



HERS

OPINION

HIS



Learning to Live With The Choices You Make

BY C. M. BROOKS

Have you ever taken a moment to seriously consider the choices and the ramifications of those choices made thus far in your lifetime? For some, I imagine, the choices selected were well-calculated, life-beginning decisions that characterize who they are today and what they are doing with their lives now. Overall, they have minimal regrets and are able to smile at a well-chosen path. For most, however, choices arrived at would make even the most fearless tremble!

The mind, as we all know, is an incredible invention. If properly nourished, exercised, and developed, it is capable of achieving intellectual feats of wonder. Why then, if this is a true and accurate statement, do so many individuals make poor choices in life? Why are they ineffective decision-makers?

There are several reasons that explain why some people make poor choices in their lives, but I have an answer that is relevant, timely, an applicable to many of us. The focus is primarily on the envi-

ronment in which we make those sometimes faulty decisions or choices. The environment is very important in terms of the outcome of choice. For example, a complex environment produces pressures like too little time, deadlines, and

Society pressures play a role in one's inability to make wise decisions. The ability of the majority to influence the minority can cause certain realities to become twisted and unclear. How many times have you made a decision based on what the larger group wanted even when it devalued your morals or conflicted with your personal views? This is called "Group Think" and it can cause you to not only question your beliefs but it will cause you to "go along with the majority."

What good is the Power of Choice if you are not capable of making a sensible selection? Eliminate outside influ-

BY: ULLYSSES TUCKER, JR.

"...WE ARE FACED THROUGHOUT OUR LIVES WITH AGONIZING DECISIONS, MORAL CHOICES. SOME CHOICES ARE ON A GRAND SCALE, BUT MOST ARE LESSER ONES. BUT, WE DEFINE OURSELVES BY THE CHOICES WE HAVE MADE. WE ARE, IN A SENSE, THE SUM TOTAL OF THE CHOICES WE HAVE MADE..."

PROFESSOR LEVY/WOODY ALLEN CRIMES & MISDEMEANORS 1989

As the quote suggests, we are constantly faced with difficult choices throughout our lives and we as human beings have the power of free will to make good or bad choices. So, if people have the power to make positive choices, then why do they still continue to smoke, waste money, use drugs, get depressed when it's not necessary, not study for class, accept bad jobs, procrastinate, engage in dysfunctional relationships, commit criminal acts, lie, abuse alcohol, eat too much, think irrationally, or a million other elements that we know are wrong or do not promote positive personal growth?

In many regards, people make choices that are directly related to their values, morals, or upbringing/conditioning mentally. For example: A Los Angeles ghetto youth sells an ounce of crack cocaine to an undercover FBI Agent and is later arrested with marked money. Did he know right from wrong? Did he know that distribution of controlled substances was against the law? Did he really care? William "The Fridge" Perry is a professional football player for the Chicago Bears. He has a weight clause in his contract. The clause states that he should report to training camp no less than 320

lbs. So, why does he show up weighing 375 lbs? Why does he complain about the \$75,000 in fines or incentives he loses for showing up overweight?

Judy is an alcoholic with chronic liver damage. Her doctor tells her to stop drinking or face the high risk of dying. She continues to drink heavily and dies. Judy's family and friends are shocked. Why didn't she stop or did she really care whether she died or not? No one made the youngster mentioned above sell drugs. No one made William Perry overeat. No one made Judy drink or force alcohol down her throat. Each one of these individuals made choices and paid the price for their actions. People need to become better managers of their lives, careers, time, money, and a host of other things.

Scholars have learned that the human brain functions along the same lines as a computer and it, the brain, acts on the information or programming it receives. Some of this programming is genetic, but most of the programming is acquired as people move through life. In the case of the youngster from Los Angeles, did the fact that he lived in poverty, watch others in his family abuse or sell drugs, or peer pressure enhance his decision to peddle drugs? Did he see this as the only way out of the ghetto? Would he have been a different person had he grown up in a nice, educated, and supportive family? Chances are he might have ended up a more positive/productive life or had more positive choices, but he still could have ended up doing the same thing. No one is immune to making terrible choices in life. In fact, bad choices will always be made by people and hopefully the good will outweigh the bad.

Now, what can be suggested to help people realize that they are the ones responsible for their life choices? At some point people have to stop blaming their environment, families, education,

race, others, or society in general for their actions and choices made. People can change what is wrong or perceived as wrong in their life by making rational and correct choices. Again, people know right from wrong. Sometimes, it takes adversity to make people realize that the choices they made are incorrect or wrong. Others even know that their choices are wrong and still do not make proper changes. A cycle of bad choices can lead a person to self-destruction. If you would like to know what your choices have been, take a long hard look at yourself and the life you have lived. What you will see is the choices you have made.

People have control of their attitude, their ego, who they chose as friends, how they spend their money, their productivity as workers, their money, how much they exercise, their goals, their ability to learn from their mistakes, their education, their giving to others, choosing the right mate, and the way they feel about themselves. It's all a matter of making the right choice. Unfortunately, people are making bad choices and they don't even realize it. Some of these unconscious choices can kill. People need to be more conscious and figure out what they want from life, where they want to go, and how they want to get there. Either way, good or bad, they have to make some type of choice to get where they desire or a choice not to be productive as a citizen of the earth.

Learning what to choose, and how to choose, may be the most important education a person will ever receive. Manage your choices and you manage your life.

Next Week: HIS/HER will address the topic of dating on the job or spending time with someone you worked with. Comments and suggestion of topics are encouraged.

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diversions. Combine these with the overabundance of information floating around in the world and you will without a doubt, make a hasty and shallow decision.

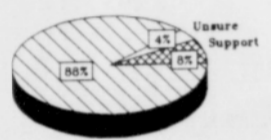
We all live with stress in our busy lives, but stress can add to poor decision making as well. Stress has a way of decreasing one's attention which is needed in making a decision and processing vital information. The outcome is usually and unfortunately, a snap decision.

ences, make time for yourself, go through the selection process steps carefully. Define the problem, look at the consequences, check out the alternatives, gather more information if needed, and then make your choice.

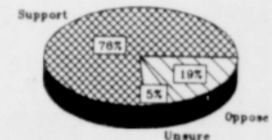
Remember this is your life and every choice you make will have some bearing on your future. Look back and smile. Look forward with optimism. It's your choice.

Attitudes of the American public toward Medicare funding.

SUBSTANTIAL CUTS IN MEDICARE TO REDUCE FEDERAL DEFICIT



INCREASE MEDICARE FUNDING



- Three in four want greater federal spending on Medicare.
- Seven in ten prefer increased taxes to reduced spending for this program.
- Only one percent of the American public views Medicare cuts as an excellent way to decrease the deficit.

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▲ Laverne Davis and students

Saudi Arabia As Seen In America

The folklore and festivals of Saudi Arabia were featured at a fantastic exhibition held at various cities throughout the United States during 1989 and 1990.

Artifacts from an ancient land, the life of a desert nomad, hand-crafted pottery, textiles, mats and sandals, beautiful brass, falconry, camel races and colorful folk dancers with bandoliers and sabres were just a few of the delightful sights enjoyed by thousands of Americans who viewed the Saudi Arabia Yesterday and Today cultural exhibition tour. Also featured were detailed models of the minarets of magnificent mosques, the doors of the Kaabah—Islam's holiest place—covered with gold and silver. Visitors got to see how old and new complement each other in Arabia and how centuries-old values and traditions undergird a society prepared for the high-tech challenges of the 21st century. More views of this splendid show and the country it came from are available in free brochures. For copies write: The Hannaford Company, P.O. Box 25192, Washington, D.C. 20007.

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Major Threat To Veteran Entitlements

Attention veterans: Many of your entitlements could be taken away unless action is taken now, reports the Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW).

For example, a recent report from the General Accounting Office (GAO) found that large numbers of veterans receive compensation for diseases that arose in military service, but were neither caused nor aggravated by that service. The GAO report suggested that "Congress may wish to reconsider whether these diseases should be compensated as service connected disabilities."

The VFW believes firmly that the diseases to which the GAO report alludes are unavoidably the result of such conditions and will continue to fight to protect veteran entitlements in Washington. For free brochures about becoming a member of VFW, write: Veterans of Foreign Wars, National Headquarters, Broadway at 34th St., Kansas City, MO 64111.



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