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## **Are you a Decision Maker or a Waffler?**

*By Brooke Loening*

We are the only species on the planet that is actually aware that we have a choice at each moment. But that does not make it easy; in fact most of us have experienced great challenges when making decisions. Today I would like to talk about some of the inner workings of our minds and why we struggle with decision-making. More awareness on the subject might make it easier for you to move forward the next time you find yourself waffling.

When making a decision, whether it is where to eat, how to deal with a business situation, or what to do over the weekend, there is a certain amount of “weighing the options” that goes on in our heads. Sometimes this weighing turns into a marathon and can be agonizing. The question is- what is happening when we can’t decide what to do?

*Focus on what you are going to do, not on what you have chosen not to do.* One factor that can make the process of moving forward difficult is the tremendous focus on all the options that might be lost forever when making a final decision. We can get obsessed with the doors that are closing for us rather than on the one we choose that will open. We are afraid that we may close the wrong door and it may be locked forever. In a way we want what we can’t have- all doors open. This takes our focus off of our new direction and dilutes it across multiple options. It is important to think forward and move forward, and resist that temptation to spend too much energy on the options we choose to leave behind. And- the less important the decision, the less important are the lost options.

*Take the pressure off yourself.* Another issue that comes up during our decision making process is our inner need to control our life experience. You probably think that you can know and control outcomes through your decisions, and that way you can create the best scenarios for yourself and others. But this puts so much pressure on each decision that inevitably it will result in too much time being taken to reach a conclusion. The fact is that we just don’t know what is best for us and those around us all the time. Many times, what appears to be a bad choice turns out to be just what we needed at the time. The reasons for this sometimes don’t reveal themselves for quite some time, but we have all had the experience of seeing great benefits from experiences that we judged as being “bad” at the time.

*Get feedback from friends, advisors, the Internet etc.* For decisions, which will have a great impact on you and others, it is a smart strategy to collect information and advice to help you reach a conclusion. Sometimes we don’t have enough knowledge to make a choice about something, and it is wise to look around for assistance. However, the ultimate call will be one that you will live with, and therefore you will be the best person to make it. Be prepared to dismiss certain feedback that is not helpful to you. Some

advice you receive, especially from friends and family, may be simply a projection of their needs and not in your best interest.

In making decisions we do need to evaluate the options and consider the different outcomes and how they affect us and the people around us. But in many situations, especially the less weighty ones, we need to work on our ability to make a choice more quickly and trust that the results will be exactly right for us in the long run.

*Enjoy the path you have chosen to take and trust.* You can make it easier to practice making quicker decisions in the future. First, remember to focus on and enjoy the positive experiences that the decision creates for you. Every decision you make will create a new reality for you. You can either be fully present and choose to see the benefits of what you are experiencing, or live in the past and think with regret about what you are not doing. Second, trust that the results will be exactly what they need to be at that time, and release your need to control every outcome. This week, try an experiment. Make a decision more quickly than you might normally, and observe the experience you have without judgment. An appropriate affirmation goes like this: “On non-critical decisions, I evaluate, make a choice, and move forward, enjoying the upsides of that decision.”

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