

<p style="" class="MsoNormal">Kamran Rizvi, Navitus
October, 2013</p><p style="" class="MsoNormal"> </p><p style=""></p><p style=""></p><p style=""></p><p></p><p></p><p></p><p></p><p class="MsoNormal"></p><p class="MsoNormal"></p><p>The idea of ♦Not for sale♦ implies having an unswerving commitment to codes of conduct one believes in wholeheartedly.

Is being priceless a practical proposition for managers in this day and age? In my view, it is. The idea of ♦Not for sale♦ implies having an unswerving commitment to codes of conduct one believes in wholeheartedly. It is crucial if one is to live a life of dignity that inspires. History is replete with shining examples. For example, Prophet Muhammad♦s (PBUH) life is a beacon for humanity.

Ethics, principles, morality, beliefs and indeed, values have much to do with concepts enshrined in corporate governance and corporate social responsibility. Yet, high-sounding words like integrity, commitment and respect are often greeted with lip service in some corporations, families and social circles. Consequently, enduring principles get sacrificed in the face of expedience, when organizations resort to pursuing desired results at any cost. </p><p>Barry Holstun[1], an American essayist asserts, <i>♦How is one to live a moral and compassionate existence when one is fully aware of the blood, the horror inherent in life, when one finds darkness not only in one's culture but within oneself? If there is a stage at which an individual life becomes truly adult, it must be when one grasps the irony in its unfolding and accepts responsibility for a life lived in the midst of such paradox. One must live in the middle of contradictions, because if all contradiction were eliminated at once, life would collapse. There are simply no [obvious] answers to some of the great pressing questions. You continue to live them out, making your life a worthy expression of leaning into the light.♦</i>

Wouldn♦t it be nice if we were free from all kinds of heart-wrenching dilemmas? Imagine a life where what is right was easily distinguishable from wrong; it was easy to do what we believed to be right; there were no ♦grey♦ zones to navigate through. Alas, this is not the case. Living by integrity is a fine balancing act.

You need not look too far to know what you consider important in life. Your everyday decisions reveal your values. No matter what you claim, it♦s ultimately the thoughts you entertain and actions you take that reflect what you believe in and what you truly value.

Dilemmas are usually ethical in nature, and are largely self-created. This is not to say that you will never face ethical challenges in your surroundings. You will! So how do you successfully navigate your way through the fog of complexities and contradictions? If you are looking for easy

answers, I am afraid, I don't know of any.

We can gain practical insights on how to become priceless by living a life of integrity from a variety of sources. Hollywood is one! There are films which depict rich human drama in a variety of contexts that have inspired and enlightened many. In this article, I recommend a few that will help you reflect on some of life's challenges.

Wall Street (1987)

This is a beautifully woven tale of human strength and weakness. The movie is set in the 80s - the yuppie phase in the financial industry. This was the time when young urban professionals did their best to make as much money as they could as fast as possible, and sometimes through illegal means like insider trading. The idea of retiring at 40 seemed attractive, but those same people with such thoughts are still working today. A number of them made their money and ended up going into a lifetime of debt because they spent their earnings quicker than they could make it. Ultimately the 1980s was good while it lasted, but boom times like these don't last forever. This becomes painfully clear as Charlie Sheen's character becomes a warning to all those who believe they can out-think and manipulate a strained economic system.

Wall Street is about those for whom material wealth takes precedence over ethics, and those for whom it does not. Moreover, it is the story of one who is struggling to decide which of the two he is: greedy or ethical. In this movie, Bud Fox is a young and ambitious stock broker who wishes to excel in life. His father, Carl, provides a strong moral foundation that values human life and well-being over the profit motive. However, Bud's mentor, Gordon Gekko, is a ruthless and legendary Wall Street player whose values seriously conflict with those of Bud's father. Caught in the middle is Bud, who pitches his father's airline to Gekko with the intentions of saving the company while everyone gets rich in the process. This business deal sets the stage for the conflict of interests Bud faces. He has to decide whether in the end it is his morally upright father or his avaricious mentor he would most like to become.

Finally, we learn how, when Fox discovers Gekko has double-crossed him and intends on shutting down his father's business, he uses everything Gekko has taught him to turn the tables around thus being authentic to who he really is.

Becket (1964)

In this film, King Henry II of England in the 12th century AD has trouble with the Church. When the Archbishop of Canterbury dies, he has a brilliant idea. Rather than appoint another pious cleric loyal to Rome and the Church, he decides to engage his old best friend, Thomas Becket, technically a deacon of the church, to the post, so that he can control the church. Becket begs for him not to. This is because he (Becket) does not want to risk losing his integrity and cares about his soul more than his country. If he's supposed to do something, he will, without submitting to corrupting influences.

Soon, Henry II and Becket are at odds with each other over church business and become bitter enemies. Students of history know that the king ultimately had Becket murdered. Becket paid a high price for being priceless. But his legacy lives

Glengarry Glen Ross (1992)

Those who must rely on their wits to make a living are often prone to desperate measures born of the insecurities inherent in their field of endeavor - a commission salesman, for example; or in this instance, a real estate salesman. To what lengths do people go when under increasing pressure to deliver on the numbers?

Writer/director David Mamet goes to great lengths to answer this question in this film, an unflinching, hard-edged movie that examines the motivations of those who would readily and eagerly separate you from your hard earned income, and whose least concern, apparently, is the value of their product or that parcel of land, which according to them is situated in just the right place for you. If you've ever trusted a big-ticket salesman in your life, after visiting Mamet's film, you'll be more careful.

In this story, the Company wants results; the hierarchy

expects their salesmen to produce, and they don't care how. Towards that end, a 'motivator' (Alec Baldwin), has been dispatched to this particular office to put things into perspective for those who would sell their wares. The deal is that at the end of a given period of time, the salesman whose name is at the top of the tote board will get a new car; those who fail to meet their quota are out the door. End of story. They will, however, be supplied with 'leads,' but from the 'old' file. The new, 'fresh' leads are reserved for those who first prove themselves worthy by doing whatever it takes to make the sale, without qualm, reservation or conscience.

This film clearly provides important pointers to corporate leaders on how not to create a working environment that results in employees leading lives of quiet desperation.

Judgment at Nuremberg (1961)

This film is of enduring significance as it highlights the age-old dilemma of whether to follow orders of ones superior or to live by ones all-abiding conscience. It is so much more telling today than it might have been back in 1961, particularly in light of the post-9/11 world we live in today and the ensuing infringement of civil liberties that are being experienced by citizens in many countries.

Even though this movie is a fictional drama about actual history, it tells a compelling story while asking searching questions we can ask of society.

Stanley Kramer (director) successfully communicates how the Nazi's used every facet of civilization, no matter how minute, to facilitate the extermination of their enemies, to inculcate it as an ordinary part of life. That was why judges were chosen to portray the issue of "obeying orders" versus "human decency." Herr Rolf is "forced" to defend the worst criminals imaginable, and yet his very defense and the principles behind it are abused in the process, used as a weapon against the very law they represent. Thus did the Nazis prevail with the willing acquiescence of the German people, and the abominable disregard of the rest of the world.
</p><p>Crimson Tide (1995)

A more recent film, it contains intense moments: two great actors, eye-to-eye, portraying characters absolutely certain of their actions, absolutely convinced that the other's course of action will lead to sure disaster. A submarine commander (Gene Hackman) and his second-in-command (Denzel Washington) are both shouting at the same time, each ordering the next ranking officer (Dzundza) to arrest the other. Washington believes, with good reason that Hackman is unfit to command because he is disregarding naval procedures. Hackman believes, with good reason, that Washington is disobeying an order and instigating a mutiny. A possible nuclear exchange and the deaths of billions hang in the balance. Dzundza knows that he must make the correct decision, regardless of his like or dislike of each of his superiors.
</p><p>Conflict in the story is between very different Naval Officer types. The captain is the old Cold Warrior (don't think about the order, your job is to just do it) and the EO is the "new breed" (educated and taught to think about the actions they are asked to undertake). Both respond very differently to the same order. Paradigms vary.
</p><p>Commands come through for the captain to detonate the weapons from their ship, but then another message after that one which is incomplete splits the entire crew. The captain thinks it is time to take control with aggression while the EO believes that this is way too important to act without knowing everything there is to know. Both are convinced that they are in the right. The captain fears that any delay in launching will leave America vulnerable

to a first strike by the rebels. The EO fears that launching the ship's missiles without waiting for clarification of the second message will lead to full-scale nuclear war. There is, however, little doubt that the film's sympathies lie with the EO. **Conclusion** We wouldn't need leaders and managers if life and work were a series of simple choices. There are dilemmas that confront us routinely. How we deal with them determines our personal and professional trajectory. Adherence to a set of principles and core values guide us through tough negotiations in a variety of situations. One may lose in the short-run, but the gain is assured, if we remain steadfast, secure in the knowledge that good will prevail. From the examples above, it becomes clear how important it is for us to carefully analyze each conflicting situation we face, before hastily taking steps we live to regret. Such analysis involves consideration of alternatives open to us, and their potential impact on all those involved in the story. Trying to balance competing interests and demands is vital. Flexibility, patience and consultation are essential while staying firm on principles one holds dear. If you are not priceless, you are worthless. Think.

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none;">ecological concerns.</p> <p style="text-align: center;" mce_style="text-align: center;"> -----</p></div></div><p>
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 <i style="" mce_style="mso-bidi-font-style:normal">No matter how big your organization gets, continue to empower your people at every level to deliver. Only this way will size lead to advantage.</i><i style="" mce_style="mso-bidi-font-style:normal"> </i> <p class="MsoNormal" style="">It is always useful to explore the history of any company to understand how they got to being what they are today. Corporate success usually follows some combination of visionary entrepreneurship and luck. When companies acquire early successes and achieve a dominant position in some market or markets they become profitable and usually follow a steep growth trajectory in their early years. </p> <p class="MsoNormal" style=""></p> <p class="MsoNormal" style="">With the passage of time, however, pressures on managers come mostly from inside the firm. Building and staffing a bureaucracy that can cope with growth is the biggest challenge. External constituencies are neglected. The firm needs, hires, and promotes managers, not leaders, to cope with the growing bureaucracy. Top managers allow these people, not leaders, to become executives. Sometimes top management actively prevents leaders from becoming senior executives. Managers begin to believe that they are the best and that idiosyncratic traditions are superior. They tend to become increasingly arrogant and aloof. The problem is compounded when top management does nothing to stop this trend and often ends up exacerbating it. </p> <p class="MsoNormal" style=""> </p> <p class="MsoNormal" style="">A strong, insular and conceited culture develops. Managers fail to acknowledge the value of customers and other

key stakeholders. They behave in an inward-looking, sometimes political fashion and fail to acknowledge the value of leadership and the talent available at all levels that can provide it. They tend to stifle initiative and innovation. They behave in centralized and authoritative ways.

Consequently, as organizations grow, whether in terms of sales, number of employees, range of products and services, market share, or whatever, they start to lose the advantage they once had. According to John Naisbitt in the book *Rethinking the Future* it is the small companies who are creating the global economy, not the Fortune 500. And these days a small company can be as small as one person. In his book, *Megatrends 2000* he gave the example of his neighbors Linde and Lito who have a publishing company called Western Eye Press. He continues, it's just two people and they publish wonderful photographic and guide books. They create them on Macintosh computers in their basement in Telluride. They print out the camera-ready pages on their own high resolution laser printer. Then they FedExed these pages to Seoul, South Korea, and the printer there manufactures their books and ships them to distributors all over the world. Western Eye Press is a key player in the global economy and its just two people on this little mountain perch in Colorado.

Large corporations and global conglomerates, if not careful, end up becoming highly bureaucratic, over-managed, rule-driven and inflexible by virtue of their size. In this day and age of cyberspace and nanotechnology, fetish with size of a business can become an impediment. This is particularly true for organizations that have grown significantly in scale in terms of revenues and market share. Organizations like Citibank have lost touch with their core constituents. It may be a major player with a strong brand image, but customers interacting with its frontline employees are often disappointed by their state of helplessness in resolving routine problems. This could be on account of slavish adherence to archaic procedures. Often, individual contributors in big companies don't take the initiative needed to listen and understand customer requirements with the intent to ultimately delighting them. There is a lot to be said for systems and processes, but if they are not customer oriented and responsive, the game is as good as lost.

Quality can now be replicated anywhere in the world. China is leading the way in this respect. With the falling of trade barriers and dropping of quotas, the Chinese have taken their global market share in textiles from 16% to over 50% in less than a decade. In recent years, the Pakistan market has been flooded with Chinese products (mostly electronic, light engineering) that are low priced and in much demand.

We no longer live in a world of big mainframes. We live in a world where the real power is large networks a lot of individuals connected together Facebook & Twitter are pointing the way. A network does not have any headquarters. Chinese excel in this field and have spread their global business through this means. Naisbitt cites Asea Brown Boveri (ABB) as a great example of a huge company that thrives and grows through networking. He quotes Percy Barnevik (Former CEO at ABB) as having said, We grow all the time, but we also shrink all the time. As the network gets larger, the nodes get smaller.

small;"> So, no matter how big your company gets, continue to excel by empowering your people at every level to deliver. Building agility and responsiveness is the key.</div>