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RELATIONSHIPS

Are you a chooser or a loser?

By JEFF HERRING
KNIGHT RIDDER

Author and speaker H. Stephen Glenn has said, "In terms of the entire world, if, when you wake up in the morning, you have a choice of what to eat, a choice of what to wear, a job to go to and a way to get there, you have abundance."

And yet we squander that abundance so often by not making choices in our lives. We allow life to just happen to us, instead of choosing what we believe to be best for us. We have enough abundance to create and live our best life, and yet we lose out by choosing not to. We have very weak choice muscles.

So the question becomes: Are you a chooser or a loser?

If that sounds harsh, well, so be it. It's a harsh reality.

HOW TO BE A LOSER

- Allow life to just happen to you.
- Play the victim role.
- Complain without taking any action.
- Believe you have no power to influence yourself or others.
- Take the "dead roach approach" to events that occur in your life — lying flat on your back with your legs wiggling in the air and whatever happens, happens.
- Believe in silly sayings such as "waiting for the other shoe to drop" and "bad things always come in threes." These are classic self-fulfilling prophecies.
- Take a reactive approach to life — do not use you brain.
- Ask really useless questions such as "Why does this always happen to me?" while whining "This is not fair!"
- Play it safe and don't take risks — prefer the safety of mediocrity over the chance to go for what you want in life.
- Set very low expectations for yourself and then consistently fail to live up to them.

HOW TO BE A CHOOSER

- Realize — get it — that you have choices!
- Take a proactive approach to your life.



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- Expect success and for things to go well and go your way.
- Set high expectations for yourself, higher than others expect of you, and then exceed them.
- Pick a direction in which to head and then pursue it with all you have got.
- Be creative. So many people limit themselves by telling me that they are just not creative. My response is "Do you worry?" Answer — "Yes, of course. All the time." Then you know how be creative. Worrying is simply being creative in a negative, limiting way. Creativity is simply this: "looking at something that has always been there and seeing something that has never been seen before."

AREAS IN WHICH IT IS CRUCIAL TO BE A CHOOSER

RELATIONSHIPS: We do not pick or choose the family into which we are born. We do, however, choose our friends and our mates. It is important to choose your friends carefully, because you will become like them.

It is crucial to pick your mate carefully, as demonstrated in this quote from H. Jackson Browne: "Choose your spouse carefully. From this one choice will come 90 percent of your happiness or misery in life."

For more information on finding and creating the kind of relationship you want, you can visit www.couples-connection.com.

MONEY: We live in a culture that trains us to consume from Day One. The route from my house to my office is about 6 miles. The other day I counted a total of 24 places designed specifically to take my money in exchange for things I do not need. Be careful that you do not let commercials choose how to spend your money for you.

WORK: We spend a very significant portion of our waking hours at work. So why not spend a significant portion of your waking hours doing something you love to do.

Most of the people I talk with have a dream of what they would like to do for a living. Go for it. If doing your dream is not available to you right now as a full-time source of income, make it part time, or just choose to make it up yourself.

LEISURE TIME: Just this morning a local radio station was taking calls from listeners about what they missed about the good old days. Here's what I miss — when kids went outside to play and adults went outside to play and talk. When I was a kid my parents had to drag me in the house, now you have to force kids out of the house. Most people in suburbia do not know the names of the people who live on either side of them, across the street or behind them.

Here's a question for you: How long are you going to watch other people live? Just how many reruns can you watch? How many do you have to watch for the story to change? Get up. Get outside. Choose to be alive.

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