



*5 Ways to Make Positive Changes and*

# **STACK THE DECK IN YOUR FAVOR**

# *Introduction*

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Everywhere everyday every one of us is making choices. Choices are a constant so it's easy to forget we are making them. All of us, but some of us more than others, struggle with choice because it inevitably means loss as well. For every door we open, we are closing another, and we fear the loss of what could be. None of us has a crystal ball so we have no guarantee our choices will work out... herein lies the struggle. We all make bad choices, we can't help it. It's a part of the human condition, but learning to make better choices and move on are the keys to increasing our successful outcomes.

First, its important to understand making choices is a process. Because choice making is a constant, it is easy to forget just how often we are doing it. This is an important factor in why so many of our choices don't work out. We make them mindlessly or habitually instead of with careful consideration, intention and expectation factored into the process. Each of us have a unique process for making choices based on our own filters such as what we believe is possible, what we believe we deserve, our past experiences and expectations for the future as well as our comfort levels with things such as change and conflict. Choices are also driven by our beliefs about economics or money; the perceived required work involved as well as perceived enjoyment and anticipatory excitement for the outcome. Also, not to be forgotten, the occasional need to be right over being happy... who hasn't fallen into that one? **Here are some guidelines to consider stacking the deck in your favor for making positive choices in your life.**





*1. We learn about the quality of our choices by experiencing the consequences.*

Often this is lost on us when we continue to make the same kinds of choices and get frustrated, blame others or the circumstances when things don't work out. Looking for patterns in your life and in your family can be a powerful way to gain insight into your decision processes. Do you tend to repeat the same kinds of personal relationship mistakes or consistently have the same kinds of money problems? Do you see other family members making similar mistakes?

*2. When faced with choices, think about what excites you and has the greater prospect for personal happiness.*

When we make choices simply for monetary or status reasons, we are nearly always guaranteed disappointment because the end result is what is important and there is very little value placed on the process. In addition, the likelihood of plateau is inevitable and a "where do I go from here..." leaves us at a loss once we have reached the initial goal. Consider that working hard at something you love is a passion and working hard at something you don't enjoy equates to stress.

### *3. Negative thoughts and limiting beliefs inhibit us from making better choices.*

For example, if at some level, you don't believe you deserve better than what you currently have, you aren't likely to achieve better. If you struggle with shame for past decisions or don't see yourself as valuable and worthy of forgiveness, you aren't likely to attract better circumstances and if you do, the likelihood of you sustaining any good fortune is diminished. What often happens is if you feel unworthy, you will make choices that send your good fortune out the door.

### *4. The feeling of contribution is powerful.*

Deep down we all have a need for connection and to feel like we are making a difference in the world. If your decisions are primarily driven by "what's in it for me?" you aren't likely to find long-term sustainable happiness in your life. Consider areas in your life where you can begin to take steps toward contribution without a need to be rewarded in some literal sense. At first, it may seem counter-productive, but give your self a chance to experience the positive feelings and fulfillment that comes with making a real contribution.



## *5. Always consider the end goal*

While this one may seem like an obvious factor, sadly all too often it is not. When we are not consciously aware of what we want out of life, we make decisions often by doing nothing. Remember, no decision is also a decision. Having short-term goals, long-term goals and living life consciously aware of what we want our life to mean, helps us to filter our choices from a higher level and sets us up to increase our success rate.

## *Now What?*

Once we have improved our processes for making choices, we still need to recognize sometimes it will not work out the way we had intended, but all is not lost. Failure teaches us some important lessons so that we can recognize how we can improve our chances next time. Also recognize the gifts we are given because it didn't work out the way we had hoped. Sometimes it can take some time before we are able to objectively do it, but allowing yourself to reflect on the things that didn't work gives us the opportunity to see the progress we have made and to recognize strength within ourselves we may have been unaware of before.

**The power of choice is a gift given to humanity, recognize it as a privilege, enjoy it, learn from it and see what wonders it can reveal!**