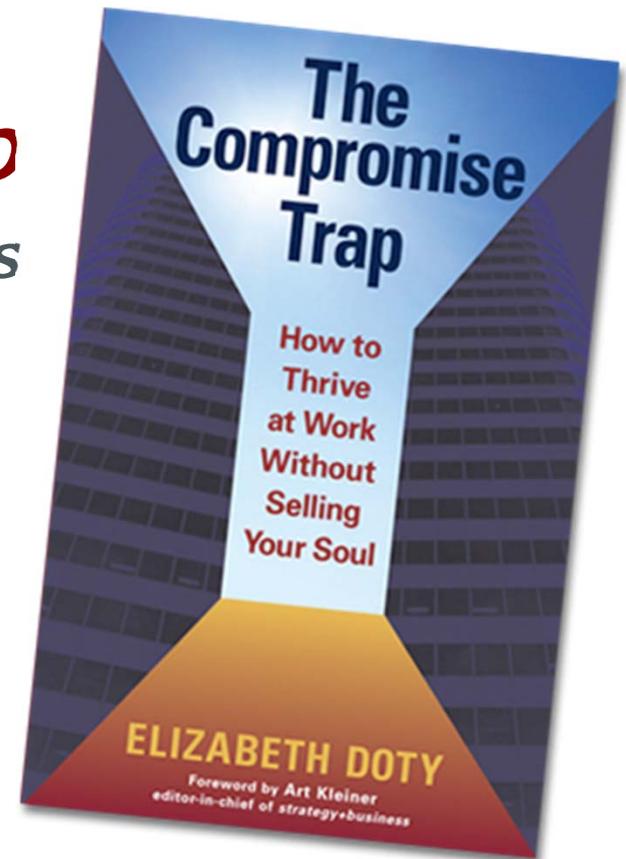


The Compromise Trap

Decision-point Tools

For Leaders, Professionals and Coaches

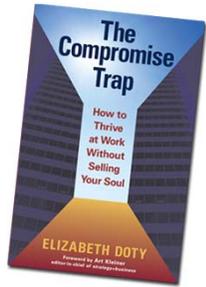


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The Compromise Trap

Why Every Professional Needs Positive Plays to Avoid the Costs of Unhealthy Compromise



Positive Plays

- Healthy Compromise
- Candid Conversations
- Positive Limits
- Skillful Influence
- Constructive Exit

Unhealthy Compromise

The Costs of Unhealthy Compromise

- Stress
- Blind Spots
- Distraction
- Irrational Commitments
- Need for Validation
- Bullies
- Lost Trust
- Damaged Relationships

The Compromise Trap

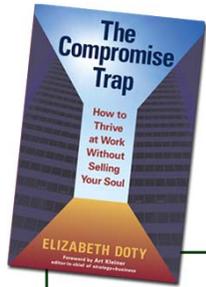


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Activating Strength Under Pressure

Three Steps to Be at Your Best in a Stressful Situation

1. Think of a situation.

- Think of the context or situation in which you'd like to have greater access to your strengths.
- Pick out an area on the floor a few feet away from you to represent that context.
- Imagine yourself in that situation, seeing what you see, hearing what you hear, and feeling what you feel.
- As the experience begins to feel real, step forward into the designated area on the floor.
- Allow the feeling to increase and, just as it begins to peak, step back out of the area

2. Activate your strengths

- Recall a time when you took a risk to do the right thing — the feeling of “I just have to do this”
- Imagine yourself in that situation, seeing what you see, hearing what you hear, and feeling what you feel.
- As that experience begins to feel real, step into the area on the floor. As it begins to peak, step back out.
- Repeat for other experiences of strength, such as... Joy — “I’m glad to be here” , Warmth— “I’m glad you’re here” or Conviction -- “I know what I know”
- Step into the area on the floor and access all those strengths at once. Allow them to mix like a blender. Think of an image or movement you associate with strength.
- Step out again

3. Bring your strengths to the situation.

- Step into the area on the floor and bring all your strengths with you
- Think about the challenging context or situation from Step 1
- What do you notice or feel now?
- What decisions or action steps become clearer now?

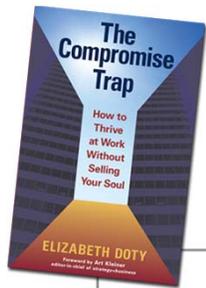


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Weighing a Compromise

How to Tell Whether a Decision Aligns with Your Values

1. What am I being asked to go along with?

What is the choice I am facing?

2. What would I be giving up?

What desire, need, want, interest, commitment, or value would I be giving up if I went along?

*Is there anything else I might have to lose?
How might I feel about that in the long run?*

What would I hope to gain?

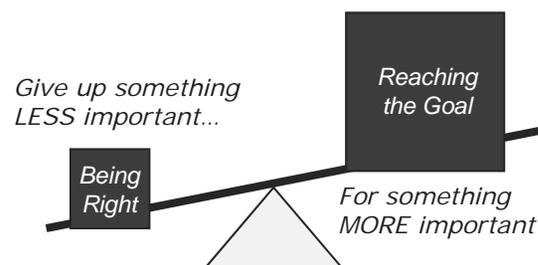
What desire, need, want, interest, commitment, or value would I be fulfilling by agreeing?

*Is there anything else I am hoping to gain?
How might I feel about that in the long run?*

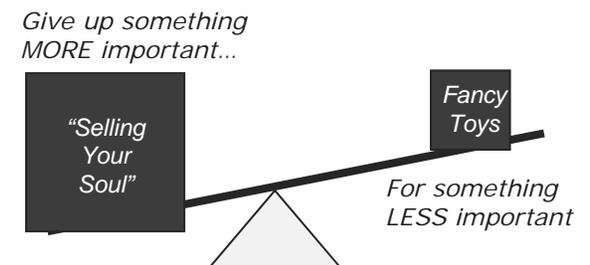
3. Is this a healthy compromise?

Would I be giving up something LESS important, to gain something MORE important?

Healthy Compromise



Unhealthy Compromise

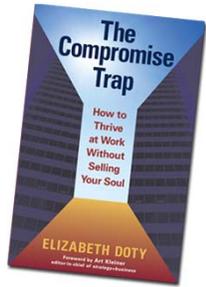


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Choosing a Worthy Enough Win

Using a Both/And Question to Find Creative Solutions

1. What is My Reason for Courage?

What really matters to me about this? What deserves more attention? Who or what could be harmed? What is the big opportunity here?

3. The Both/And Question

How do we protect _____ *(reason for courage)*

While also addressing _____ *(cause of pressure)*

As much as possible?

2. What is Really Causing the Pressure?

*What is behind the pressure to make an unhealthy compromise?
What competing interests, needs or values are at stake?*

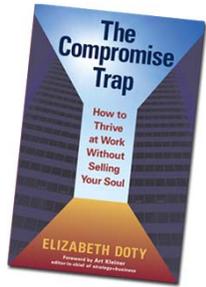


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Tapping Your Real Team in a Crisis

Questions to Help You Mobilize Support

To ask your family...

- Have you been trying to get my attention about something?
- What do you need me to understand?
- Can you help me sort out a tough situation?
- How can I help the best thing happen in this situation?
- How can we make sure your needs are met as I deal with this?



To ask your circle of allies...

- Can you help me sort out a tough situation?
- Here's the situation. What might I be missing?
- How do you see my core values and priorities applying here?
- Have you ever faced a similar situation? What did you do and how did it turn out?
- How can I best help my family through this?
- How should I tap my professional network?



To ask your professional network...

- Can you help me test my thinking about a tough situation?
- Here's the situation. What might I be missing?
- What would you need to know to be certain my diagnosis is accurate?
- If my assessment is accurate and I don't act, what might the consequences be?
- What could I do to help the right thing happen here?
- Would you be willing to help influence the situation for the better?

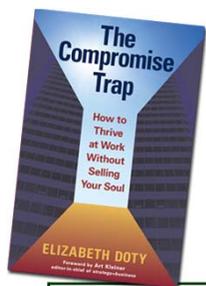


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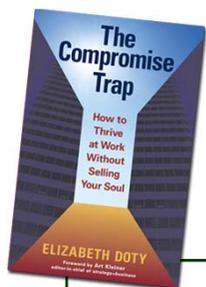
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Choosing a Positive Play

Five Positive Plays Every Professional Needs to Know

<p>Healthy Compromise</p>  <p><i>Even though I had argued against it at first, talking with Finance convinced me I needed to include more risks in my analysis.</i></p>	<p><i>WHEN: If the compromise is healthy and there's no better alternative</i></p> <p><i>HOW: Be clear about what you're agreeing to and clean up any related commitments</i></p>
<p>Candid Conversations</p>  <p><i>I had to admit my mistake, so we could protect our customers from getting hurt by my error.</i></p>	<p><i>WHEN: You can resolve the unhealthy compromise by saying what needs to be said</i></p> <p><i>HOW: Admit mistakes, apologize where needed, and renegotiate commitments you can't keep</i></p>
<p>Positive Limits</p>  <p><i>Boss, ostracizing me isn't ok. I recommend you either fire me today, or let me join the team and deliver the sales results I promised you.</i></p>	<p><i>WHEN: The compromise is unhealthy or sets a dangerous precedent</i></p> <p><i>HOW: A Positive No includes a Yes to what you're standing up for, a No that is non-antagonistic, and a Yes to their needs by making a proposal or counter-offer</i></p>
<p>Skillful Influence</p>  <p><i>I know that new green product specification will be hard to deliver on, but it's a really good idea. How about we make it real?</i></p>	<p><i>WHEN: You have influence on the root causes and the compromises are not too severe</i></p> <p><i>HOW: Build your "equity", try it yourself, gather data, make proposals, show the opportunity, connect people</i></p>
<p>Constructive Exit</p>  <p><i>If I'm going to be fired anyway, I might as well tell the boss what will REALLY help the company.</i></p>	<p><i>WHEN: The compromises are too severe, you don't have much influence, or you cannot sustain yourself in this setting</i></p> <p><i>HOW: Leave in a way that makes the most positive difference and take what you have learned into your next job</i></p>



Doing an After Action Review

Learning from your Experience

1. What was my intention for the situation?

2. What was my strategy? My goal?

3. What did I actually do? How did I behave?

4. What outcome did I get? Was it what I expected or different?

**5. What do I most appreciate about how I used my strengths?
What could I do to increase my alignment and impact in the future?**



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Adapted from William Torbert, Action Inquiry