

A CASUALTY OF SEXISM

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CASE STUDY



My client was torn...he was also a casualty.

"Should I stay in public accounting, and continue to help owners of family businesses think long and hard about how the decisions they make about their business today will impact the family in the future?" he wondered out loud. "Or should I accept the job offer at a private manufacturing company?"

It wasn't the choice that confused him, it was his emotions that surprised him.

He remembered, at 7 years old, sitting in the TV room with his cousins listening while their mothers (four sisters) tried to console themselves after their father handed his company to their 3 brothers, cutting them completely out of the family business.

The decision to ignore the daughters and recognize the sons divided the family in ways the owner never imagined. Like many traditions, it continued unchallenged, and as a result no one considered the consequences--hurt feelings would permeate over generations.

The division pitted brothers against sisters, cousins against cousins, the haves from the have nots, the wealthy from the wage earners.

Even when he and his cousins became adults, and the cousins of the aunts tried to speak with the cousins of the uncles to find ways to be included, they too were blocked.

15 years had passed. And all the disappointment rushed back as my client faced a decision that he didn't realize reached back to his family's business.

Leaving public accounting, meant leaving his mission to help business owners think long and hard about how decisions made today will reverberate in future generations.

But entering into industry felt like a very private sting--like a betrayal for the loss his mother and her sisters experienced.

When we omit women--sisters, aunts, mothers, and daughters--our sons suffer too.