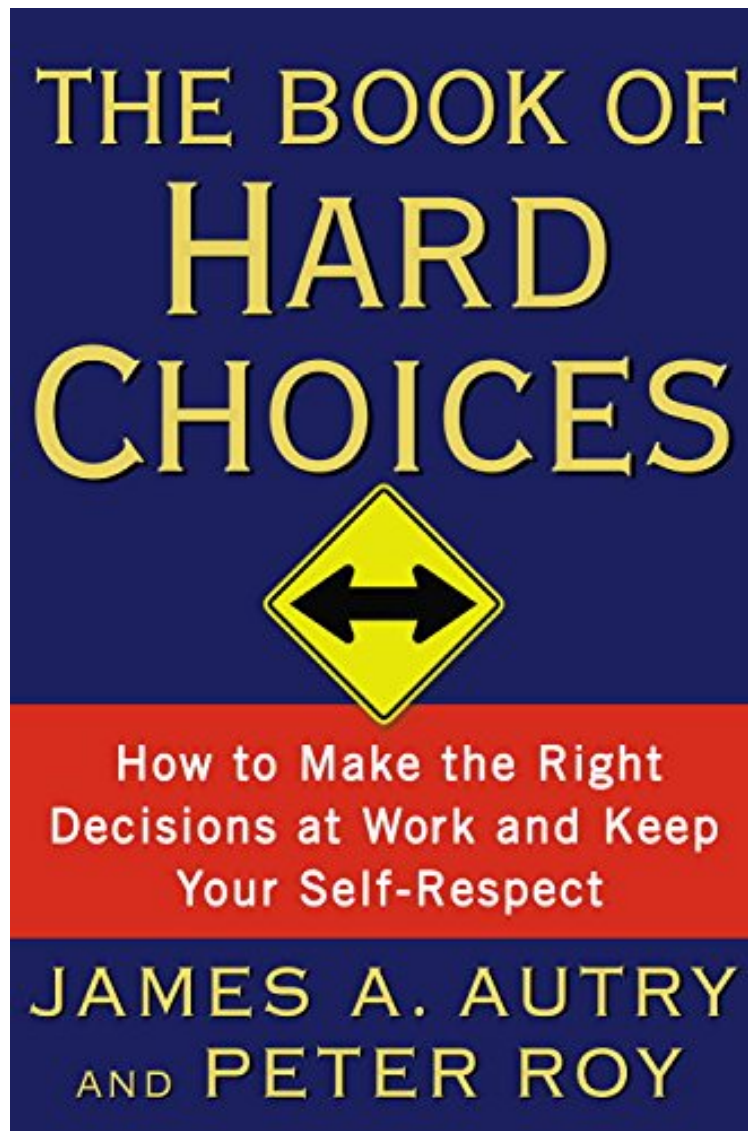


(Mobile library) The Book of Hard Choices: How to Make the Right Decisions at Work and Keep Your Self-Respect

The Book of Hard Choices: How to Make the Right Decisions at Work and Keep Your Self-Respect

James A. Autry, Peter Roy
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James A. Autry, Peter Roy : The Book of Hard Choices: How to Make the Right Decisions at Work and Keep Your Self-Respect before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The Book of Hard Choices: How to Make the Right Decisions at Work and Keep Your Self-Respect:

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. A hard choice is where all of the potential solutions have some negative drawbacks. By E. D. Hance There are lots of hard choices. They just keep coming up in different forms over

and over. I liked the thoughtful explanation of the procedure the author uses to handle a hard choice. Sometimes there is no perfect, right choice. People will complain no matter what you do. You may suffer financial setbacks even if you do the right thing. You are between a rock and a hard spot. 0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Great insights on the tough decisions in business! By Charmaine E. Hammond I just finished reading *The Book of Hard Choices*, and appreciated the many examples of the tough decisions in business. Autry talked about the four types of clients: 1) Reasonable and fair clients 2) Unpredictable and troublesome clients 3) Difficult and Demanding clients 4) Bullies We have all probably dealt with several types of these clients. Autry discusses the challenging dilemma of dealing with these situations involving the more difficult clients, while maintaining your integrity and self respect. He also talks about the importance of never being driven by fear in terms of making important decisions and to remember the long term impact of what we say and what we do. I very much enjoyed the author's comments about living in the "learning zone" instead of the comfort zone. This was an insight that I think is most important for business. Complacency can smother a team's morale, productivity and success. Autry's comments that life experiences and how you cope, shape you are so true. It also provides hope that we can change the outcomes of situations by how we respond, and who we are being in those moments. Finally, his examples of ensuring ground rules before agreeing to confidentiality were so well written, and so important. As a trainer, facilitator and former mediator, I witnessed firsthand the necessity for ground rules around communication and confidentiality. A good read Charmaine Hammond Hammond International [...] 0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. The first-person accounts are the best part. By share The "lessons to be learned" summaries at the end of each chapter trivialize the stories. The whole point of these accounts is that these were difficult choices to make, not always with happily-ever-after endings, and not always choices that everyone in good faith would agree with. But this book contains more complex real-life situations than I've ever seen in any other leadership book, and it conveys how each person made his or her choices and the conflicts they felt.

There are a thousand acts of duplicity and dishonesty every day, some large and some small, some of which undoubtedly take place in your workplace. The question for all of us is, "Are we going to resist or just play along the path of least resistance?" The first hard choice a person of integrity must make is to choose to live, both personally and professionally, in a way that embodies integrity. The power of this book comes from the real-life, in-the-workplace experiences that these executives have been so generously willing to share. None had easy choices, but that's the point: Integrity is not about easy choices, it's about the courage to make the right choices. From *The Book of Hard Choices* All of us like to think that, in any given situation, we can do it with integrity and do the right thing. But what happens when we get to work each morning? Do the same rules we follow in our personal lives apply to our work lives? The lines between right and wrong become blurred when we must weigh our obligations to our employer against our own ideas about what is right and wrong. Should altruism trump profit, even to the detriment of the organization? When should you step in to protect an employee and when should the employee be left to take the heat? If the CEO is up to some unethical accounting, should you always risk your job—and the company's reputation—to sound the alarm? These are the hard choices, the dilemmas that put your integrity to the test and require you to look beyond organizational policy and industry precedents to find an answer that reflects your personal sense of justice. *The Book of Hard Choices* goes to the heart of these difficult decisions. James Autry and Peter Roy, experienced executives themselves, interviewed numerous leaders about the tough decisions they've made on the job. They spoke with people like former Starbucks president Howard Behar, Iowa Cubs owner Michael Gartner, and Governor Tom Vilsack of Iowa as well as entrepreneurs, military officials, members of the clergy, and a whole host of leaders. The authors dig into the thinking process these people went through, as well as the emotional strain, the self-doubt, and the fear of a wrong decision's impact on their business, family, or coworkers. Not everyone in this book made the right choice, but all of them were forced to examine their values and make decisions in complicated circumstances. The result is hard-won wisdom on how to navigate the ethical gray-areas of work life—from daily challenges to possible career ending choices—and make the best possible decisions in the most difficult situations.

The stories in *The Book of Hard Choices* are more than case studies—they are intensely dramatic and personal, surprising and deeply moving. They implicitly challenge the reader to ask, "What would I have done?" This book should be required reading for any professional ethics course—and any professional. — Betty Sue Flowers, Ph.D., business consultant and executive director of the LBJ Presidential Library Two seasoned, highly successful business leaders provide invaluable reflections for anyone who aspires to a life and career of integrity and self-respect. — Ken Dychtwald, Ph.D., bestselling author of *Age Wave*, *Age Power*, *The Power Years* and *Workforce Crisis*, and founder and CEO of *Age Wave* These real life stories steer right into the practice of making the difficult choices necessary for principled participation and leadership in the workplace. Thoughtful, helpful, and ultimately invigorating. — Walter Robb, co-president, Whole Foods Market This is the first book I would send to

anyone interested in how leadership is done and how tough choices are made in any enterprise.”—Warren Bennis, Ph.D., Distinguished Professor of Management at the University of Southern California and author of *On Becoming a Leader*

About the Author: JAMES A. AUTRY was president of the magazine group of the Meredith Corporation and is the author of eight books, including *The Servant Leader*, *Real Power*, and the bestselling *Love and Profit*. He is currently a consultant with FORTUNE 500 corporations and a popular lecturer on leadership and business ethics. He lives in Des Moines, Iowa.

PETER ROY is the former president of Whole Foods Market, which Fortune magazine first named one of the “Top Companies to Work For” during his tenure. He is currently a director of Avalon Natural Products, Traditional Medicinals and the Naked Juice Company as well as a trustee of the National Outdoor Leadership School. He lives on Pawleys’ Island, South Carolina.

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ONE LOOK THE OTHER WAY OR FACE DOWN THE CORRUPTION?

Is it true that nice guys always finish last? IN 1972, DAVID Stein was enjoying a terrific career on the East Coast with the largest home-building company in the world. He was so successful at it, in fact, that he wasn't sure whether he was good or just lucky, so he decided to move to California. “I liked the company I was with,” David explains, “but frankly, it was the largest home builder in the world because it built houses the way Ford builds cars, mass-produced. I wanted to do something more creative. I chose California because it was, and probably still is, the leader in terms of planned community development and architectural and interior design.” He went to work as a project manager for ACDI, one of the largest planned community developers in the country. Probably the company’s most important development was in Laguna Beach, a seven-thousand-acre planned community that stretched from the Pacific Ocean to the interstate highway that connects Los Angeles and San Diego. The prospect of working in this area seemed like a dream job for David, but he quickly realized that all was not well. “Not only was the company not run the way my former company was,” he recalls, “but I felt there was real corruption within the company and it was very disheartening for me.” David’s concerns had to do with the process of getting projects approved. “It was clear that in order to get a project approved, it required political support, so the company’s overriding concern was getting the support of politicians and not of the community.” David wanted to manage good projects, but he found that at this company it was less important to manage good projects and more important to manage projects that could get political approval. “The way to do that was support the campaigns of politicians. And what made this corrupt in my opinion was that the decisions were not to be made on the basis of the projects’ merit but purely on political influence.” David made another uncomfortable discovery. ACDI had a terrible reputation in the community itself. “They used to say that ACDI is a four-letter word,” he laughs. “It was clear to me that my first priority as a project manager was to build bridges with the community.” David felt, not only as a matter of personal principle but also in the interest of the business, that a company should strive to be a good citizen of the communities in which it operates, and he personally intended to be a good citizen of the community. He could not choose to compromise either his personal or his business principles. He knew, however, that building bridges was not going to be easy. Before David arrived, the California legislature responded to concerns about development by passing the California Coastal Act, which established the California Coastal Commission to set up criteria for development. David explains ACDI’s response as the reason for community hostility toward the company: “ACDI had a huge property on the coast, so to beat the clock before the new law took effect, they started grading the property. They moved millions of yards of earth, and they did it in twenty-four hour shifts, bringing in big spotlights so they could work night and day. There was also a piece of property on the sea that was a very popular surf spot. They cut off public access to it. They just seemed to do pretty much everything they could to piss off the people in the community.” Even though I worked for the company, I came to feel that the bad reputation was deserved and that I should try to do something about it. “His bosses did not think it was necessary. The system was working for them because of the political influence they had garnered.

Here’s the process: First the project managers of the various companies presented their projects to a planning commission. Often, representatives of the community would oppose the projects before the commission. If the projects were then not approved by the commission, the companies were allowed to appeal this decision to the county board of supervisors, and, of course, if the companies had made the appropriate campaign contributions, they always won the appeal. “But,” David says, “there was more and more community resentment being built through these practices. It could not continue, and besides, I felt it was utterly corrupt to game the system in this way.” David began his own initiatives, meeting with community leaders and laying out his plans. They were suspicious. “First, I was with ACDI, which was bad enough, but there was also my own personal image problem. I came to one of the most conservative counties in the country, Orange County, with a George McGovern sticker on my car; I had long hair and a Fu Manchu mustache. The people I met with either had a flattop or a buzz cut. To say they were skeptical and suspicious is an understatement. But as I got to know them and convince them that I had the best interests of the community at heart, they put up with me. “I had a lot of problems because my bosses thought I was an idiot. They said, ‘This is not the way it’s done.’ I said yes it is, and eventually this is what will be our survival because the time will come when we’re going to have a lot of problems getting projects approved.” At about the same time that David was reaching out to the community, a wealthy construction company owner, Ralph Dietrick,

decided to run for the county board of supervisors. He invested a lot of his money in the campaign to unseat a longtime supervisor and was elected. He quickly moved to establish his power by donating money to other supervisors' campaigns and helping them get elected, the result of which was that Dietrick could always produce three votes, a majority, of the supervisors on any issue. "He became famous," David says, "for asking, 'Do you know how to count to three?'" During this time, David was not sure he would be able to remain with the company. But he did not want to give up on his goal of getting the community support that would convince the planning commission to approve the projects without having to appeal to a corrupt supervisor and his cronies. He almost lost his job when he accompanied his boss to a meeting with Dietrick, a meeting that in David's view was not necessary. "I was working on a project," David recalls, "where there was a property line that went straight through some hilltops, and really it didn't make any sense. It was an artificial line. We needed a road to the top of a hill, but putting the road on one side or the other of the property line would mean destroying the hilltops and doing tremendous grading damage. So I had worked out an agreement with the neighbor that we would trade some land back and forth because it really wasn't buildable land anyway. This way we could snake the road through and not do environmental damage. The deal was a bit complicated and I was proud of having pulled it off." But David's boss, the general manager, was not happy. "You can't do that," he said. When David asked why, the boss said, "That son of a bitch [the neighbor] screwed me ten years ago and I'm not doing anything that might help him." David was stunned. "But we can't do the road the other way," he said. "It will cost a lot of extra money and besides, it's wrong." The boss made him change the road. "I thought about quitting then and there," David says, "but it wasn't the most important thing in a very big project and while it aggravated me, I thought the overall project was more important than that one issue." David dutifully took the project to the planning commission, and of course it was not approved because of the road. Then came the appeal to the board of supervisors. David's boss insisted that David accompany him to a private meeting with Dietrick, who by that time had become chairman of the board of supervisors. "My boss wanted me to go because he needed me to explain the issue because he didn't fully understand it. All he knew is that he didn't want his old enemy to get the road worked out." Well, I bristled against it but I went to the meeting, where I sat silently somewhat like a petulant child. It was clear to everyone that I didn't want to be there. "This was to be the first time David got to witness the corruption firsthand. When his boss, Don, began to explain the situation, he stopped and said that David would explain it." So I told them the truth," David says. "I told them that the plan was justifiably appealed because the road should not go where Don wants it to go." His boss shouted at David, "That's not the issue," then turning to Dietrick, said, "I want that road there and that's it. I don't want to help this guy." Then Dietrick turned to one of his aides and a lobbyist who was in the room and asked, "Has Don bought a table to my dinner party?" Don said proudly, "Yes, I did." "Understand that this was a \$1,200 table," David says, "which is probably equivalent to \$10,000 in today's dollars. So I just kept my mouth shut." Then Dietrick looked at Don and at the lobbyist and said, "Boys, this looks like a two-dollar problem to me." At this point, David got up and left the meeting without saying anything. In the car with Don, he asked, "How could you do that? I did what you wanted me to do." "Yes," said Don, "and you didn't do it right." David responded, "No, Don, you..."