



Do you remember your grade school playground carousel – your Merry Go Round? I have several memories of mine:

- Standing beside it trying to spin it faster and faster as either the girls screamed or the guys egged me on to spin it faster. (Boy, that was pretty sexist, wasn't it?...)
- Being scared as it went faster and faster and I was just sure I was going to fly off...
- Standing beside it as it spun around hesitating to jump on for fear I couldn't make it safely on.

It's that last one that I've been thinking about the past few weeks. It all started when I was meeting with a key employee (a non-family member) of a family business. This person was a bit discouraged that they weren't "in" on some of the conversations the family were having. The family members were learning, growing and changing but this key employee was on the outside looking in. I remember sharing the merry-go-round analogy and it made sense. This person wanted on, but didn't know how to get on. It's scary watching and it's scary to jump on...

So, here's my question for you:

Is there anyone on your team for whom you need to slow the merry go round down so they can jump on for the ride?

There's another angle to this picture...

There may be people on your team who might not be afraid of jumping on but who make their own choice to not jump "on board."

What to do?...

If I may, allow me to switch stories. Some of you are aware of William Bridges' work on transitions. Bridges wrote a white paper entitled, "Getting Them Through the Wilderness" (<https://wmbridges.com/featured/articles/getting-them-through-wilderness/>). Bridges uses Moses leading the people of Israel out of Egypt as the backdrop. Egypt, the Wilderness and the Promised Land are the places Bridges uses to describe the three parts of any transition: *ending*, *neutral zone*, *new beginning*. Fast forward the people-of-Israel story. When they got close to the Promised Land, spies were sent out – 12 of them. Ten came back and said, "No way, Jose." Actually, it was, "No way, Moses." They were terrified of the people living in the Promised Land. Two spies, instead of fear, expressed faith...They said, "Let's go!"

Here's my second question for you:

Do you have "fearful spies" on your team?

In the biblical narrative, what happened to the fearful spies? They died in the wilderness.

My observation is that, as a NextGen group steps up to lead a family business into the future, the culture can begin to change.

This is a natural part of a healthy transition.

You move through the ending, through the neutral zone and into a new beginning. It's the way things are supposed to be. BUT, sometimes you have an "old guard" that wants to go back to "Egypt" (*the way we've always done things*) and that can be a problem.

Their fears of letting go might mean they die in the wilderness...

When team members don't let go, you can HONOR their choice to stay in the wilderness...And, for the health of the team, this might be something that has to happen for the team to move forward into the *Promised Land* – the preferred future that comes from what we call

the SCVF – The Shared Compelling Vision for the Future.

This month's food for thought...