

Clarity and Courage

We are faced with thousands of decisions in our lifetime. Some are very simple, such as what to wear that day. Others are more difficult, such as whether to leave a job or end a relationship. Sometimes the decision is made for us if we put it off for too long, which is a decision in itself. All are placed before us for our learning and growth.

Have you noticed that some people are able to make decisions with great ease while others agonize over the smallest choices? How we make decisions can be a reflection of patterns of how we go through life in general. Are we bold and confident? Are we withdrawn and give up our power? Do we embrace life or hold back out of fear? Some may see situations from many perspectives while others believe they have the only truth. All these patterns make us uniquely who we are in the world. We are held responsible for how we go through life and the choices or lack of choices we make. In order to live life to the fullest, the patterns under which we operate and how we make decisions require effective strategies and inner resources. Two of the qualities that are very helpful to have are clarity and courage.

Clarity involves knowing what we want, awareness of options, understanding the consequences and seeing the big picture. If you frequently hear yourself say, "I don't know what to do; I don't know what I want." Or, maybe you come from the opposite end and frequently say, "I don't care what happens, I'm doing it my way." Both are examples of lack of clarity. One leads to feeling paralyzed. The other may lead to severe consequences that the person didn't consider. There are several aspects that interfere with clarity:

- *Not having criteria for the outcome. If you are going to buy a car, for example, it's a very difficult decision to make from the hundreds of models available if you have no criteria for what you want. If you have the criteria of a certain budget, gas mileage, safety, comfort, sporty or seating capacity, it's a little bit easier to narrow down your choices.*
- *How we ask the question. Starting a question with "Should I", or limiting the options we look at often interferes with clarity. Our brain doesn't know what to do with the word should, and gets hung up on that ambiguity instead of searching for answers. We also get polarized and create an internal argument as there are often positives to both options. If we pose questions such as, "Should I go out tonight or stay home." Should I take the new job or stay in the old one," we often get stuck. One way of bringing clarity in is by starting to connect with your inner guidance to know what you want that's at a higher level. Examples of newly worded questions would be, "How can I best relax and unwind tonight?" or, "How can I enjoy my job and bring in more money?" The wisdom is in the question. When we ask a question starting with "how can I", or "in what ways can I", our brain starts on a search to find all the ways that can happen.*

One powerful question that fits any situation is, “What is my next step for my Highest Good?”

- *No permission to have what we want. Sometimes we feel we don’t have the right to have we want. If we have beliefs of, “I don’t deserve”, “I never get what I want”, “Every time I get what I want I mess it up”, the energy of those beliefs is going to stop us from giving ourselves permission to make a decision.*
- *Want to make a decision from a place of anxiety or anger. The part of our brain involved when we’re anxious or angry has to do with the flight or fight response. It can’t think of new options or be creative. So, making a decision from this place can be difficult. Doing some deep breathing and telling ourselves to relax and let go can be helpful. Another easy method is to put one hand on your forehead and the other hand behind your head and just hold it there for a few minutes, breathing slowly. This is a method that interrupts your body’s stress response, actually begins to retrain your body to relax.*
- *Fear of making a mistake, other people’s reactions, wanting guarantees. Sometimes we get paralyzed by beliefs that we must be perfect, that others must approve of all that we do, that we need a guarantee of success before we move forward. Although it’s helpful to get as much information as possible when making a decision, being overly influenced by what’s out of our control clouds our clarity. Sometimes it’s not so much that we don’t know what to do, it’s that we’re afraid of doing what we know to do. So, instead, we sit and wait and agonize, losing sleep and energy.*

Courage comes into play in making decisions by developing trust in ourselves and our inner wisdom. Courage means going inside and connecting with our soul for the clarity and guidance for what to do, knowing that only we know what’s right for us. Our part is to be quiet and listen. Courage means knowing that life holds no guarantees for success, but does guarantee our learning and growth when we allow it.

May we all have the clarity to know our next step, and the courage to take it.

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