

MAKING DECISIONS: ARE THEY OUT OF FEAR OR FAITH?

What is your motivation for making decisions? Is it Fear or Faith? There are many ways to look at these two states. We could be moving away from pain as opposed to moving towards pleasure; we could be playing it safe rather than taking risks; we could be focused on the glass half empty as opposed to the glass half full; we could be focused on what's missing rather than what's there; we could look at experience as a disaster or an opportunity.

"The reality is..." Ever hear that phrase before come out of your mouth or someone else's? Who's reality are we talking about? What is "reality" anyway? A more appropriate phrase might be "My reality..." As a student of NLP you know that the brain takes in millions of bits of information every day. We have a way of sorting and organizing them into something that makes sense. We all sort and organize differently. We sort and organize by deleting and distorting and generalizing the information that comes through our 5 physical senses and filter it through our past personal history, memories, meta programs, beliefs/values, moods, attitudes, etc. Because no two people can occupy the same place at the same time, no experience can be filtered the same way. Hence, what I experience is not the whole experience. What is real to me is different for someone else.

All of this is leading to the point that your experience can be altered by the decisions you make. "Oh, the economy is bad; better hold on to my money." Which came first? If large numbers of people stop spending money, the economy does get bad. In fact, there have been times when the economic indicators were fine, yet so many people thought the economy was bad that it did get bad. People pull their money out of the stock market, it goes down, and people lose money. One of my NLP trainer friends told me that someone backed out of a training class because of the war. Huh? I could see that being a sound decision if the troops were marching down their street. The war or any other event can spur us to make decisions. What makes one person go after personal development while another shrinks from it in challenging times? One person is making their decision based on fear; the other is making the decision based on faith.

Fear makes us hold back, pull in and hold on. We go into a protection mode where we stop taking risks and start focusing on what's missing, what we don't have and what we might lose. We stop taking advantage of opportunities for growth and we vegetate. We move away from what scares us and stop moving towards things that will allow us to grow.

This takes place on a cellular level. Our cells have two ways to survive: growth and protection. A cell cannot be in a pattern of growth and protection at the same time. When they're in growth they are moving towards or forwards; when they're in a mode of protection, they're going backwards away from something that scares them. We are made up of cells. According to Dr. Bruce Lipton, a biophysicist and cell biologist, the state of fear accesses the fight or flight mechanism and puts our cells into protection. In protection, blood is sent away from the organs and into the muscles, away from the front part of the brain (logic) and sent into the hind or primitive brain (adrenal system, automatic response) **Cells in protection can't grow and eventually die.** Fear and stress lead to the shut down of the immune system (a high budget energy system) to save energy. This leads to illness and disease.

Ever notice that a fearful world or national event is followed by widespread illness, such as flu. Now just in case there is not enough to be fearful about we have SARS.

Faith, on the other hand, allows us to breathe freely and know that no matter what happens, we'll be ok; that we'll be taken care of in some way; that there is always more; that even in loss there are gifts. We are free to move towards things that will allow us to grow and be healthy mentally and physically. We can let go of money and other things because we know that more will come back or something better is coming. Our life is in FLOW. We know that anything is possible and that miracles occur hourly. In faith we're grateful for what we have. Every time I write a check I remind myself that there is always more where this came from.

People around tax time get anxious when they have to take a large amount of money out of savings to pay taxes. They've been doing it for years. And yet they get anxious every time because they look at what they are doing as a loss. Fear makes them anxious even though they've always had enough. If it's humanly possible and you are a human, then it's possible for you.

Think about what you are telling yourself or visualizing or feeling that motivates the kind of decisions you are making.

Are you fearful of spending money because you might lose what you have or you won't have enough? Bad strategy. If you focus on not having enough, you won't have enough. If you focus on money, love, whatever you want, you'll create more of that.

Avoid letting fear dictate your happiness or growth or access to information that would allow you to make more money, be happier, have richer relationships. You want to keep investing in yourself; it will give you the richest returns.

Dr. Carolyn Myss talks about the Tribal Mind in her books on spirituality. The Tribal Mind is the most primitive, survival-oriented level of social consciousness, identified with ethnicity, nationality, and consensus reality. Tribal control of life is necessary for physical and financial survival. Tribal influences can be positive and negative. Tribal loyalty and honor when attached all the time leaves loyalty to oneself in low priority. Tribal culture provides a sense of belonging and dignity. Tribal experiences energetically interconnect us. Epidemics are a negative group experience to which we can become energetically susceptible if our own fears and attitudes are similar to those held by the overall culture. When we allow ourselves through ignorance or choice to be ruled only by the Tribal culture and subvert our own individuality, we become victims of the Tribal Mind. The dominant thinking of the culture becomes ours. If the culture is predominantly fearful we will be fearful.

And there are many ways to trick ourselves into thinking we are doing one when in fact we are doing the other. We do this when we make a decision based on what others think, when delude ourselves into thinking we're taking the safer route. Recently a client was deciding whether to go to the Orient or stay here. Someone asked him, "What about SARS?" That didn't bother him. It was a business decision. What would be the most beneficial to his business? He decided to go.

Without taking risks, you stop growing. When you stop growing, you die. And it, for most, will be a slow anxiety ridden death. Make decisions bases on FAITH.

It will create the kind of peace and lasting happiness that only that wonderful sense of accomplishment can provide.

For Students of NLP:

Strategies for getting rid of fear: anchoring, belief change of the belief underneath the fear, conflict resolution when the feelings are conflicted. As on client put it, "Curiosity (intent of his confident part) plus protection (intent of his fear) = wisdom. Understanding the positive intent of the fear is useful.