

## **Dilemma: Right vs. Right**

*Dilemma: Perfect Run or Avalanche? An Ultimate Ski Dilemma.*

Ultimate Ski Expeditions provided just what the name implied: an opportunity for top-notch skiers to have the run of their lifetime. The company took groups by helicopter to peaks of virgin snow and treacherous terrain. The small company had been tenuously established for two seasons when Mike joined as a field guide—it was Mike's primary job to ensure the safety of the skiers.

Mike liked his boss, Charlie Masterson, but often felt sorry for him. As owner of the company and its official manager, Charlie had too much riding on each expedition. Insurance costs for such an operation were exorbitant, and since each participant had to pay thousands of dollars, it was always difficult to book a party fully and cover all expenses.

One February morning, after a spell of bad weather and a consequent lack of expeditions, Mike was slated to accompany a group down Proud Peak, an hour away by helicopter. This morning's trip meant everything to Charlie and Ultimate Ski Expeditions. There was every indication that a successful trip would keep the company afloat, but any mishaps could mean the end of the business Charlie had worked so hard to create.

The sky that morning was a clear, bright blue. There was little wind, and it was perfectly safe to board the helicopter and land at the top of the mountain. Mike had awakened with an uneasy feeling about the outing, however, and he couldn't shake it off.

Although Mike was trained in every aspect of skiing and felt confident about his ability to manage any challenge, there were some factors out of anyone's control. Part of Mike's job was to check conditions and decide whether or not it was safe to ski a slope. In his backpack, Mike carried gear used to test the snowpack and determine if avalanche conditions prevailed. Proud Peak had accumulated many inches of snow in recent blizzards, and no one had been near the ski slope recently.

As the helicopter approached the mountain, Charlie waxed poetic about the experience each skier was about to undergo. The plan was for the skiers and Mike to disembark by towrope and ski the mountain, while Charlie and the pilot monitored the activity from aloft.

The eight skiers were let down at the top of the mountain. Mike got out his testing gear and set to work. After considering his data for a moment, Mike repeated the operation. In the helicopter above, Charlie sat watching, his walkie-talkie held at the ready. Mike looked at his second batch of results. They told him that skiing the slope was a gamble. The conditions were right on the edge of "avalanche."

With luck, the group could ski safely. Mike knew that plenty of skiers had skied through similar conditions with no harm at all. But if the snow shifted and began to slide, Mike also knew there was a chance no one would get off the mountain alive.

As if from far away, Charlie's voice reached Mike over the walkie-talkie. His tone was forced and bright.

"So, Mike! It looks like a perfect day for a perfect run! Let's hear the go-ahead and get these people on their way!"

Should Mike give the go-ahead, or play it safe?.

Note: This and other dilemmas on this site come to you without their real-life resolutions. We encourage you to think for yourself about how you might resolve them, since the nature of each dilemma is highly individualistic. In sharing these dilemmas, we do not endorse them in any way, but rather offer them for your consideration.

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