

## Video Transcript: "The Client Who Fell Through the Cracks"

[https://youtu.be/UcXF\\_KhGZ2c](https://youtu.be/UcXF_KhGZ2c)

**Mary Gentile:** [00:00:00] Hello. I'd like to tell you a story today about kind of the values conflicts we all can encounter in the workplace, or even in our wider lives, times when we know what we think is right, but we feel that we are being expected to do something that contradicts that. The story I'm going to tell you is called the client who fell through the cracks.

This is a story about Susan. Susan is a young financial analyst in a firm that manages the portfolios of high-net-worth individuals. She's fairly new in her job, and her boss is also fairly new in his role. They don't know each other very well, and the organization has been going through a lot of turmoil, a lot of rapid change lately. So it's kind of a high pressured environment right now. One day she comes into work and her boss calls her into his office and he gives her an assignment that surprises her and [00:01:00] troubles her. He tells her that he has a meeting that afternoon with one of their high-net-worth clients, and it's a meeting to report on how this gentleman's portfolio has performed over the last period. The portfolio has significantly underperformed the benchmarks that the firm itself had set for this gentleman's portfolio. So her boss says, Susan, I'd like you to come up with a different blended benchmark that makes it look as if his portfolio has performed better than it has. Then I'd like you to produce a set of slides, a deck, and a script for me to explain what happened. He's an elderly gentleman. This is his life savings. He did very well with his business, which was a consumer retail clothing operation, and this is basically his nest egg, his legacy for his children and his grandchildren. So he's not a very sophisticated investor and he won't really understand [00:02:00] that we've made this switch.

Susan's somewhat taken aback. She feels that this is not right, it doesn't sit well with her. She doesn't feel comfortable deceiving this client, but she's also uneasy. As I said, she doesn't know her boss very well. She hasn't been at the firm that long. She's wondering, is this how things are done here? She's not sure what steps she could take, and there's not a lot of time. This is the morning and the meeting is that afternoon. There's a lot of time pressure. So she's really not sure how she can proceed, what she can say and do. She knows what she thinks is right. She knows what she wants the impact of her actions to be, but she's not sure how to be effective.

So what could Susan say and do in a situation like this to be successful? Have you ever faced this kind of situation yourself where you were directly told, or maybe even implicitly [00:03:00] pressured, to do something that you felt was clearly deceptive or wrong, and did you find some strategies for addressing it? Did they work? What I'd like you to do is to take a few minutes now and put yourself in Susan's shoes and assume that there is a way that she can be effective, even if you're not sure there is, but just assume that she can be effective in acting on her values, and try and come up with some strategies, some scripts, some things she could say and do at this point to change the outcome for that client and for that meeting that afternoon. Take a minute and try that.