

Wake Up—Start Making Empowering Choices

by Darren Hardy

We all come into this world the same: naked, scared, and ignorant. After that grand entrance, the life we end up with is simply an accumulation of all the choices we make. Our choices can be our best friend or our worst enemy. They can deliver us to our goals or send us orbiting into a galaxy far, far away.

Think about it. Everything in your life exists because you first made a choice about something. **Choices are at the root of every one of your results.** Each choice starts a behavior that over time becomes a habit. Choose poorly, and you just might find yourself back at the drawing board, forced to make new, often harder choices. Don't choose at all, and you've made the choice to be the passive receiver of whatever comes your way.

In essence, you make your choices, and then your choices make you. Every decision, no matter how slight, alters the trajectory of your life—whether or not to go to college, who to marry, to have that last drink before you drive, to indulge in gossip or stay silent, to make one more prospecting call or call it a day, to say I love you or not. Every choice has an impact on the Compound Effect of your life.

By employing the same idiot-proof strategies I've used to catapult my own life and career, strengthened by the Compound Effect, you'll be able to loosen the mysterious grip of the things that are unwinding your life and pulling you in the wrong direction. You'll be able to hit the pause button before stumbling into idiot territory. You'll experience the ease of making decisions that lead to behaviors and habits that support you, every time.

Your biggest challenge isn't that you've intentionally been making bad choices. Heck, that would be easy to fix. Your biggest challenge is that you've been sleepwalking through your choices. Half the time, you're not even aware you're making them! Our choices are often shaped by our culture and upbringing. They can be so entwined in our routine behaviors and habits that they seem beyond our control. For instance, have you ever been going about your business, enjoying your life, when all of sudden you made a stupid choice or series of small choices that ultimately sabotaged your hard work and momentum, all for no apparent reason? You didn't intend to sabotage yourself, but by not thinking about your decisions—weighing the risks and potential outcomes—you found yourself facing unintended consequences. Nobody intends to become obese, go through bankruptcy, or get a divorce, but often (if not always) those consequences are the result of a series of small, poor choices.

For instance, you inhale a soda and bag of potato chips and suddenly realize only after you polished off the last chip that you blew an entire day of healthy eating—and you weren't even hungry. You get caught up and lose two hours watching mindless TV—scratch that, let's give you some credit and make it an educational documentary—before realizing you spaced on preparing for an important presentation to land a valuable client. You blurt out a knee—jerk lie to a loved one for no good reason, when the truth would have worked just fine. What's going on?

You've allowed yourself to make a choice without thinking. And as long as you're making choices unconsciously, you can't consciously choose to change that ineffective behavior and turn it into productive habits. **It's time to WAKE UP and make empowering choices.**