

Mentoring Module

POWER OF CHOICE

YOUR POWER OF CHOICE, your ultimate freedom must be your greatest power. You have the power to think whatever you choose to allow into your head. The freedom of choice is your birthright; your circumstances have nothing to do with your destiny, they are merely the result of past choices or non-choice.

Using your power of choice to make decisions determines your future.

Successful people choose to make decisions.

Unsuccessful people choose to prevaricate.

Your thoughts are your own, uniquely yours to keep, change, share or contemplate. No one else can get inside your head and experience your own thoughts. When you command your thoughts you determine your feelings and you can choose how you respond in a particular situation. It follows that you can choose NOT to react to situations. This gives you command over yourself. This means that you can no longer blame circumstances for any situation you find yourself in. George Bernard Shaw expresses it so well with:

People are always blaming their circumstances for what they are.

I don't believe in circumstances. The people who get on in this world are the people who get up and look for the circumstances they want, and if they can't find them, they make them.

When we start to examine our lives in the light of choices we have made or, more significantly, failed to make, then we can start to see that we are the person responsible for how we feel. How we have been conditioned to think the way we do and how to overcome it will be discussed in another module. For right now it is important to accept that you are the sum total of your choices made to date from your current thinking. It follows that, with new thinking and new choices, you can decide *to be, have or do* anything you want for the future.

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Admittedly, it is hard to think in new ways. Consider, for example, when you learned to drive. There were three pedals but only two feet and getting to grips with letting out the clutch slowly and pushing down the throttle at the same rate as you released the clutch seemed a real problem when the same foot was needed for the brake. Suddenly, a million mental signals later no thinking is necessary – driving is just second nature. When did you believe that you could drive? A thought becomes a belief when you've worked on it repeatedly, not when you simply try it once and use your initial inability as the excuse for giving up.

It is important to also know that though you do have the freedom in your choice of action you don't have the choice of the consequence. These are always predetermined by the principle of cause and effect where thoughts are causes and conditions are effects. The only way one can make a choice of results or consequence is by making the right choices of actions and attitudes. When you pay for a bad choice you usually pay for it later, but the good that comes to you must be paid for in advance.

Frustration is experienced by wanting to have our cake and eat it; also, by wanting both the pleasures and prestige of one choice and the consequences of another. This is, of course, not possible but many people spend their lives trying to 'beat the system' and when it doesn't work their way they will blame bad luck, fate or someone else for the outcome. But you can stay in command by choosing again if the original outcome is not to your liking. For example, if you are following a route and you choose a wrong turn you can choose to make a detour to get back to where you want to go – you don't have to accept that the first road is the one you must stay on, or moreover abort the journey. Yet many people after having made the wrong choice will just give up. **The choices you make must be your own.** Schopenhauer wrote:

| We forfeit three fourths of our lives to be like other people. |

Ultimately choice is yours because no one else is qualified to make your decisions because they do not have your exact personality and do not have to bear the full consequences of your choice as you must. You must learn to trust your intuition and to develop your power of choice and decision-making by using this.

Making choices is a talent that must be developed – you are not born with this ability. The more decisions you make the easier it will become to make more, and the more you make the better you will become at making them. To make good decisions you must acquire the habit of making choices and with practice you will become mentally prepared for the consequences and able to anticipate them.

The power of choice is unique to mankind – it is a privilege – you have the power to choose your environment, your friends, and your thoughts. Only you can open the door to your future and only you can shut it. Making the right choices and doing what you want are what's necessary to make a success of your life.



We cannot wish away forces previously put in motion by past choices, yet circumstances can be improved by making better choices now. By the decisions we make and by the attitudes and habits we cultivate we are able to create our own mental, physical and emotional environment.

To be able to share freely in all life's opportunities we must exercise the power and privilege of our free choice. If you go down a path that you haven't consciously chosen then you won't achieve your full potential. When we choose we obviously risk losing but we also risk winning. This danger of the unknown makes people delay making a definite choice and they go through life saying: 'Of course, what I should have done', 'what I could have done' and 'I wish I had done'.

We are much more powerful than we choose to believe and this sense of personal power is sometimes difficult to cope with. It is much easier to believe our conditioning that tells us that situations outside affect us inside, that dreams don't come true and that we must accept our lot. You must realise that you can choose and must choose. It must be better to attempt great things even if sometimes we risk failure, than to stand on the sidelines of life. When it comes to our power of choice my motto is:

*Right Choice, Right Outcome;
Wrong Choice, Choose Again*

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