

Re-programme your thinking: Live the life you choose

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During Sunday lunch on a beautiful summer's day a group of friends talk about their life. "Tomorrow is Monday and work again, I wish I could do whatever I wanted, I dislike my work and my boss is so annoying" complained Justine." "So what's stopping you" asked Sally. "I need the money, and where would I find another job in these difficult times and at my age." Justine responds." "I think we are all in the same boat, stuck in our jobs until retirement, I suppose we should make the most of our weekend." sighs Thuli...

Having worked in the space of coaching and people development for many years, I am saddened by how easily we give up on seeking and living a better life. We are quick to place blame and responsibility on something or someone.

From my research and experience on how we function and are programmed, I believe that every action creates a reality for tomorrow. Decisions on eating healthy, exercising and keeping fit, relationships, the work we do and our activities are daily choices. We prioritise and decide which is important and which isn't. We create a mental picture of where and on what we will be spending time, energy and resources. Often when questioned, we come up with excuses that we do it for others or that we have no options and choice. Yet that very act is a choice.

BE ACTIVE NOT PASSIVE IN YOUR LIFE'S JOURNEY. Decide on how you spend this precious time on earth, what value you bring to yourself and others.

Our brain is programmed very similar to a computer, the neural pathways for our current programme have been created over years. We formed habits that we keep repeating and so deepening the pathways. When we continue doing what we have always done we will get the results we have always gotten. It is like the story of the man who walks down the road and falls into a hole., The next day he takes the same route. We may have not been aware of creating our thinking and behaviour patterns up until now. Now we have the ability to make decisions and change our thinking and behaviour patterns to design the life we wish to live. **WE HAVE CHOICE.**

Reflect on your life, your relationships, the work you do and all aspects that make-up your life, in each of these areas. Did you choose or allow it to happen? Was it circumstances and influences that shaped it or was it your decision and choice? At times situations maybe out of our control, however the majority of times we make the decision and choice.

As a start to living your chosen life

1. Get to know yourself better. – What are you good at, what are your strengths? Are you using these strengths and where? This is particularly important when you find yourself questioning the work you are doing or in times of retrenchments and retirement. Once you are aware of your strengths you are then confident and aware of all the opportunities and possibilities of

using these strengths. If you are unaware of what you are good at, life becomes scary, and the thought of losing your job is daunting.

2. What brings out your passion and energy – thinks of times when you were so involved in a piece of work or activity that time flew by. Recapture these moments and repeat them as they motivate and energise you. When you decide on a career, think of these moments and choose to do what you enjoy. Do not be a victim of circumstances. Often people say I needed the money therefore I took the job. At times this may be true, but continuously seeking work that brings you happiness and engagement means you can move jobs or share this with your employer to move positions in the company. Organisations benefit more from people who are engaged than those doing a job for merely a salary.
3. Think of how you can contribute to not only yourself and immediate family, but the community at large. When we contribute to something bigger than ourselves we ignite the energy inside of us.
4. Continuously reflect on your day and the decisions you have made; was it a choice or were you a victim of circumstances? Change the programme in your brain to take ownership of your life, to make decisions because you have thought it through and have chosen to make it. Then take responsibility for the results. Learn from your decisions, if the results were not as you had anticipated what would you do differently the next time?
5. Learn about yourself through people – request for feedback on your behaviour and decide how and why you will change your behaviour.

A well-known Author and speaker tells a great story about a taxi driver who decided to soar like an eagle. And, if we will take the lessons provided in this story and apply them to our lives, we too, can soar like eagles.

His story is about a taxi driver who heard about POWER OF CHOICE one day.

Power of choice is that you can be a duck or an eagle.

He exceeded customer expectations by being presentable, offering services such as beverages, reading material and facilities that very few other drivers offered. When his customers responded well, he did more and began to reap the benefits. In his first year as an eagle, he doubled his income from the previous year. The following year he quadrupled it. By changing his attitude from being a complainer to taking responsibility for his choices he attracted opportunities. “Making him an eagle soaring above the rest of the drivers”.

The brain is programmed to filter what you focus on. “If you expect a difficult life, you’ll rarely disappoint yourself”. It’s up to each of us to decide if we want to be a duck or an eagle.

It’s easy to cluster around similar thinking people, complaining about work and life. But being an eagle presents us with an opportunity to step out of the flock of ducks, look at the world from a higher vantage point, and rise above our self-imposed limitations.

WE HAVE CHOICE IN DESIGNING OUR LIVES – OWN IT!