

# Parable of a sadhu

Experience, Human Nature



The Sadhu could have had a better chance of surviving this ordeal. It is hard to say whether what these men did was enough, because we do not know what happened to the Sadhu. But they certainly could have done more to help their fellow man. This story reminds me of the parable of the Good Samaritan. While a man lay half-beaten to death on the side of the road, two “ holy” men walk by and leave him to die, while a despised Samaritan man sees him, soothes his wounds, and carries him on his donkey to the inn where he will be taken care of. Buzz and his group could have been like this Samaritan and been more compassionate to this Sadhu.

As religious men I believe they had a responsibility to do so. Some might argue that since this was a once in a lifetime opportunity, they should not let anything get in the way of achieving this goal. Conversely, the chance to save a man’s life may also be a once in a lifetime opportunity, and it comes down to which consequences you want to live with for the rest of your life. Is it worse to never have made it to the village at the summit of the mountain or to have contributed to the death of a fellow man because of indifference on your part?

In these types of situations, there is hardly ever a clear cut “ right” choice. Because of this, many situations in the business world can be related to this dilemma. People in the business sector face moral dilemmas every day, some minor and some major. Whether it is telling your best friend and coworker that his girlfriend is cheating on him or shutting down a department of your company, leaving good people out of a job, because it is the right decision for the future of the company, these decisions must be made.

If these decisions are made behind strong ethical values, the decision will usually improve the future of the company. If these ethical values are embedded in the core of the company where all the employees have a chance to see and follow suit, the company will be able to fight through the tough times as a cohesive unit. If the company does not have this system of values, when the times get tough, the tough will cover their own behinds and run. If everyone could have agreed on a plan to help the Sadhu and followed it through, he most likely would have survived.

As it happened, we may never know what happened to the poor sadhu. My Role as executive director of Nepal Mountaineering Association (NMA) To perform a ethical role both from my heart as a human being as well as a professional executive director of Nepal Mountaineering Association (NMA) , I would firstly analyse the situation and then either individually and / or as a group do the following

## **Key Issues**

Who, if anyone, is responsible for taking care of the Sadhu? ? Will religion and culture play a role in the decision? ? This is a once in a lifetime opportunity for the climbers. Is the Sadhu's life more valuable than the experience? ? Will others resent Buzz if he makes an unfavorable choice?

## **Who is/should be the Decision Maker**

This seems like a straightforward question, but I believe the answer is not trivial. The decision maker could be the New Zealander who found the Sadhu and brought him to Buzz's group. I believe, however, that Buzz was the ultimate decision maker. Because he was the author, we were told the story

from his point-of-view; we were put into his mind and asked to judge his choice.

Therefore, as the leader of the group, Buzz's choice decided the fate of the Sadhu

## **Stakeholders**

Tier 1: The primary stakeholders are Buzz McCoy and the Sadhu. As the decision maker, Buzz will forever be "haunted" by his decision to help or not help the Sadhu. As for the Sadhu, he will certainly be affected by Buzz's decision to help him survive or leave him to fend for himself.

Tier 2: The secondary stakeholders are those on the mountain trail whose mountain experience will be affected by what Buzz decides.

Not only will Stephen and the 2 porters and Sherpas of their group be affected, the New Zealand, Swiss, and Japanese groups will be as well.

Tier 3: The third level stakeholders are the villagers of the mountain village and the family and friends of the Sadhu. The mountain villagers will be affected if Buzz decides to escort the Sadhu into their care. The family and friends of the Sadhu will surely be affected by what happens to their father, husband or neighbor.

## **Alternatives**

### **Option 1:**

Buzz could drop everything and help the Sadhu down the mountain all the way to the village.

**Option 2:**

Buzz could completely ignore the Sadhu and continue on his journey up the mountain.

**Option 3:**

Individually, the members of the group could do their own part to help the Sadhu. This is what they did.

**Option 4:**

Buzz could clothe, feed, and house the Sadhu in their hut for the night and if he seemed well enough, send him down to the village in the morning for further recovery.

**Option 5:**

Buzz could give the Sadhu a sweater and some food and then continue his ascent.

**Solution**

If I were in the position to choose what was to be done with the Sadhu, I believe I would choose option 4.

I would certainly give the man some clothes, feed him, and do whatever I could to ensure his immediate survival. Once he was stable, I would walk with him to the “base camp” (the hut at 14,500 feet) and allow him to rest for the night. If in the morning he seemed well enough to make his way down to the nearest village, I would allow him to continue on his own, leaving him with clothes, shoes, food and water. If not, I would stay with him until he was well. If he needed more urgent help, I would bring him to the village.

Based on the above solution, as a ED of NMA ( Nepal Mountaineering Association ) I would draft a detailed guideline as well as Code of Conduct to be signed off by all my staff on business ethics. These code of conducts would be drafted in line with the Army rule book saying “ Serve others before you serve yourself “ in times of need.

My Codes, Controls and Guidelines would clearly have the following check points.

### **Check Points**

- Clearly defined Duties and responsibilities of my staff, sherpas, porters and headquarter staff.
- A clear guidelines and Code of Conduct for the climbers. Ethical responsibilities on where would they start and End in the extreme circumstances ) Also a solemn sign off before the start of the journey on ethical / social norms, to act as a refresher / reminder even in extreme or harsh situations.
- A swifter mode of communication of any such incidence by a single person responsible from my team to the base location for creating a Back up (Mobile technology or any other technology if available for creating a back up for the team in action).
- A Two person team in every such exercise trained to deal with all or any such ethical situation.
- Basic first aid and life saving training to my team for such incidents.

That apart the practice of ethics being a complex exercise due to varied human nature and circumstances , would ensure to follow the same

personally all the time and preach it to all connected with me from time to time so that I or my team is never faced with a situation where my company does not have this system of values, when the times get tough, the tough will cover their own behinds and run and then repent later as to what happened to the Poor Sadhu.