



7 Steps to Make Confident Choices Now!

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“When you do things from your soul, you feel a river moving in you, a joy”

Malwana Jala ad-Din Muhammad Rumi, 13th century Persian poet

“Be miserable. Or motivate yourself. Whatever has to be done, it’s always your choice.”

Dr. Wayne Dyer, internationally renowned author and speaker and “father of motivation”

Do you believe that you can choose to have or do anything you want?

Do you believe you can choose to be happier today?

If you’re unsure or answered “no” - keep reading because I’m going to share with you 7 simple steps to help you change that belief and make powerful, confident choices from your heart, from the place within you that is longing for something different, for something more, or to feel happier.

Sonja Lyubomirsky, professor of psychology at UC-Riverside and author of "The How of Happiness: A Scientific Approach to Getting the Life You Want," analyzed studies on identical twins and other psychological research. She found that happiness is 50% genetic, 40% intentional and 10% circumstantial. “Half of your predisposition toward happiness you can't change," she says. "It's in your genes. Your circumstances – where you live, your health, your work, your marriage – can be tough to change. But most people are surprised that circumstances don't account for as much of their happiness as they think."

Consciously making choices from your heart is powerful, it’s 40%!! The choices you make create much of the quality of your life. Mastering the art of choice can help you live your dreams, succeed in business, reach your goals, have better quality relationships with friends and family, and create anything you desire.

To be fully conscious of that power, we need to take responsibility for that 40% and use that to overcome some of the obstacles that we can’t directly control. We can move to a better, happier place through our choices, regardless of where we are right now. Remember what Theodore Roosevelt said, “Do what you

can, with what you have, where you are.” And while you’re doing what you can, think about what you’d rather be doing and make a plan for getting there using these 7 simple, but not easy, steps.

1 - Believe that you have a choice

For many of you, this may be the hardest step because you “think” you can’t have or do what you want or that you are somehow obligated to your current life, work, or situation. So, the first step is to change your mindset and believe that you DO have a choice! Remember, 40% is under your control.

It takes confidence in yourself to change that belief; sometimes it takes undoing years of hearing society tell you what you “should” do, what other people expect of you, what you “can’t” do, what everyone else you know does, etc. So how do you build that confidence?

Role models can be a great source of inspiration. Think about someone you admire, someone you believe is making choices from the heart, and ask them how they do it. Find groups of people who are making choices to follow their dreams, surround yourself with positive people and positive energy. We all want something, we all have desires and dreams, but often we end up longing for something more, without ever attempting to really live our dreams.

You might be thinking sarcastically, “Sure, I’ll just get some confidence, intend that my dreams come true and magically they will.” And you’d be right – it’s not that easy! It takes dedication to yourself and to the vision you’ve created. It also takes discipline in making the choices that will lead you to your dreams.

Debbie Fields, founder of Mrs. Field’s Cookies, is an inspirational example of confidence and dedication to her vision. As a child, she had a passion for chocolate chip cookies and dreamed of opening her own bakery. As a young housewife, her passion continued despite discouragement from friends and family and rejection from many banks. She never let go of her vision. She persevered and finally received a \$25,000 loan to open her first shop in 1977. With very few customers on her first day open, she decided to go out and get some customers. Determined to succeed, she took trays of cookies and gave free samples to the

people walking down the street. She ended up with \$75 in sales on her first day - \$25 MORE than her goal! She believed in herself and her vision and today, Mrs. Fields has nearly 300 hundred locations in the U.S. and employs over 4,000 people!

Debbie Fields didn't let the fact that she could not control the bankers, the naysayers, nor the lack of customers, stop her. She kept making choices from her heart, believing in herself and her vision. That could not have been easy for her, yet it was simple in that she knew what needed to be done to live her dream and she did it. You can't change the people in your life, their behaviors, or their choices. But you can choose how much influence they have on you. You can choose how you use the amazing gifts, talents, and passions that are within you and you DO have amazing gifts. Maybe you love teaching children to sing, maybe you're the person everyone comes to for dating advice, maybe you always win at checkers, think about what you love to do.

And the great news, just like Debbie Fields, you get to choose how you use your amazing talents!

2 - Nurture and Nourish Yourself

If you feel good, it's easier to believe in yourself and your vision. Do something just for you as often as possible. Even if it's just 5 minutes a day to read a favorite author, meditate, sit outside in nature, take a walk or wake up early to have a few minutes of quiet time before the rest of the family – whatever it takes to just concentrate on you. This will help clear your mind and give you renewed faith in you!

One tool that helps my clients (and me) become more successful *and* happy is the 40 Day LoveFest practice. By taking just 2 minutes a day to acknowledge your gratitude and triumphs, you will feel better about what is in your life now as you make better choices for your future.

Every morning, I jot down three things I'm grateful for. Some mornings, it's tough, but even a small gratitude for waking up in a warm bed can help me create a better mood for the day. Each evening, I write

down three triumphs. One day, my greatest triumph was choosing to be nice (instead of mean) in response to a negative situation. Triumphs can be small or large and it's important to acknowledge them all!

At least once a day, when I'm in front of a mirror, I say something nice to myself. It can be simple, like "nice sweater" or "you are beautiful" and sometimes I say "I like you" or "I love you." This simple acknowledgement, along with your gratitude and triumphs helps build your confidence and belief in you!

At the end of the week, I relax and spend 10-15 minutes to journal just a half page about what went well, what made me feel good, who I enjoyed being with, and more. I also review my daily gratitude and triumphs and acknowledge, but not dwell on, what didn't go well. This review helps me create meaningful intentions for the next week. Even more important, journaling raises my awareness of the power my attitude has on creating my success and happiness. It will strengthen your gratitude for what you already have and for what will come; it will build your confidence!

3 - Know what you want: look into your heart for answers

If you have a very clear vision of what you want, making better choices gets easier. People often get overwhelmed at this point and claim they don't know what they want. That is exactly why they don't have it! I worked with a client a couple of years ago that desperately wanted to be more successful and create more income, yet he couldn't tell me about it; he didn't have a vision. So, I started with a simple exercise: daydream that you have all the success, all the money, there are no worries... what would your perfect day look like?

He couldn't do it. He had also strongly resisted steps 1 and 2.

I wanted to help him get to a place where he could begin to build his belief and confidence, so, I changed to even smaller questions like "what do you like to do?" and "what are your goals this week?" He could answer those questions, but when it came time to create an action plan and execute it, he struggled. He could not put into the plan even a few minutes to nurture himself each week. He could not breakdown the

goals into manageable, daily choices that would need to be made to reach his goals. He could not look into his heart to find the answers to what he truly wanted.

Soon, I knew that in order for me to help him, he needed to believe that his dreams could come true, he needed to build more confidence, and he needed to believe that HIS choices were creating the results in his life and that by making different choices, he could have different results. While he read many books on the topic, it was hard for him to truly believe in the 40% intention and the power of choice.

Today, it's a different story. During the last two years, he made choices to surround himself with positive people and environments; he limited his interactions with negative people and places. He continued to read books like this and listen to amazing people like the co-authors featured here. He believes in the power of choice and intention; he acknowledges the power of his own thought and attitude. He practices gratitude and recognizes even his small triumphs. He has looked into his heart to know what he wants and he is making choices that will help him finally reach his goals.

The process is simple, but not easy. We have to start with one choice. It doesn't have to be the ultimate life choice. It's a choice, based from the heart for what you want right now. That may change later; you may choose something new to go after. Bill Gates chose to enroll in Harvard University, but later made a decision to drop out and began writing software. He continues to evaluate his choices and his life continues to evolve as he now focuses on his philanthropic goals.

Regardless of your current situation or perceived lack of opportunities, make a decision, choose. If you want to increase sales, choose a measurable goal, maybe 5 new clients in the next two months, or increase your dollar sales goal by 25% - whatever you choose, make it something you can track. If you want to improve the morale of your employees, decide what that would look like. Would that mean you have better customer retention, more repeat sales, lower employee turnover, or less sick days called in? Create something that is measurable as a result of the desire to improve morale. This will make it much easier to make choices that lead you to what you want.

4 – Create the overall vision: what does your life look like in six months, a year, or five years?

So now that you believe you have a choice, are nurturing yourself, and have decided what you want – create your overall vision. You can do this with a coach or consultant, meeting with your staff or trusted advisors for brainstorming, or on your own. Start with the basic idea of what you want and just let the ideas flow: jot them on a large white board, use post-it notes, a journal, or audio-record your brainstorming session. Write an end-of-the-year letter or report dated a year or three years from now detailing what things look like then.

Another good process and tool is to create a vision board. Joyce Schwarz describes the full process of creating a vision board in her book, “The Vision Board, The Secret to an Extraordinary Life.” Begin by gathering a variety of magazines, including some that you wouldn’t normally read. You can also include pictures of yourself, your company, or employees. Look through the magazines; see what pictures and words you are drawn to – cut those out. When you are finished, arrange the pictures and text on a small poster board. Move them around to create your vision. Place your vision board in everyday view as a tool to remind you of your goals and desires.

By brainstorming, diagramming, or creating vision boards, you’re reinforcing your commitment to your clear goals and visions. These reminders will help you make choices throughout your day that are positive and empowering. Whatever you do at this step to create your vision, be sure to review it, evaluate it, and use it to keep you motivated to make choices that will lead you to the vision you’ve created.

5 - Outline a plan for successfully reaching your goal

Wow – when you get to this step, you know exactly what you want! Now it’s time to create the action plan for getting it. What is the time frame? What are the tasks that need to be accomplished? Creating a plan for success will further clarify what you want. It will help you make good choices. You will naturally say no to things that don’t fit and yes to things that do.

Your plan can be simple or complex, based on what you desire. At minimum, create a basic outline for what you want, detailing what it looks like in the end and what needs to happen to reach that goal. It can be only one or two pages, but write it down. If your goal is to improve sales by 25%, what would you need to do to make that happen? Break down your outline into actionable steps and tasks. If you've taken time to work through steps 1-4, you should find that this step is easy in comparison.

Enlist help; who can you include? If it's a work goal, include your key team members. If it's a family goal, get the kids involved. Ask them what needs to be done in order for the vision to become a reality. With your completed outlines and action plans, it'll be easier to evaluate the options when you are faced with making tough decisions. It'll be easy to identify the ones that will help you reach your goals, and easier to say "no" to the others.

6 - Raise your awareness of the power of your choices

As you raise your consciousness about what you want, you'll also be more aware of the choices you make throughout the day and how they affect your plan for success. Stay focused! When a friend calls and you know she is going to complain about her life and you don't want to spend 30 minutes listening to her, don't. Instead, think about your choices – a) don't answer the phone, b) answer, but let her know you have only 5 minutes to chat, and after five minutes, say good-bye, c) answer the phone and take control of the conversation, start with a positive greeting, tell her about your excitement in making more positive choices in your life, maybe it'll rub off on her.

Some of our choices become automatic, but maybe aren't the choices we'd make if we thought about it for a minute. For example, maybe every morning you stop in the break room at work and pick up a donut, because everyone else is there and it becomes a routine social choice, BUT you want to lose 10 lbs. This is a perfect opportunity to break that routine. You like the social interaction, but not the donut. Instead, you could bring in a bowl of apples to share, and eat one of those while chatting before work. When you make these positive choices, recognize them in your Be Happier in 2 Minutes a Day journal and reward yourself for using your intention to make choices that will lead you to reaching your goals.

If you need a reminder to break a routine habit/choice, create one. A few years ago, I noticed that after spending a lot of time with young college students on campus and a few family members, I had picked up a bad habit of using slang, even swearing occasionally. Determined to make different vocabulary choices, I wore a rubber band on my wrist and when I unconsciously muttered words I didn't like, I snapped the rubber band lightly. It raised my awareness and I began to make better word choices.

The rubber band is also a great reminder tool for new clients when I challenge them to not complain for 7 days. After a few complaints, and a red wrist, they start making better choices and thinking more positively!

7 - Make choices from your heart

Your friends, family, co-workers, or employees may not like the changes they see in you... because you are making choices based on what you truly desire, not on what others think you should do. It's not always easy to say no, but explain that you're focused on your action plan and must say no. Then, do your thing! It doesn't mean you love them less, it just means that you love yourself first.

Once you make these new choices – keep making them! Don't let yourself get sucked back into old habits that don't serve you. You have goals and dreams that you want to fulfill, not just dream about. So, make the tough choices and stick with them until you manifest your dreams and vision.

Use your tools: your journals, vision boards, your outlines and action steps, and any other tools you create as you harness the power of your intention and choices: your 40%.

Life is simple, but not easy and we have only now to choose how we use our goals, abilities, passions, and talents. Learn to master the art of choice to increase your confidence and create your dreams with these 7 simple steps:

1. Believe that you have a choice
2. Nurture and Nourish Yourself
3. Know what you want: look into your heart for answers
4. Create the overall vision: what does your life look like in six months, a year, or five years?
5. Outline a plan for successfully reaching your goal
6. Raise your awareness of the power of your choices
7. Make choices from your heart

For more support in your journey to a more confident and happier you, visit www.40DayLoveFest.com

