



6. YOUR DECISIONS

-Choices, choices, so many choices...-

CHAPTER ROAD MAP

DIRECTIONS: This chapter aims to inspire you to think about your decisions. The decisions you make on a daily basis are the ultimate expression of YOU. Have you ever thought about your decision-making? (That's called metacognition, btw: thinking about thinking. Very deep

stuff.)

Your decisions define (for yourself and for those around you,) exactly **who you are**. Your decisions will drive your life in the direction of your choosing. (Yeah, see? That's big stuff. We saved the best stuff for last.)

After the usual test drive, you will review previous book material in order to review what you've learned (in all three books) and apply it to your daily decisions and choices. You will cover:

1. How to make a decision you like (that may be a good place to start, yes?).
2. What are consequences? Weighing risks with rewards (your brain, your emotions and your psyche).
3. Character development (your morals, media and social world).
4. Spreading your wings (how family and Cu.R.E.S. shape your decisions).
5. The forgiveness factor (weaving it into your personality, communication and love).
6. Daring, destructive, dangerous or dubious outlets (bad decisions and their impact on you).
7. Powerful, positive or potent outlets (good decisions and their impact on you).

FINAL DESTINATION: Finally, after three books, we are able to say: Your final destination always depends on your decisions! You choose where you will end up in each aspect of your life. Each decision IS a destination. Just where will **YOU** go?



Check Under Your Hood:

What does the word "consequence" mean to you?

When you have a difficult decision to make, how do you go about it?

Do you turn to your parents? Your friends? Keep it to yourself? Journal? Pray?

Run? Sleep on it?

Are you generally happy with the decisions you have made in life? **yes/no/ half and half**

Have you ever made a decision that you regret? **yes/no**

If yes, why did/do you regret it?

TEST DRIVE

Everyday, you have a choice as to how to live your life:

Do you choose to let little things get you down? **yes/no**

Do you choose to worry more about school work than about crushes? **yes/no**

Do you choose to regularly get out of bed on time for school? **yes/no**

Do you choose to ignore your siblings when they pick fights with you? **yes/no**

Do you choose to effectively communicate what is on your mind? **yes/no**

Do you choose to exercise? **yes/no**

Do you choose to shower? **yes/no**

Do you choose to eat well? **yes/no**

What did you choose for breakfast this morning? _____

Everything you do and say is the product of a decision. Sometimes those decisions may be routine (like whether to brush your teeth every morning). Sometimes those decisions will be very deliberate and well thought-out, (like, how you are going to tell your parents you want to attend a party Friday night). Whether big or small, you make thousands of decisions everyday that further create **who you are**.

As such, wouldn't it seem logical to make sure that the majority of those 1,000+ decisions benefit you? **yes /no /I wasn't paying attention and I need to read that over again.**

How do you feel about the following choices?

- **If you choose to not stick up for Sam who is being cyber-bullied by your friends, you have made a choice to be part of the bullying. I will feel**

- **If you choose to plant trees because a recent storm wiped out a dozen at the local park, you have chosen to do something beneficial for the environment. I will feel**

- **If you choose to write "Debbie is a loser" on the white board just as the entire class, including Debbie, enters, you've chosen to hurt Debbie. I will feel**

- If you choose to hold the door for someone on crutches you have chosen to do a nice thing and you may feel _____ because of it. The other person probably feels _____ as a result.
- If you say YES! to date Sam, even though you know Sam has been abusive in the past, what experiences might you have as a result of that choice? My experiences might be _____

Thinking ahead about what your feelings and experiences will be as a result of the decisions you make is critical. Imagine if you didn't think about the different outcomes? You wouldn't be respecting yourself, or others, if you went around making choices without a thought to the consequences.

Not only do you have a choice about the things that you will do each day, you also have a choice about your moods and how you wish to view your life. No really, you do. How you choose to deal with those moods will affect the emotions you will have in the future.



What are you thinking about lately and what types of decisions are you making? 1,000 positive ones or 1,000 debatable/questionable ones? **positive/negative/?** In fact, just how do you make sure your decisions feel right and speak to **who you are?**

**“Behaviors are a choice. Feelings are sometimes out of our control.”
~Randall Terry**

HOW TO MAKE A DECISION THAT REFLECTS WHO YOU ARE

A decision is **“the act or need for making up one’s mind.”** (dictionary.com). What makes a decision feel right and good? That’s entirely up to you to decide (yes! You decide on your decisions!). How do you make those feel-good decisions? Well, for that we have some guidelines and then, well, you can decide whether or not to use them (ha, ha, ha, more decisions).

We already discussed some of your decision-making in **BOOK 1**. Remember this diagram?

**ACTION CREATES TIME
TO THINK, FEEL,
CHOOSE LEADING TO A
RESPONSE**

This diagram shows the time between an action and a response (remember, you don't react anymore). That time is your time to think and **CHOOSE** a response that

speaks to who you choose to be (so many choices!!). **Each and every response is a decision.** Your decision. (Now, it's all coming full circle, isn't it?)

With every decision you make, you probably use your thoughts and feelings, and this, in turn, creates your experiences – **your life**. We will now refer to this diagram as your **DECISION DIAGRAM**.



Certainly, you don't need to go through a big process for each and every decision in your life (you'd never make it out of bed in the morning). However, when you are faced with a difficult decision and you need some time to think, feel and choose, here are some simple guidelines for you to follow:

1. **Find a peaceful spot to think.** Whenever you are faced with a difficult decision, your mind is likely to be going in many different directions. Help yourself to focus by finding a comfortable place where you can think.
2. **Clearly define the problem in your mind.** *The problem is that Max is cheating on Alexa and Alexa is my friend so I feel I need to do or say something.* Don't forget to tap into how you feel about the situation. Your feelings may help you resolve the problem. *I feel really stuck and nervous about getting involved.*
3. **Brainstorm. Generate some ideas about how you could respond:** a.) *I could tell Alexa right away,* b.) *I could tell Max that I know and ask him to tell her,* or c.) *I could leave an anonymous message in her locker (we could name many more examples, but you get the idea).*
4. **Explore what might happen with each response.** a.) *Alexa might get mad at me, she might thank me, she might not believe me,* b.) *Max might ignore me, he might deny it and then try to hide it better, he might tell Alexa,* or, c.) *Alexa might not believe the letter or even find it. How do you feel about these results? How likely is each one?*
5. **Choose the best option. Given your thoughts, feelings and the possible consequences, which response resonates the most with who you are?**
6. **Do it. (No need to go through all that and then not follow through! But, remember to use your awesome communication skills!)**



“As simple as it sounds, we all must try to be the best person that we can: by making the best choices, by making the most of the talents we have been given.”
~Mary Lou Retton,
World-class gymnast

In order to make your **life** as you choose, you will want to start making solid decisions now, ones that reflect **who you are** and ones that put you on the path of your choosing. Many things happen in life that are beyond your control (remember that whole discussion on control?), but you ALWAYS have control over the decisions that you make.



PIT STOP: How are you doing with the responses you are making in your life these days? Are you reacting less, the same, or more than when you first started reading these books? **less/ more/ the same/ I'm not sure**

Do you have a place where you can think carefully? **yes/no**

Think of the last big decision you made... Did you think carefully about what to do? **yes/no**

Pretend you see John, your best friend's brother, stealing from the school store for the third time. You know if you report him he will most likely get expelled. Use the decision making guidelines above to determine what you would do. When you are done, write your decision here, why you chose it and what you think the consequences will be of that choice. **Decision:**

Why: _____

Possible consequence: _____