

The Challenge of Choice

March 31-10

Have you ever wondered what it would be like if you could choose the life you live? What if you could be happy in every circumstance never feeling apprehensive, lonely afraid, or worried? How awesome would that be? If you're like me you probably know at least a few people who seem to live in that "space" where no matter what happens to them they are always the same...happy and content with life. They could have just lost their job, their car is broken down, and their home needs repair, yet somehow they just know that it will all work out and they are not worried. Some will actually make fun of these types of people thinking that they live in some type of fantasy world because they never seem to get upset, angry or even have a bad day. But the truth of the matter is that we are all envious of this type of behavior because we want to live that life too. What if I told you that this type of outlook on life is merely a choice? It is. You too can learn to live life unaffected (or at least minimally affected) by the great challenges that come your way.

Most of my life I had thought that life is mostly what you get and that we're merely stuck with the challenges we are faced with. In fact in the beginning of my own healing journey several years ago it was suggested to me by a very wise friend (who was also a key healing practitioner in my life) that everything in my life was my own choice. Many times in discussion of some issue she would often pose the question to me "so could you choose to react to this differently?"...or say "do you know that you can choose to feel differently about this situation?" Looking back I can see that I always had some outside excuse for not changing my view of things, and the term "yes, but" was used a lot! I still thought that my actions, reactions, frustrations, and anger were just because of what someone else did, or some circumstance that caused my life to be challenged. What I did not realize at the time was that I was simply reacting to the issue with the programmed response that I learned in life. I never took the time to stop and think about how I wanted to respond to this and just accepted the initial reaction. Kind of like living on autopilot, which we discussed in the Feb 2010 issue of Insider's Insight, "Conscious Living". What I have come to understand is that everything in our life basically comes down to our own choice. Whether it is the choices we've made about taking a job (or leaving one), spending our money, speaking our truth (or holding our tongue), or staying in a relationship that is not healthy for us. We all make our own choices. In the infamous words of the band Rush, "if you choose not to decide, you still have made a choice". Our life is based on choice. So why is it that so many people find it such a challenge to understand that their whole life is a result of their choices? Again, I think this comes down to the fact that we are never taught that we can create any life we want to live simply by becoming more aware of our choices. Once we become aware of the choices we make, we can better evaluate if we've made the right ones. As my healing journey has continued, I have come to understand that there is a big difference between a reaction and a response to a situation. Taking time to step back from any given situation, even for a few seconds, and allowing ourselves the opportunity to respond in a way that is harmonious with our spirit is much more agreeable than accepting the "knee-jerk" reaction that we might otherwise experience. I still sometimes catch myself in "reaction mode" rather than making a conscious choice to respond...but luckily these are fewer and far between. What I have found is that I spend a lot less time worrying about what

someone has said to me, or what I might have said to them. I spend a lot less time turning problems over in my mind until I make myself crazy. I experience a lot less physical stress and emotional anguish. I have chosen to adjust my experience in a way that allows me to perceive life differently and the result is that I am more focused, more free, more successful, and most of all more joyful.

So the Challenge of Choice is merely a choice! We can choose to continue to view life the same way or we can begin to examine our choices for what they really are and then adjust our future choices accordingly. The other challenge is that we live in fear of change. It seems to be human nature to resist change. We're afraid of what it will be like if we do things differently. In spite of how miserable we feel, we tend to be comfortable with what we are familiar with and therefore don't change. Again, this is a choice we make. So the Challenge of Choice is also the Challenge of Change. We must be willing to make the choice to change. This is really easier to overcome than we think it is if we just make the choice and stick to it. If you don't think you can do it alone, get an ally. A friend, a spouse, a mentor, or a coach...someone who can help you build accountability to yourself that will ultimately help you achieve your goal to change. Change is never easy...but sometimes it can be easier than the turmoil we're going through due to our current choices. So the choice is yours. Choose to exist in the life you have or choose to create a new life and joyful future. The choice is yours.