

HOW TO MAKE SUCCESSFUL DECISIONS

“Don't worry about having to make a right decision. Make it and then work to make it right” Anon

Everyone makes decisions every minute of each day most of the time without realising what they are doing. Common examples are endless and include things like deciding what to eat, wear or read, where to shop, how to pay a bill, what to watch, etc. There is a process involved in decision making however not a lot of people give a lot of thought to the process involved. The answers to your questions often come about from various experiences you have had and created in your lives. When this is combined with the fact that the process of thought is often on such an unconscious level the thought process doesn't register.

Decision-making is a cognitive process that leads to a path of action among alternatives. Each decision-making process creates a final choice (decision), which can be either an action or an opinion. It can be either a rational or irrational process based on either precise assumptions (there is evidence to support your decision) or implied assumptions (presumed evidence which is not concrete).

Everybody has their own beliefs and thoughts about what they perceive as being true. How many times have there been two sides to a story where each party believes their side is the truth? It is their perception, presumed evidence not the actual truth.

Decision-making seems like it should be a simple process and is but sometimes you can find yourselves in two minds back and forth between choices unable to make a committed or firm decision. A lot of people fear making decisions for worry of making the “wrong” one. This can paralyse people into making no decision at all and hence be counter productive if a decision is needed. However, it is important to note that there is no such thing as a “wrong” decision. Any decisions made that keep seeking solutions will eventually give you the outcome you need or want.

Making no choice is also considered a “choice” if it a conscious choice in that you decide to actively decide to make no choice because you need more information, need to speak to a professional or just simply because you are confused and need to sit on it for a while.

Use the following steps to become more active and aware of your choices:

1 Clear The Clutter In Your Mind And Find The Signs

A reason why most people struggle with decision making is because they have so many things on their mind. It is important to spend a few minutes in a quiet area to become more relaxed in the body and mind. This allows the mind to wander and where most answers come from. Paying attention to what your body is telling you is important to decision making. Do you feel a tightening in the stomach? That is your body trying to give you a message. It is important to listen to what your body is telling you. Your intuition is the most powerful tool in supporting you to make a decision.

Obviously you are not going to do this for all decisions (i.e what to eat, read, etc although you can if you want) but for important decisions it is necessary to make an informed conscious choice.

Next time you need to make an important decision find a quiet area and spend a few minutes getting quiet and tuning in to what your body is telling you. This quiet time may allow you to see more choices that you could not previously see. Allowing yourself to let go of controlling the outcome will allow you to do this. Keep asking yourself the question "What is my outcome here?" Allowing yourself to let go will give the emotions and fears the opportunity to relax and will allow you think more logically.

2 Consider The Negatives And Positives

Once you have a number of choices it is essential in some instances to look logically at the positives and negatives. For example some choices may affect members of your family like when you need to consider an interstate job offer that requires the uprooting of the family. Writing down the positives and negatives is considered useful for some people to see the choices clearly. Also remember that negatives don't have to be negatives – it is only the individual's perception of how they choose to see a particular choice.

3 Consider The Outcomes

It is furthermore necessary to see how each action has an outcome and therefore a consequence and how will these consequences affect you. No one has the ability to see the future. However if you can understand and define what your outcomes are, then you may find it easier to make a choice. Two helpful questions to ask yourself during this

stage are: “What is the worst that could happen if I make this decision?” and “Is it likely to happen?” This second question is fairly important because this is where your fears enter you mind. Your fears may be out of proportion to the likely results and you may presume that certain things will happen when in reality they may not. Even though you may believe a particular outcome will occur it may not so you need to be open to this possibility.

For example, starting up your own business, the worst than can happen is you could die, not likely to happen. However you could loose a lot of money – or not. You could meet a lot of great people. You could fail – or not (only by not doing you are failing).

4 Make A Choice

This can be a most difficult task if you allow it to be. You are scared about making the “right” or “wrong” choice. This is understandable. But having active control of your choices is far more important than making a “right” or “wrong” choice. There is no such thing as a “wrong” or “right” choice. Whatever choice you make will be the appropriate choice for you at that particular time with the information you have available. It is also important to note that making no choice is considered a choice if you have chosen to do so.

Becoming more aware of your decision making process will support you in making decisions. The more you practice this the better you will become at making active (conscious) choices instead of inactive (unconscious) choices which are just reactions to particular ingrained patterns of behaviour that no longer serve you. The more you do this, the more you are likely to create the life you desire.

By being aware that what you believe is only your perception allows you to look outside the square and see other sides and options available to you. By believing and seeing your outcome you give yourself the opportunity to create it.

©2006-2007 Debra Woods & Anna Cairo

***For more information contact Debra Woods
of Life Fulfillment Coaching at: admin@lfc.net.au***

LIFE *f* **FULFILLMENT COACHING**
...bringing together 'where you are now' to 'where you most want to be'