

## **Change vs. Choice**

### **Change**

The Wikipedia explains the word “change” as “The process of becoming different”.

### **Choice**

On the other hand for the word “choice” Wikipedia offer much longer explanation: “Choice consists of the mental process of judging the merits of multiple options and selecting one of them. While a choice can be made between imagined options ("what would I do if ...?"), often a choice is made between real options, and followed by the corresponding action. For example, a route for a journey is chosen based on the preference of arriving at a given destination as soon as possible. The preferred (and therefore chosen) route is then derived from information about how long each of the possible routes takes. This can be done by a route planner. If the preference is more complex, such as involving the scenery of the route, cognition and feeling are more intertwined, and the choice is less easy to delegate to a computer program or assistant. More complex examples (often decisions that affect what a person thinks or their core beliefs) include choosing a lifestyle, religious affiliation, or political position. Most people regard having choices as a good thing, though a severely limited or artificially restricted choice can lead to discomfort with choosing and possibly, an unsatisfactory outcome. In contrast, unlimited choice may lead to confusion, regret of the alternatives not taken, and indifference in an unstructured existence; and the illusion that choosing an object or a course leads necessarily to control of that object or course can cause psychological problems.

### **Reading**

“We who lived in concentration camps can remember the men who walked through the huts comforting others, giving away their last piece of bread. They may have been few in number, but they offer sufficient proof that everything can be taken from a man but one thing: the last of the human freedoms -- to choose one's attitude in any given set of circumstances, to choose one's own way, “said Viktor Emil Frankl M.D., Ph.D., neurologist, psychiatrist, and Holocaust survivor in his book “Man’s Search for Meaning”.

In his book “Long Walk to Freedom,” Nelson Mandela writes about the frequent change of his prison guards, because the guards became “soft”, after spending some time in the wing he was kept. Most of the guards were transformed by Mr. Mandela’s refusal to become angry with them during his mistreatment, and he remained kind, peaceful, and loving. Mr. Mandela could not change the circumstances he was in, and most days he was not even sure if he would see the end of that day. He was in this very depressing situation for 27 years. Most of us have heard about his imprisonment, but it is not the actual imprisonment we remember him by, but by the attitude he

chose while being mistreated. He changed the world not by demanding the world to change, but by the choosing to see the world differently.

### **Coaching Application**

In his foreword to “Teaching of Abraham” by Esther and Jerry Hicks, Dr. Wayne Dyer wrote “When we change the way we look at things, the things we look at will change.” I would like to rephrase it to “When we choose the way we look at things, the things we look at will change.”

Often, when we are faced with situations or circumstances in our life that are uncomfortable to us, or cause us pain, we want to change the situation or the circumstance. We get so focused on trying to change a behavioral trait in others, or in ourselves, and become bitter when there is refusal to change despite all of our efforts, or we realize that changing ourselves is even more painful than the current situation or circumstance. We find ourselves trying so hard to bring forth the desired change that we have become exhausted and unable to enjoy any change we have been able to make. Everything seems to be going backwards, and now we have added to the pile our frustration or despair. And everything starts snowballing down the hills. By the time we realize that we have forgotten what we tried to change in the first place, it seems that we are so deep in all of this, that the only thing to do is to change something or someone else, and cycle starts all over again. Now we have two snowballs rolling down the hill, but our focus is now on the newly created snowball. Soon this snowball gets too big for us to handle, and we create another one. And then another, and so on. Eventually we have so many snowballs rolling down the hill, that we lose control over all of them. The change seems to be impossible. But things start to change when we introduce to the mix the choice. The choice creates awareness, and we become aware of all the snowballs rolling uncontrollably down the hill. This might be a scary sight. An avalanche comes to mind. But now we can choose to not change situations or circumstances we did not create. We might even find that the very circumstance or situation we are trying to change are actually working for our benefit, if we just take a step back and look at it from a different perspective. We are not creating any more snowballs, and we can choose which snowball we can let go of because it is unnecessary, which snowball we need to break, because it is full of debris, which snowball we need to stop from rolling, because it has reached its peak potential, and which snowball we can use to create what we want. We choose, we prioritize, and then we create. And before we know it we have made a snowman!

When we try to change something or someone, the outcome has all the power. We hand the power over to something we have no control over; our happiness and confidence will be on a very shaky ground, and that will most likely manifest itself as a stress or anxiety. Choice at the other hand will put the power back where it belongs – in our hands. We can choose our attitude, we can choose how we see any given circumstance, we can even choose to accept ourselves as complete, powerful, and resourceful ready to create whatever we choose to create. This knowledge might come as a surprise or even scare us, but once again we can choose to move forward, or wait; the power is ours.

**Ask Questions:**

What is your desired effect?

If you had two choices, what would they be?

If you could change one thing about ....., what would you change? Would that change really make you happy? How?

What is holding you back?