Discerning the right thing to do with a dilemma
A roleplay…

You are…

…the Managing Director of an organization which is owned by a larger corporation with a strong brand and reputation to protect.

About your organization

You have just under one hundred employees. Your organization has been winning big projects and industry awards for years. Its key personnel have developed a strong bond and have used to bonuses and other benefits/perks.

This could be a professional services company, a laboratory, a factory, or any other sophisticated enterprise. Privately or publicly owned or even a charity or social enterprise. It could be in any one of many different sectors including health or education. Imagine it is the kind of organization you might work for one day.

The dilemma begins

A young apprentice is hospitalized by an accident at work. Initial enquiries discover this is because a manager called Paul Smith took some ill-judged and 'unauthorized shortcuts' to finish a project on time. Colleagues in the company disagree about what to do.

What do you *instinctively* feel is the appropriate outcome for Paul, pending (before) further enquiries into the incident?

🟥	**Ask the Personnel Dept. to consider whether dismissing Paul would be appropriate** For gross negligence and misconduct.
🟧	**Reprimand and move Paul to a different role so he cannot make the same mistake**
🟩	**Issue only a Reprimand and arrange appropriate training and supervision** e.g., Health & Safety training and closer supervision of Paul by his line manager Further action is undesirable as it would disrupt productivity. And the incident is covered by insurance. "After all, anyone can make a mistake"

A series of updates are revealed and discussed one at a time…

1st Update

Before you must make your decision, an investigation reveals…

Paul has the best record for productivity in the company. Many important contracts depend on his unique ability and experience. He is also very diligent and discreet in his work and has a reputation for 'going the extra mile' to help colleagues in need. Not surprisingly, he puts in long hours too. This has made him very popular with many key people in the organization. Furthermore, he has four young children, and his wife is not working while the children are so young.

Choose	🟥	🟧	🟩

2nd Update

Then more information comes to light…

There is new evidence that at the time of the accident, the project was behind schedule and Paul was under pressure from his line manager to finish it on time for an important client/partner.

Choose	🟥	🟧	🟩

3rd Update   *Weeks later…*

Your Personnel (HR) Manager complains that in recent weeks absenteeism has risen and productivity has fallen especially among junior staff. She reports that there is a growing feeling that management puts profits ahead of employee wellbeing and safety. And older staff talk about the loss of a sense of professional service and vocation which was the original ethos of the founders. The founders have long since retired and sold the business to its current owners. Your Personnel Manager recommends making an example of Paul by dismissing him ASAP, to send a clear message to all staff that safety and professional integrity comes first.

Choose 🟥 🟧 🟩

4ᵗʰ Update   *Months later…*

It turns out the apprentice has suffered long term harm, so his Lawyer sues for compensation. During the resulting investigation it is discovered by the Lawyer of the apprentice that the Personnel Dept. had serious doubts about Paul for a long time following a series of incidents. However, the Operations Director who is responsible for both Paul and Paul's line manager, blocked any action to meet the performance targets for his department. This leaves the company open to a charge of a failure in its 'Duty of Care' and of negligence in Health & Safety. An independent investigation begins.

Choose 🟥 🟧 🟩

5ᵗʰ Update   *One year on…*

After a lengthy enquiry, the independent investigation concludes that **you** yourself as the Managing Director are guilty of negligence.

It is revealed that you had recently personally blocked a proposed change to the governance of the organization. This change would have helped ensure compliance with the latest legislation concerning employee rights and well-being including 'whistleblowing' (i.e. safe channels for internal reporting of malpractice). You opposed this because you were convinced these changes would have undermined the entrepreneurial spirit of your team which was so much part of its success.

As a Company Director you are personally liable. You could be disqualified from being a Company Director and you could face criminal charges.

Now what was once a loyal Board of Directors turns on you for a range of reasons/motives – you are a convenient 'scapegoat,' the company might benefit from some fresh leadership and, the other Directors want to distance themselves from you to avoid falling into the 'line of fire.'

Policies and decisions that were once seen as 'shining examples' of a company culture based on 'excellence' and 'results' are being presented as evidence of an intolerant 'bullying' culture.

You begin to suspect that unknown individuals and forces are conspiring against you…that unscrupulous Operations Director could be after your job. Are you being treated fairly, is it your turn to be the scapegoat? Are you the victim of "cancel culture" or are you just getting paranoid?

Finally, the Managing Director of the parent company takes you out for lunch. Just the two of you. She thanks you for all your good work and quietly invites you to accept responsibility for the shortcomings highlighted in the Report, apologize and offer your own resignation so that the business can 'move on'. In return, you are offered an excellent package and, after a decent amount of 'gardening leave,' a new position elsewhere in the corporation.

Do you accept this offer?

If yes, would you try to set any (or insist on) conditions?

What did you *discern* during this dilemma?

Reflect on:

1. How much did each update change your perspective?
2. Which of the 16 Needs/Values/Principles **below** appear most relevant?
3. The illustration with its yellow core of the personal needs, character and subsidiarity.

The words highlighted in <mark>yellow</mark> in the list below relate to the <mark>yellow</mark> core in the graphic over leaf. Highlight the words that appear most relevant what you thought and felt while contending with the dilemma:

Personal Needs (Individual Human needs including our work)

i.e. Our *essential* need to survive and *unlimited* aspirations for prosperity.

<mark>Personal Needs/Aspirations</mark> affect how these 'EPIC' priorities are perceived:

1 Effectiveness

2 Productivity

3 Innovation

4 Competitiveness

Community Values (inc. commercial, civic, political and religious communities)

<mark>5 Character e.g. How the community defines 'character'</mark>

6 Humanity i.e. What the community considers to be 'humane'

7 Love (as defined by the community)

8 Practice (e.g. what we do together as a community)

9 Partnership (as facilitated by the community)

Universal Ethical Principles in Catholic Social Teaching*

<mark>10 Subsidiarity i.e. Keeping decision-making as close as possible to where they impact</mark>
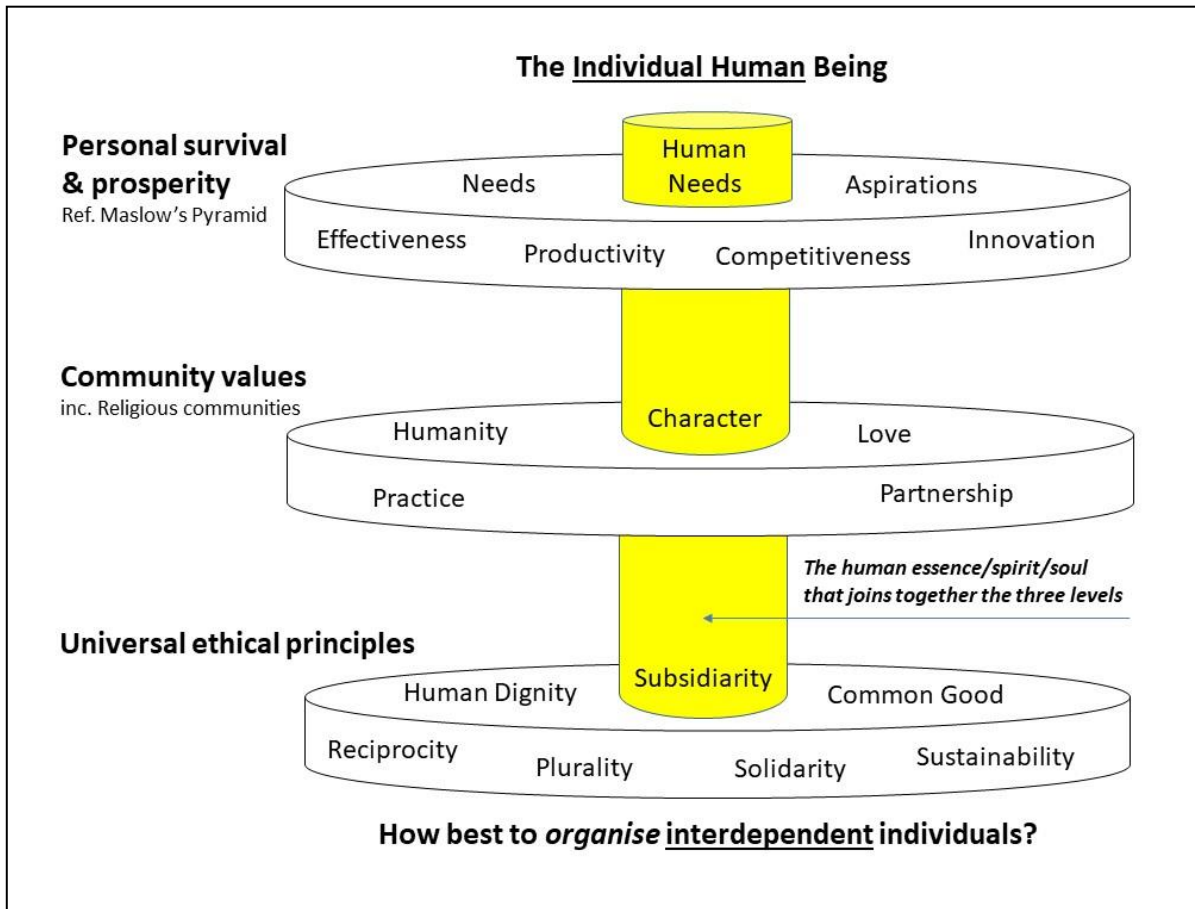
11 Common Good i.e. behaving as if it exists today rather than as if it is just an abstraction

12 Human Dignity i.e. protecting vulnerable individuals from abuse/marginalisation

13 Sustainability (e.g. avoiding short term gains that harm long term well being)

14 Solidarity (e.g. supporting colleagues in difficulty)

15 Reciprocity (e.g. nurturing good will between stakeholders)

16 Plurality (e.g. recognising the benefits of differences/otherness)

*These universal principles go all the way back to Aristotle and were later woven into the New Testament Gospels in the Bible. They are what helps make Christianity a 'modern' religion. Then in the late 19th Century they were espoused by Catholic scholars in response to the humanist, socialist and communist ideals emerging at the time. A Papal Encyclical (a Pastoral Letter from the Pope) made this body of work more widely known as Catholic Social Teaching.
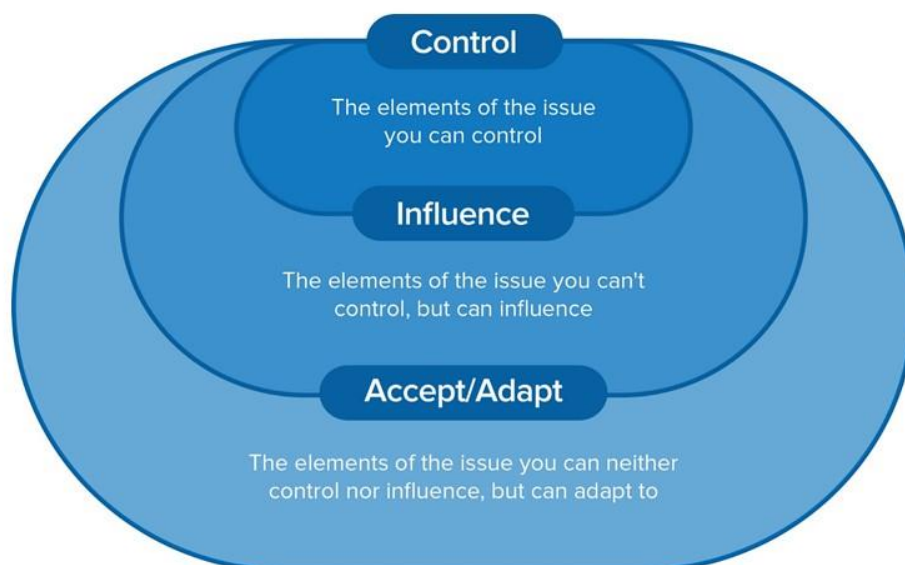
The universality of these principles makes them relevant to all humanistic belief systems. Similar insights can be found in ancient 'wisdom traditions' across the world, from North American indigenous cultures, and across Africa and China (Confucius and Sun Tzu).

Pope Francis is a strong advocate of Catholic Social Teaching with his own encyclicals (e.g., Laudato Si') and personal leadership style. He has placed even more emphasis on environmental sustainability and cultural plurality. The universal appeal of these principles has helped him become the influential figure that he is, across the globe.

Illustration: 3 Tier Model of what influences our choices
Personal needs, Communal values & Universal principles

The <u>Individual Human</u> Being

Personal survival & prosperity
Ref. Maslow's Pyramid

Human Needs

Needs   Aspirations

Effectiveness   Productivity   Competitiveness   Innovation

Community values
inc. Religious communities

Character

Humanity   Love

Practice   Partnership

Universal ethical principles

The human essence/spirit/soul that joins together the three levels

Subsidiarity

Human Dignity   Common Good

Reciprocity   Plurality   Solidarity   Sustainability

How best to *organise* <u>interdependent</u> individuals?

Interpreting the world around us

Control
The elements of the issue you can control

Influence
The elements of the issue you can't control, but can influence

Accept/Adapt
The elements of the issue you can neither control nor influence, but can adapt to

A useful model of how we can or cannot 'make a difference' at work.