

Transcription - Case Study: Feeling Guilty About Moving On

Welcome back, I'm Kim Baillie, she's Fulyana Orsborn and this is Inside Exec. We have a case study for you today, and it's about changing organisations.

So the case study is that "I am stuck by guilt. I feel it's time for me to leave my current organisation and continue to grow in my career elsewhere. I feel guilt in leaving because I love this organisation. I love the people, I love the culture. I have learned and grown so much here. I have been looked after very well in all aspects, including recognition, reward and remuneration. I felt this way this time last year but didn't do anything about it. Whilst I stayed, yet again, I was given more opportunities and rewards and recognition. I feel guilty for wanting to leave."

My first thought is, have you written that down? Why you want to leave? Have you done the list of this is what I like, this is what I want that I'm not getting. And I can see, because we use the video obviously as we're recording this, that herself is nodding her head and saying yes. I've already stolen her thunder by saying what she's going to say!

I wonder if this is a, well obviously it's a cyclical thing. Is it cyclical because of the time when you joined the organisation or is it a calendar cyclical thing about end of year, start of new year, that sort of thing? Is it because you have, at this point, time to reflect about what you're doing? I think the bottom line is, what is it that you think you're missing? Because in the information that we were given, there's nothing that indicates specifically what it is you're missing.

You want to grow your career elsewhere. Is it because this organisation can't provide you with the growth that you want? You talk about you've been given more opportunities and rewards and recognition. So you're getting all of that. What is it that you think you're missing? Is it tangible enough for you to be able to measure it and to know, when you're looking at another organisation, that that's going to outweigh the sense of loss and grief that you will feel by leaving this organisation?

You feeling guilty about leaving is the precursor to loss and you have to understand that if you do leave the organisation and you think that you're heading towards the new shining light, you will still feel some grief and some loss and you have to go through that process and you have to understand what that process is and how it's going to affect you. You can't make a move like this and regret it in the first week.

And you're not going to know, for a long time you're not going to know, how good the next organisation is going to be.

My concern out of all of this is that you're not being really specific about what it is that you think is going to grow your career. Have you really done a bit of a SWOT analysis on what it is that you're looking for and where that might be and what it might take? You go out of being given opportunities and rewards and recognition into somewhere where you start again and you've got to build yourself up. That might be the process that you like. You might like to prove yourself. You might like wanting to prove, that might be your career growth. You might want to prove yourself in some other industry, in

some other environment. But I wouldn't discount a place that is giving you recognition, particularly because if you've listened to any of the other podcasts you'll know that that's the big ticket, I think, for most people, is that they want recognition for what they're doing. If you're getting that, what is it that you're not getting? And where do you think that will be?

I definitely agree about we don't know enough and that the person needs to go through and figure out why they're leaving. Firstly, just some observations and then I'll make some assumptions and then take it from there.

The observation is the fact that feeling bad about leaving and the fact that you almost decided 12 months ago and then stayed. It's not a whim. It's something that this person wants to really do. However, he's being loyal and he's staying because of that idea. Assuming there is a number of reasons why people want to leave, in this case, it's not because you're not happy, which is great. And therefore, I agree with everything you said about, you know, don't discount that and it's precious.

However, what do you want is really what the focus is. Is it because you want to grow your career upwards and there's no opportunity in that organisation in your immediate area or another area? That's one. The second one is maybe you don't want to move upwards. You want to continue in that same area that you're in but as you said, you want to try somewhere else where nobody knows you and your involvement, new people.

So what you can do is challenge yourself. Am I going to be as good there as I can be here? All of those things need to go through and then just say to yourself, alright, what if then I decided, yeah, I want to go and yes, I know the risk and the risk is maybe I wouldn't be as happy there. Then what would you do? So have I thought that through as well? To me is to say, for example, look, and if these people like you and respect you as much as you they think, they will understand and you just say, look, I'm looking because I want to grow my career. There's no opportunity here or I want to become a subject matter expert but I want to try it in another organisation or another industry. However, what I'd like to do in the meantime, I'd like to help you, if you want, about making sure I document everything and make sure that it's easy for someone to take over so there's no big gap and even put tips and helpful hints about if something goes wrong, what do you do and who do you go to and all of that. So go the extra mile helping the organisation and also then if you can help with the selection, if you like, with the recruitment.

Doing all of that and having a conversation, I certainly, if I was a member of that organisation in the management position, I will be supportive, sad and I will miss the person, but I'll be very supportive for their own good. But I will always say, feel welcome to come back anytime when we have the right vacancy for you. So that way you're opening that door as well, not because if it doesn't work out, I can come home, not that attitude, but more about you know, you're feeling that you know, it's for the long term as well. And when you're going to a new organisation, there's going to be settling in periods. It's got to happen because you've been here long enough and established yourself and you're respected and recognised and all of that.

I think, don't keep putting it off because you want to be loyal and you feel guilty because if you look at how you might feel in another two years time, you might feel like I'm getting stale now and you don't want that. You want to stay in your peak.

I guess that's one of the other things we don't know how long he's been in this particular role or in this particular organisation. I would imagine, by the information, that it's a reasonable amount of time. I have a great saying about a reason, a season and a lifetime. So you joined and you worked there for a reason, maybe the season is done and so you need to go somewhere else. Otherwise it's going to be a lifetime, you know, you're not ever going to move if you don't move now. If not now, when?

And maybe that's another thing that you look at is that, okay, I'll do this review now, I'll stay, say the decision is I'll stay, but put an end date on it, don't be like you were last year just leave it open. Say, I'll just stay, you know, I will stay for six months.

I will stay for three months and I will have another look at it then and keep it top of mind because it does appear to be cyclical, does appear to happen this time every year, whatever that time was. So you've got to break that cycle to start with, to actually jumpstart your thinking into what it is that you want and why you want to go.

A couple of things that occurred to me then when you were talking was about, which you mentioned anyway, if you leave, it's not closing the door, it's never closing the door so long as, and this is my other big point is that your attitude when you're leaving leaves the organization feeling like they would want you back at any stage. And the way people accept what you're doing is your approach, your attitude to what you're doing. It's not about retreating into yourself and saying, I feel so bad about leaving, but I've got to do this. It's about, I'm leaving because I need to develop these skills so that one day in the future we can all come back together and we can be even better than we are now. It's about putting the positive spin on what you're doing and why you're doing it, not laying your guilt or your remorse or your distress or your grief on everybody else because they'll all react differently, but it's about they will take their reaction from your attitude.

One more thing I'll add to that when you're making all these decisions, when you're analyzing how would I feel if I didn't go in a year's time, what happens if I went and I was unhappy? I think add to that thinking is what if I stayed on everything is fantastic and happy and all of that, but the organization itself changes? There is a merger or acquisition, whatever, the people that you work so well with all went different ways? Don't expect that this is not going to change because we don't know that at the moment. It looks like it's going to stay, but we don't know. So take that into account, what if I stayed and everything stayed the same, how would I feel? What if I stayed and everything changed? Just take it all into consideration so you can make that decision knowing what's next because really you're in the perfect position to make the decision now, there's no pressure on you to make a decision externally in terms of the organization changing or the economic environment changing or any of the other external things. So the threats out of the SWOT analysis, the things that you can't do anything about, they're probably as important as the opportunities are in this instance. Most definitely have that as part of your decision making and make the decision now while you can without pressure.

All right, I think we've probably covered that as much as we can in terms of the information we've got. I hope those ideas help you in your decision making process. We're all about process, so I'm sure you didn't expect anything less from us in this instance. We'll leave it there for today. I'm Kim Baillie, she's Fulyana Orsborn and this is Inside Exec.