

A Time to Choose

WRITER
JESSICA
MCGREGOR
JOHNSON

Why our choices are governed by our value systems

I was talking with a client recently and she mentioned that one of the things she had noticed that we came back to again and again was my invitation to always make a choice.

She was trying to decide what the next step in her life was to be. Should she leave where she lived right now in Spain and move countries? She felt she had two choices, the UK or Germany but neither seemed right or easy to do. She felt bad because she was making no choice and thus staying in Spain by default. Because of this lack of choice she felt disempowered, a victim of her circumstances. She was stressed and felt pressured about her decisions, which completed the vicious circle and made her feel completely powerless.

I suggested that instead of looking at her life as a choice between two countries she looked at it as a decision between three countries. Put Spain into the picture. By making it a choice to stay in Spain right now, rather than something that was just happening to her, she immediately began to feel better.

The panic began to dissipate and she could relax and become more focused in the present moment and what real choices were available to her. This did not mean that everything was sorted there and then, far from it and she is still in the process of making the “final” decision, but seeing everything as a choice in her life did help her feel better about herself. And when we feel better about ourselves we begin to see the wood for the trees.

I was speaking with another client about choices recently. She was telling me quite forcefully that sometimes we do not have a choice, we



cannot do what we want. In her situation she had two children and she told me that what she'd really like to do is pack up everything and go to India for two years. She told me that that simply wasn't possible and that she had no choice but to stay where she was.

At that point I played devil's advocate and replied that in fact she did have the choice. She could leave her kids with her ex-husband and go to India. She could decide that India would be an amazing experience for her kids and take them with her. At this point she got even more agitated. I pointed out that her reaction to these suggestions was so strong because for her they were not choices. These options went against her values, family being one of the highest of her values. But with that said – she still had a choice. She might not like the choice – but she did have one.

Our choices are very governed by our value system and this is where the confusion around choices can happen. We can choose to stay within our value system or we can choose to ignore it. More often than not our values do have a huge influence over our choices, and that's a good thing.

But never confuse a values-based decision with being a victim of circumstance. There is no “have to” in this world. We might not like the choices we face but if we can stay in the mindset of it being a choice then we take back both the control and responsibility for our lives and from that space we are in a stronger mental position to handle whatever arises in our life.

This principle of making everything a choice is true for every area of your life. Whatever situations you face, if you can remember that you always have a choice then it will help you immensely. Whenever you are faced with a decision that makes you feel like you are stuck between a rock and hard place remember that even then this is a moment to make it a choice. At that point if you decide that you cannot choose – know that in fact you have chosen. Trouble is that when you decide not to choose is when you immediately feel disempowered – and that does not feel good.

So if you are faced with a situation in which you feel like you have no choice – stop and look for where the choices are. You may not like them but they are there – for sure. Then decide to step up to the plate and make a choice. Take control and you will be far more armed to handle whatever the outcome may be.

about the author



Jessica offers Life Guidance & Mentoring to people who are at a crossroads in life. She typically finds that for many having reached the success they have worked towards for many years there is a sense of something missing, that this cannot be “it”. She guides you to discover yourself anew, identify your true passions, and live them, whether it be in your work or personal life. She works internationally with people individually on the phone and Skype as well as offering her signature “Get Unstuck in Two Days” individual retreat in Spain. She is the author of *The Right T-Shirt*, *Write Your Own Rules and Live the Life You Want* and you can read the first two chapters of the book as well as sign up for her monthly focus letter here www.jessicamcgregorjohnson.com/signup.html. You can also follow her on Facebook at www.facebook.com/JessicaMcgregorJohnsonCoaching and Twitter @Jessicamcgj

