



# The Power of Choice

By Julie Fuimano, Personal Development Expert & Success Coach

Every day you get up, get ready for work, get your family ready for work/school, and are on your way. Day in and day out, you do what you do because you have to. You are either obligated to do what you do because it's your "duty" or you do it because you have no choice. Or, so you think.

## Thoughts Are Not Truth

The mind can be a tricky place. You have thousands of thoughts every day. Many of those thoughts are the same ones you had yesterday and the day before and the day before that. Repetitious thoughts become habits of thought. Who says that those thoughts are good thoughts? They are merely the thoughts you've been thinking day after day, year after year.

The reality is that just because *you think* you have to do something, doesn't mean you do. You have a choice. In fact, you always have a choice. You have free will. You may have a thought process that does not want you to believe that you have a choice. These thought processes are the trickiest of all because of their grip on you. But that does not mean you don't have choice. It just means your mind doesn't want you to have control.

Your argument might be, "Well, I have to pay the bills. I *have to* work." The reality is that you don't *have to* pay the bills. You don't. Unless of course you like having the things that paying those bills provides you. If you like having heat or air conditioning in your home, then you'll pay the electric or gas bill – *willingly*. You also don't *have to* work this job. You choose to do *this* work and you choose your attitude and your enjoyment of it. You could choose to do other work. Work is not a bad thing. When you think of work as an opportunity to do what you love, to express yourself, and to utilize your potential, then work becomes *play for pay*. You choose your work and you choose your attitude. There's always a choice; you just may not like the options.

Unfortunately, society works against you. There are many forces that converge upon you to make you think you have no choices. This includes family. As I write this, it is late November and many people are discussing the obligations associated with the holidays. Why do you feel the need to go to parties or to attend social gatherings? Why do you spend money you would rather not spend on useless gifts that people don't really care about? Why do you spend time, money, and effort on sending out all of those holiday cards to people who you barely associate with? Do you choose to do what you do because you want to impress someone? Is it because you feel obligated? Knowing why you do what you do is an important part of giving yourself choices. But often the reason is buried deep within your thought processes.

When you are growing up, you are expected to do as you are told and follow direction. This is important for children because they need limits and rules to live by. But when you are an adult, if you continue to follow the rules and blindly do as you are told, you are giving away the gift of adulthood: the gift of choosing for yourself what is best for you. This is the very thing that as children we long for and then when we receive the gift of adulthood, we fear the freedom it gives us so we continue to do what we were taught as children.

When you operate out of a sense of obligation or duty rather than choice, you feel stress and pressure. It's heavy, like the weight of the world is on your shoulders. You charge forth day after day but it's like walking through mud; and at the end of the day, you feel drained. And when you are tired and drained, there's not much energy for yourself to exercise, spend quality time with friends or family – to enjoy yourself. Over time, you get burned out and you resign yourself to find another way...but you procrastinate because you're too tired today to figure out how to do things differently! And this is how you live your life.

## Operating From Choice

What if you were to operate completely out of choice? How might you feel different if you were to do what you do because you want to rather than because you have to?



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What if you were to only do things that feel good for you and that honor your ideas about how you want to spend your time, energy, and resources? You might need to learn how to say “no” to people, places, and things that you do not want to spend your time and money on and those that do not add value to you or support you living at your best.

What if you were to eliminate the words “have to”, “should”, and “supposed to” from your vocabulary? You would need to be more aware of your language both to yourself and to others. You would use words and phrases such as “I choose to” and “I want to”.

By giving yourself permission to choose how you spend your time, who you spend time with, what you choose to do, and how you choose to think, you are *free to be you*, to freely express through your words and actions who you are as a mature adult man or woman. The thought of that should make you smile. No longer do you need to do anything out of obligation. You can still choose to do something that you have to do; but you can do it because you want to, because as an adult who’s in charge of your life, you are choosing to make that phone call or attend that family gathering. You can do what you do out of choice. It’s an empowering place to be. By being at choice, you take charge of your life and your inner experience. After all, it’s not only what you do and what you achieve, but how you feel about it that matters most.

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