



Choices: Manage Your Choices and You Will Manage Your Life

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Publisher: Simon & Shuster

Copyright year: 1989

ISBN: 0-671-67419-6

Author's bio: Shad Helmstetter is a behavioral researcher, author and lecturer in the field of motivational behavior. He is also the author of *What to Say When You Talk to Yourself*, *The Self-Talk Solution*, and *You Can Excel in Times of Change*.

Author's Big Thought:

Who we are and what we really want from life are the results of the new choices we start to make, beginning today. The author gives us invaluable techniques to help solve problems, accomplish goals and take control of our lives.

Chapter notes:

- Choosing to live your life by your own choices is the greatest freedom you will ever have
- What brought you to where you are now is your programming. You are, for the most part, the sum total of your genetic structure and the programming that you received from others, and from yourself, since you were born.
- You can, if you choose, from here on out, give yourself the programs that create for you, in yourself, the person you would most like to be.
- You can, with your own self-programming, make the choices that are best for you, and give your "self" the internal self-directing programming that will make your choices work.
- It is only when you exercise your right to choose that you can also exercise your right to change.
- It is your programming that has created your choices in the past. It is the choices you make today that are creating the programs of your future.
- If we consciously choose to make those few basic choices, decide for ourselves what we want, how we want to be, who we want to become, and live by those choices, we would give ourselves a foundation that would set us up, program us, to make the other *choices* in life, even the small, day-to-day choices, with the same sense of purpose and direction.

- The choices we make by accident are just as important as the choices we make by design.

The importance of conscious choices:

- If you want to make better choices, why do your choices now have to be conscious choices? So you will *think* about them. It is by choice of will, your own will now overriding your old programming, that you can finally set the record straight, make the right choices for you today, and in doing so set up a pattern of choices that begin to create new, more positive, more productive programs in your subconscious mind:
- Our identity and our beliefs are programmed into us from birth
As much as three-fourths of all our programming is negative or the wrong kind.
 - Our unconscious choices are made for us by the programs we carry in our minds
 - The choices we make unconsciously can be no better than the programs behind them.
 - Taking conscious control over each choice interrupts and stops the old programs from creating poor choices.
 - New, Conscious choices create strong new, more powerful and more accurate programs in the subconscious mind.

Choices of Attitude and Choices of Actions

- There may be a thousand little choices in a day. All of them count. These are all opportunities we have to take control and get it right.
- Much of how we feel about things, our attitude, is either based on the programs we have received about them in the past or the choice we have to think about them differently in the future. That means we can change feelings and change or override programs by choice – “*Choices of Attitude*’.
- There are four questions you can ask yourself in any situation to immediately regain conscious control over your attitude. Your feelings at any given moment are always determined or influenced by how you choose to feel at any given moment.
 1. How do I feel about this?
 2. How would I like to feel about this?
 3. How do I choose to feel about this?
 4. How do I feel about this now?
- The same is true about Choices of Action. These two kinds of choice work hand in hand. Our actions affect our attitudes, and our attitudes affect our actions.
- “*Choices of Action*” are those choices that tell us not how we feel about something, but what we will do about it.
- There are four similar questions that help control each of the choices you make that govern your actions. They are:

1. What am I doing about this?
2. What would I like to do about this?
3. What do I *choose* to do about this?
4. What am I going to do about this now?

Patterns of Success

- If you'd like to know what your choices have been, look at yourself and the life you have lived. What you see is the choices you've made.
- There are three patterns or "cycles" that we set up either consciously or unconsciously that control most of how we feel and what we do each day. You will probably find yourself fitting into one of these three patterns. Understanding these three patterns will help you determine what kind of moment-by-moment choices you have been making in the past, and what choices you would like to make in the future, so that you can decide for yourself which pattern you would like to create and following your life. The three patterns are:
 1. *Pattern 1- Choices that build you up* – people that fit this pattern make even the smallest choices that help them move forward, do better for that moment, create a better day that day, and set themselves up to succeed or to do well. The Pattern 1 person recognizes that life isn't perfect. Life is how it is. Recognizing that fact, the Pattern 1 person uses every opportunity in a productive way, a way to build, a way to get better, instead of seeing life as an obstacle course only a few can overcome. It is true that they are the positive thinkers, but there are also the true achievers, those who take absolute responsibility for themselves, and those who recognize that it is the day-to-day small choices they make about how they feel and what they do that eventually leads them toward their successes in life.
 2. *Pattern 11- Choices that pull you down*. Pattern 11 people make small choices that pull them down or work against them. They tend to complain instead of making the best of a difficult situation, they see the risk instead of the opportunity, or they have the habit (a pattern of choices) of looking at the worst first and the best last. Pattern 11 people tend to create the rain that falls on their own parade. They tend to be negative self-talkers. Not all Pattern 11 people live in despair – there are degrees of unhappiness. But for the most part they pull themselves down instead of building themselves up.
 3. *Pattern 111- Choices that help you break even*. The largest group of people is the group that fits into Pattern 111. These are the people who make choices that help the break even, but get them nowhere. Because of the choices they make, they never really get anywhere or reach a level of self-fulfillment that approaches achieving their true potential. But on the other hand, they never get too far down either. The primary program is that of going along with the crowd, staying in line and fitting in. Pattern 111 people are quietly frustrated with life, but aren't sure why. They avoid making choices that create waves or upset the norm.

10 Steps to Becoming a Pattern 1 Person

1. Decide what pattern you are now.
2. Ask yourself, "Is my present program working for me or isn't it?"
3. Carefully look at the patterns of choices of the people around you.
4. Make a list of the choices that would improve your pattern.
5. Learn to recognize the old programs that could be holding you back.
6. Decide which programs you want to work on most.
7. Beginning immediately, start practicing Pattern 1 choices.
8. Assess your progress- watch the feedback you get from yourself and from others.
9. Set a clear goal to become a Pattern 1 person.
10. Award yourself along the way.

Complaining

- Some people choose to live by complaining. Other people choose to live.
- The reason it is important to take a close look at complaining is that while the problem creating the complaint in the first place may be unavoidable and out of our control, the attitude itself is a *choice*. We can control our choices; how we feel about the problem and how we *think about it* is up to each of us.

Making Choices – a method that works

You cannot manage your life if you do not manage your self.

You cannot manage your self if you do not manage your choices

Manage your choices, and you will manage your life."

- Learning what to choose, and how to choose, may be the most important education you ever receive.
- This is a simple four step thought process that is easy to use, and is an effective way to help yourself become more aware of your choices as they come up throughout the day.
- *The four steps of choice:*
 1. Say to yourself, "Is this a choice?"
 2. If the answer is yes, then immediately say to yourself, "This choice is mine".
 3. Next, as soon as you have given the choice as much or as little thought as it requires, consciously say or think to yourself the words, "My choice is...." And complete the sentence.
 4. Always be aware at a conscious level of why you have made the choice. Say to yourself, "The reason I made this choice is..." This is to keep you fully on top of which of your mental programs you are responding to, and who or what is in control of your decisions.
- The choices we make in the heat of emotion would be better if left for some other day

- Listen to the quietest whispers of your mind. They are telling you the choices that will help you the most.
- Even the best of choices is only as strong as the choices that stand by its side. Always give your choices a team of support choices.
- It is the big choice we make that set our direction. It is the smallest choices we make that get us to the destination.
- The new choices in the cycle of Self-Talk works like this:
 - The old programs (if they are negative) create negative choices.
 - You decide by conscious choice (right now, as an example) to give yourself some clear, strong, new choices.
 - You use conscious, positive Self-Talk to create the new choices.
 - The new choices, from the new self-talk you have created, *form new programs* in the brain that override the old, negative choice programs.
 - The new programs now take off on their own and deliver a better set of choices to you.
 - Each time you make a newer, better choice, you create another positive program in your mind, and your healthier new cycle of programming and choices is off and running.
- Love is a choice
- Success is a choice
- Happiness is a choice

Reviewer's recommendation: I wish I knew all this years ago when I was making the choices that shaped my life. It's a quick read that will make a difference in how you think of the many choices big and small that you will make going forward.

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About the reviewer: Frumi Rachel Barr, MBA, PhD

Many CEO's find themselves asking "What now?" to sensitive situations that only an experienced former CEO can understand. Frumi is brought in to solve problems and often remains to work with you, as your confidante and secret weapon. She has an uncanny knack of getting to the heart of your corporate climate and maximizing your team's performance, profitability and sustainability.

To schedule a free *Break From the Pack to Success* consultation email

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