

Chapter Two

The Dilemma

Leslie Lee is one of America's most insightful and talented artists. Her work was introduced to me at the end of a four-day retreat where my colleagues and I had been teaching the audience how to imagineer transcendent thought and put it into commercially viable action. One of the retreat participants said something like this to me, "Bruce, I have a friend who has created a painting called 'The Dilemma.' I think you should use it in your courses and retreats. I think it will help people gain a clear picture of their condition more quickly." My response was, "Please send it to me as soon as possible."

About a week later we received a greeting card with an image of "The Dilemma". We were so impressed that we immediately contacted Leslie and acquired a licensing agreement to use that picture as a book cover. At that time I didn't know what the book title would be, but I knew that it would deal with the universal human dilemma we are confronted with in business, finance, spirituality, politics, and life. This is that book and yes, Leslie's picture is that poignant.

For the past decade I have only shown "The Dilemma" to family, friends, and clients. This book is the first time that I have shared it with the world. Please do yourself and those important to you a favor and study "The Dilemma" carefully. Make note of as many details as you can see. At a minimum please consider these details:

- The person's arms are full of ordinary looking eggs that represent the life, business, financial, spiritual, and relationship circumstances the subject currently "owns" or lives with.
- Imagine how disconcerting or frightening it would be to have a large bird suddenly land on your head. Lots of golden opportunities show up in ways that can be frightening or uncomfortable. In this painting, the person is looking up, but all that can be seen is the head and part of the neck of a large goose. The person cannot see all that is happening and is therefore unable to determine that a golden egg sits on top of his or her head.
- It's easy for us to see:
 - There is a golden egg (not an ordinary egg) resting on top of this persons' head.
 - The goose that laid that egg is about to leave the scene right now.
- The person doesn't have sufficient clarity to know for sure that letting go of some of the ordinary eggs to grab the golden egg, or the goose, will leave the subject better off. The risk is obvious; the reward is not clear nor is it certain.
- Neither you nor I as third party observers can be certain that what the subject must let go of will turn out to be worth the sacrifice.
- The person is only certain of this: reaching up to grab what is new will end some current aspects of his or her life.



“The Dilemma” by [Leslie Lee](#)

The Undistorted Mirror

When facing such a dilemma it would be nice to have a quality mirror with good lighting so we could see what is available to us. It would be great if we could see opportunities, adversities, and ourselves more clearly. Unfortunately many mirrors available to us (advisors, loved ones, society, teachers, etcetera) cannot or will not provide an undistorted well-lit perspective. Most people offering to be our mirrors are biased or clouded or reflect a distorted perspective even when they don't mean to do so.

Fool's Gold

The shiny new thing often turns out to be made of “fool's gold” and it can distract us or take us down some dangerous path to our ruin. But sometimes there really is a shiny new thing that is solid 24k gold. Wouldn't it be great if we all could get a fiduciary level due diligence report before we take the risk of letting go of what we have? That would be an incredible advantage to understanding and minimizing risk before we let go and reach for that golden opportunity.

How Many Eggs?

My youngest son Jake and I were discussing “The Dilemma” when he was about twelve years old. Even at that young age Jake could understand many of the points described in this

chapter. It came as no surprise to me that Jake had sufficient wisdom to suggest the following courses of action:

1. Reorganize the existing eggs so the most important or valuable ones were kept and only the less valuable ones would crash to the ground when letting go and reaching up.
2. Grab the goose rather than the golden egg hoping that she would reliably produce many more golden eggs.
3. Jake also suggested that the person in the picture could use a soccer technique to slide the golden egg off of his or her head and catch it with one foot. That way both the golden egg and the goose that laid it could be retained.

It didn't surprise me that a twelve-year-old could have so much clarity and recognize so many ways to derive valuable wisdom from this picture because twelve-year-old children tend to find letting go easier than many adults do. I encourage you to look at this picture often. You can share it with people and discuss it with them. Some of the most mind expanding and enlightening conversations I have experienced have evolved from that kind of beginning. Metaphorically speaking, the rest of this book is an undistorted well-lit mirror of sorts. If you are willing to see the world and condition you are in with greater accuracy, perspective, clarity, and sense of purpose, you will gain maximum value from this book. Your dilemmas will be more accurately perceived and that tends to make them easier to recognize as opportunities and to transcend adversities.

Art and music are powerful. They trigger epiphanies. They bridge chasms between people and ideas. They shift attitudes and stir souls to action.

When you think about your role(s) as an individual professional or as a business in the lives of your customers, which of the following best describes you?

- One of the many ordinary eggs
- The golden egg
- The goose that produces golden eggs

Every second of our lives we can choose to play whichever role(s) we desire. We can grow ourselves out of the ordinary eggs category and elevate our importance, relevance, and impact with customers and strategic allies. How abundant and magnificent our future will be depends largely on that decision and how well we follow through with the execution of details.