Massachusetts or not, you are probably familiar with our stance on same-sex marriage. You may not however, have heard of the vote in the legislature to put this matter back on the public ballot. This past summer one of our state representatives created a few headlines when he reversed his position in the eleventh hour and voted against bringing this topic back to the court of public opinion.

His original vote was genuine; his change of heart was attributed to his evolving clarity. After taking a long hard look at himself, the people around him and the potential impact of the vote, he concluded he had no choice but to vote against returning the matter to the ballot. What followed was an abundance of support and a fair amount of derision. What remains certain is this- this leader did not let the perceived consequences of his decision sway his conviction.

The world in which we live and conduct business is a very busy, ever-changing place. Survival depends upon our ability to remain on our feet, sense the pulse of the marketplace and respond accordingly; in short we must change with the tide or be swept away by it. It's common sense, right?

Of course it is but... can you afford to do so at the expense of your inherent values and core beliefs? For me the answer is a resounding NO! Sure, it's easiest to take the path of least resistance; you know, 'go with the flow'. If you happen to be aligned with the masses then by all means follow them. But what happens when the prevailing currents simply don't feel right for you? For me, there are three obvious choices- acquiesce, compromise or innovate and inspire.

### ***Acquiesce-***

With this option you choose to let the masses be your guide even though what they are promoting feels wrong. Fundamentally, we all want to be accepted; we all want to fit in. Acquiescence supports those needs but at the same time it undermines our self-confidence and ignores our values and beliefs.

To acquiesce puts your' personal credibility at stake; maybe nobody else will know, but you will. Is it really worth it to diminish "you" in this way? Over the long-term this strategy may move you to a place of complacency and inadequacy. Can you think of any legitimate long-term benefits to this strategy?

*"If you set out to be liked,  
you would be prepared to compromise on anything at any time,  
and you would achieve nothing."  
-Margaret Thatcher-*

### ***Compromise-***

There are times when settling for compromise is a wise course of action. For example when agreeing with an ego-inflated superior despite your' beliefs to the contrary. It's sort of like choosing your battles carefully.

You could elect to express your contrary views but you recognize that the potential consequences far outweigh the benefits. Unlike acquiescence though, you do this with full recognition of your position and you recognize it for what it is- a short term solution designed to hold you over until a more suitable opportunity arises.

Compromise is designed to retain a sense of flow and continuity. While you are not actively rocking the boat you remain true to your convictions and course.

*"The opposite of courage in our society is not cowardice,  
it is conformity."  
-Rollo May-*

*"You can't inspire people if you are going to be uninspiring."  
-Robert Reich-*

### ***Innovate and Inspire-***

This option takes courage but it is also the option with the greatest return; it happens to be the path our State Representative chose. I call this the innovate and inspire option because you choose to separate yourself from the masses. You draw your' inspiration from your' core beliefs and inherent values as well as your' intellect and experience. In short, you create the solution rather than borrow it from someone else.

The innovate and inspire course can be daunting. Your' actions may be perceived as unpopular, maybe even controversial. But you're not looking to win a popularity contest; you're doing what you believe is the right thing and you know that this is what inspires you. And don't forget, your' courage and innovation have the power to inspire others as well. Moreover, this option preserves and bolsters your' integrity and self-confidence. This option produces sustainable benefits, both short and long-term.

The next time you are faced with a challenging situation look both ways before you step in. Hear what the experts have to say but don't forget to look inside as well. The choice is yours'. Choose wisely!