

ethikos Volume 34, Number 7. July 01, 2020 Can choices be this simple: Survival or status?

By Suzan D. McGinnis, JD, MLIS, and Jinger A. Gustafson, EdM

Suzan D. McGinnis (suzan@rethinkcomplianceco.com) is Senior Director, Advisory Services at Rethink Compliance in Westminster, CO, and **Jinger A. Gustafson** (jinger.gustafson@mnsu.edu) is Assistant Professor and Department Chair, Educational Leadership, Minnesota State University, Mankato, MN.

Are individuals forced into choices and/or do individuals make choices for a particular reason? As an ethics professional/practitioner, I believed the reports made regarding ethical concerns, challenges, and considerations were littered with the individuals making bad choices. I could read a case file and have a fairly good idea where the bad choice was made that led to the reason for the report. Individuals make thousands of choices every day. I have found that an organization's ethical culture, which can be different from overall culture, plays a critical role for employees.

Through the years, I have had the opportunity to go to several countries to train and educate on ethics. During one of my trips, I went to a developing country to train their leadership team on ethics, answer questions, provide guidance, and to put a face to my name. This experience shifted my thinking about how to effectively train, answer questions, provide guidance, and even how to introduce myself. Fundamental elements of what I had done for years and how I had approached employees, as well as reports, was not going to work in an assimilative culture. This was not familiar. And, it was not until a few days into the trip that I examined my own cognitive dissonance, because I now needed to assimilate to survive and maintain the status of my role.

This document is only available to subscribers. Please log in or purchase access.

[Purchase Login](#)