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Is She Voluptuous Or Big Busted?



William E. Caswell

Bill Caswell is an experienced coach of CEOs and senior executives around the globe. The author of 14 books, Bill has penned the 12-book series *The Respect Revolution* written, by a CEO for CEOs, as a guide to getting your company to *Excellence* and keeping it there.

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How many of you were attracted to this article by its title? Personally, I seem to focus on voluptuousness whether I'm in the mood or not, whatever the magazine. Yet joking aside, I have a key point. Is my primordial emotion driving me to respond and overriding my logic? Yes it is! And how often does that occur? Ten times a day! This is true of us all.

Business decisions are being made every day by emotions rather than by logic. Think you not?

Within the past month, I had lunch with a client, Peter. He was complaining about the 'joke' of an increase he had received at his annual salary review. He explained all the work he had done in the past year, above and beyond the call of duty. I was busily trying to calm him down and get to the heart of the matter, as he had sought my help. I asked him what was a reasonable increase that would have pleased him. He wandered around about how the company was now in a tight position and could not really afford very much. He explained the convoluted situation he was in where the company paid part of his home rental and he provided some services at no charge as a quid-pro-quo. For half an hour we danced the emotional jig. Finally, after much fussing, he answered the "How much more would have pleased you?" question. His response floored me: "\$1,000 more." Does this seem logical to you? It made a lot of sense to Peter. My solution to Peter was to go into his boss and tell her that he had been upset with the increase and would not be satisfied with anything less than \$1,000 more – plain and simple; make no threat, simply see how the chips would fall.

Think of the logic vs. emotions in this situation:

- Emotionally upset at the amount of the raise
- Emotionally unable to state to me what he really wanted
- Emotionally unable to complain directly to his boss
- Logic said he should define his needs; he couldn't
- Logic said he should advise his boss of this need; he didn't (at least not that I was aware of, as of a week after our chat).

We, on the outside, who are not emotionally involved can see how ludicrous the situation has been skewed. Peter cannot.

¹ Recently two different, well established magazines (*Vogue* and *Sports Illustrated*) referred to the model Kate Upton repeatedly through their articles as 'voluptuous'. While most of the other women in these magazines were equally voluptuous, not once did refer to them as voluptuous. The difference was that Kate Upton was large breasted, yet not once did they say so, as if the admission of such was a cardinal sin. Our society worships breasts on the one hand (breast implants are a multi-billion dollar industry), and on the other hand fears to admit the obvious truth of breasts as a socially attractive feature of a woman. Our emotions attract us to the woman, and our emotions prevent us from admitting why. Is this logical? The real point here is that emotions trump our logic in many arenas.

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Bill is always available for comments or questions at

bill@caswellccc.com

Caswell Corporate Coaching Company (CCCC)

Ottawa Canada
613-232-1243

www.caswellccc.com

Within the past month, another client, Sarah, a CEO, had asked my advice as she contemplated firing a long-time employee. She had been fed up with the employee for at least a year, actually since the day I first met Sarah. Finally, Sarah came to the conclusion that Irina had to go, months ago. The logic of 'why' had been determined months, if not years, ago. However, Sarah and I have been discussing the most humane way of doing this act for two months. Sarah explains all the reason why Irina must go. Even George, the VP, expressed his displeasure many times about Irina. It was no longer about why or how but about actually taking the step to do the unpleasant deed.

We on the outside, who are not emotionally involved, can see how ludicrous the situation is. Sarah cannot.

Then there is Harold, the CEO, who within the past month, has been fighting a lawsuit now into the hundreds of \$000, which he has no chance of cashing in on – even if he wins. But his "We're not going to let them get away with that!" sentiment overrides the logic that says he should quit spending money on lawyers and stop spending valuable time that he has even less of, for the sake of emotional justification on a situation that has not yet produced one solid piece of evidence that it would turn around.

I can keep on going. Every client of mine sometimes falls into this emotions-over-logic category and they have been doing so for the past dozen or so years that I have been coaching CEOs. A sorry lot? I don't think so. These are clever, honest, hardworking, successful individuals – leaders of their companies and of society. It is just that some days it is hard to separate the logic from emotions.

The point is that many so-called 'rational' decisions are emotionally based – and the only rationale is that we have rationalized the emotion as logic. Here is what we recommend that you do.

1. Start by **observing yourself** and note whether your choices, decisions, and actions, have emotions involved (anger, revenge, pride, righteousness, etc.).
2. **Involve others** in your decisions because an outside person will lack the same emotional triggers as you. We call it having a 'second set of eyes'. Have someone else read your slightly contentious email before you send it out.
3. **Listen to the others** – they have a lot fewer emotions involved than you. Or, if you have trouble listening, wait one more day before sending the note out or making that phone call. You will discover that your own judgment can change in one day.

Good luck,

Bill

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