

5

DAILY CHOICES WINNERS MAKE



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SOLUTIONS**

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WHY YOU'RE READING THIS

“The two most important days in your life are the day you are born and the day you find out why.”

– Mark Twain

Our team is anything but your usual pair, and perhaps that's why we've been able to help our clients accomplish the incredible. However, in order to influence our clients' success, we first had to do it ourselves.

Chuck Hunter, CEO of Multivariable Solutions, has a rich history of leading exceptionally successful corporations, such as CamelBak and Lockheed Martin. Also in his timeline - U.S. Navy Fighter Pilot and Instructor. Stacey McKibbin, our COO and President, has been demonstrating her overflowing skillset of operations and team leadership to build multi-million dollar companies since 2002. Somewhere in there, she's also had time to raise a family.

This doesn't sound like anything too out-of-the-ordinary yet, right? A couple of driven business gurus sharing their knowledge and experience, so what? The real magic is in the “why” they do what they do, the reasons which, fuel the “how” they do it.

What good is wisdom if it isn't shared with others? Chuck and Stacey have collectively acquired decades of hard-earned wealth of wisdom, and it flourishes by helping others who are hungry to learn. You could say, they've found their purpose in serving others in a unique way. The easy path for them would have been to sustain their own wisdom, continue to build their own businesses, and retire with their families on a beach somewhere in the Caribbean - but that's not intrinsically rewarding for them. By helping executives develop their strategy, working with them to set and attain their goals, and seeing them retire happily with their families, the unstoppable duo has become richer in ways that actually mean something; and that... is priceless.

The point of this book is to empower you, whether you're the CEO of a company, or simply the CEO of your life. Success is a never ending journey, and it's not an easy one. As you read along, we highly encourage you to fill this book with highlighter, side notes, dog-ears, and whatever else will help you retain these essential insights.





IT BEGINS WITH CHOICE

No one can make you be successful. That power exists within you. The same idea goes with failure; you have the power to do plenty of that as well. Within the business world and life in general, you are given infinite options that will ultimately define you. Some choices are simple, while others are more complex and can produce unintended outcomes. However they're packaged, each choice you make has a ripple effect on the opportunities that stem from it. The upside is, we are awarded an endless amount of forks in our road. We can choose to be whoever and whatever we want - whenever we want. The more unfortunate reality is, we don't always make choices that lead to favorable results (which may be our subconscious nudging us to learn something new).

After years of studying people and business, we noticed a pattern of recurring choices that shape every person and every company. We've concluded that in order to find success, there are 5 choices you have to continually make:

Choose To:

1. Own It
2. Fully Engage
3. Seek Enlightenment
4. Embrace Mistakes
5. Have Fun

CHOOSE YOUR WAY



CHAPTER ONE: CHOOSE TO OWN IT

“You must take personal responsibility. You cannot change the circumstances, the seasons, or the wind, but you can change yourself.”

- Jim Rohn

Before you can better your business, you must better yourself. In every situation, you have the power to choose the role you play. You can either put on your victim hat, or you can be the pilot of your plane. Whichever role you take on; know you're putting yourself in it.

Naturally, business doesn't always go your way, people don't always do the right thing, and life doesn't always follow the course you intended. The key is to step back, and look at the situation from a perspective that positively influences the future. Take your focus off what “happened to you,” and shift your gaze onto your next move. Choose to be the leader.

The leader that we're calling you to be takes responsibility for his/her contribution to a negative outcome. The leader doesn't blame others, but analyzes the ways in which communication was disrupted. The leader isn't reactive in problem solving, but proactive in solution seeking. The leader doesn't have “reasons” (grown-up person's word for excuses) for his/her shortcomings, but relies on his/herself to improve. The leader takes the road less traveled and stops to repair potholes along the way, the victim takes shortcuts to avoid having to deal with obstacles.

Pat yourself on the back. You're not expected to become a leader overnight. Acquiring mastery in anything takes time and effort, especially when you're trying to master your mindset. Be patient with yourself, and celebrate the fact that you're trying. Next time you're confronted with something that evokes negative emotion, refer to this page, and follow the steps below before you amplify the situation:

Step #1: Seek to understand, not be understood

Recognize the situation as it is without labeling elements as “good” or “bad.”

- Repeat after me: “It is what it is.” There is no “good” or “bad”...there just *is*. When you detach yourself from the good or bad labeling of others your brain becomes more open to the intent rather than the action. Put yourself above the situation, and think of the intentions behind the actions. The vast majority of the time, no one means you harm.

Step #2: Look for the true intentions behinds the actions

Choose to hear the message and ignore the delivery

- Though most people do not have the best communication toolbox readily available, rarely does anybody wake up in the morning, put their feet on the floor and say “how can I make this person’s life miserable today?”. So while we agree there was probably a better way to say or deliver the message, that does not eliminate your responsibility to understand what they were actually trying to say. Taking a few steps forward to them to better understand what they were attempting to mean rather than abdicating the responsibility and just reacting.

Step #3: Respond rather than react

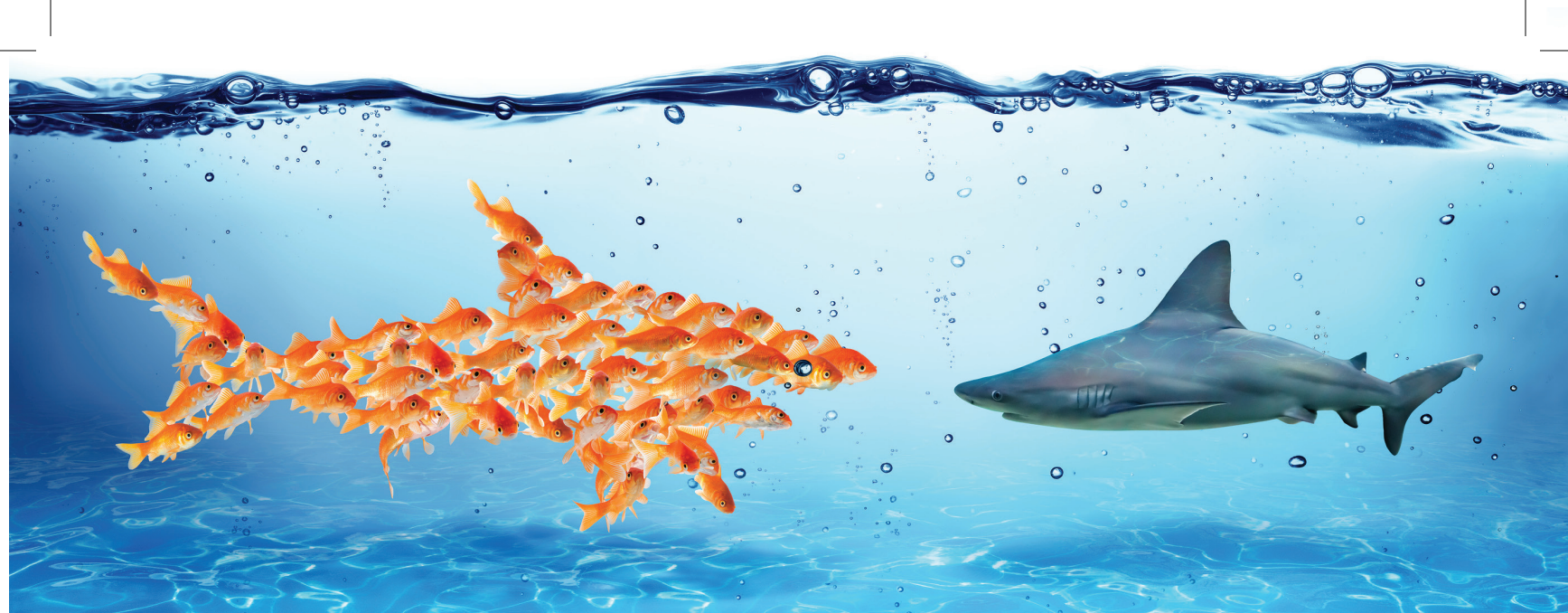
Take the time you need to make your delivery match your intentions.

- Don’t spend time concentrating on the conflict, punishment is not productive. Once you can see the entire situation clearly and without bias, you will be better positioned to respond, as opposed to react. Build a solution, don’t add to a problem. Talk about the experience with your team, do a play-by-play of the situation, analyze, and take ownership of the part you each played without pointing fingers.

Here are a few more best practices to help you choose the appropriate response:

- Work with leaders one-on-one and coach them on responding vs. reacting.
- Don’t treat failure as a bad intention.
- Separate intentions and actions.
- Encourage each member of your team to practice self-accountability by asking them what choices they may have made to lead to a result. Show them how to be the leader.
- Think of yourself as a coach of a sports team. By understanding how each player learns, you can improve each player’s method.

Write down one thing you intend to do differently...



CHAPTER TWO: CHOOSE TO FULLY ENGAGE

“If everything seems under control, you’re just not going fast enough..” –Mario Andretti

Participation, or “showing up” to play, generally isn’t enough to win you the game. While you may get that ribbon anyway in junior sports, it stands to reason that participation can only benefit you to a certain point. Engagement, however, is an entirely different way to bring yourself to work. Engagement represents how you feel about the work in front of you, and it is the difference between going through the motions and excelling. It’s the attitude that you walk in with, the level of influence you provide, and the amount of learning you implement into daily practice. When you merely “show up,” you may be getting by, but others around you can sense that you’ve got one foot out the door, and it changes the energy as well as the group dynamic. **Participation is showing up to work (taking action), Engagement is excited to be there (making an investment.)**

If you were to make an “Engagement Scale” that went from 0-10, a 5 would demonstrate participation. Showing up on time, getting tasks done, collecting a paycheck. Only half the potential is being contributed. An 8/9/10 would signal the levels of engagement that lead to better business and happier self. For example, making eye contact and saying, “hi,” when you arrive to the office, proactively asking others if they need help, holding teammates accountable, and having tough conversations that build the other person up as opposed to tearing them down are all ways of engaging. Bring your heart and soul to the table. Attaining a higher rating is completely possible, and it revolves around attitude. Choose your attitude, influence your own perspectives, and create something meaningful.

While you have complete control over your attitude, changing someone else’s isn’t always the easiest mission. When you choose to be a leader, instead of a manager, you are able to feed your team with positivity and a sense of purpose. Be the example of full engagement, and you’ll influence the culture. A positive culture directly correlates to positive results. Challenge your team, inspire your culture – you’ve got this! Here’s a few tips to get you moving in the right direction:

Step #1: Stay Committed

Commit to the personal development work it will take to help you achieve ultimate engagement.

- Engagement is a state of mind. You must want it to have it, and you need to seek it out. When you fully

engage with all levels of your team, the levels of engagement from your team will reflect on you, and ultimately your business.

- Be patient, persistent, diligent and playful during the process. Stay consistent in your message. We all adapt to change in our own way.

Step #2: Be Excited

Bring your A+ attitude to everything.

- People like to work for those they aspire to become. Be the person your dog thinks you are. Stay positive, create a welcoming culture, and remember: everyone is watching you.
- Emotional Intelligence is a skill you can develop and strengthen. And it starts with self-awareness. Be mindful of your own impact and the unintended consequences you may be causing. We know times can get overwhelming, and lots of circumstances are beyond our control, but no one can ever take your attitude or your belief in the goodness of others. You get to choose, so invest time to strengthen this skill. Work at it a little every day.

Step #3: People don't care what you know, until they know that you care.

Be interested in others.

- Make your team feel like they can share their ideas with you. Ask them how their weekend was. Take a client service representative to coffee. Learn one interesting fact about each person that works with you.
- Be open to feedback from all levels.

Keep them informed.

- Knowing is half the battle, so it strengthens your team to keep them in the loop. Don't disclose everything, but do share valuable information that helps them to see the big picture, while also tying their individual work to the overall success.
- When the whole team is aware of and feels accountable for the big picture goal, it creates momentum and ownership. Communicate and celebrate accomplishments, say thank you, and keep them in-the-know.

Write down one thing you intend to do differently...



CHAPTER THREE: SEEK ENLIGHTENMENT

“If I don’t learn something every single day, it’s a wasted day.” –Leonard Lauder

Ever seen the same movie twice, but noticed something different the second time watching it compared to the first time around? Your perspective changes, and you might feel differently about the conclusion. As a leader in your organization, you may hear a lot of the same information over and over. You might also tend to put on metaphorical ear muffs to information you’ve already heard, because, “yeah, yeah, I know.”

Stop it. Just like you are met by different thoughts every time you watch the same movie, you gain different perspective every time you hear information heard once before. Choose to get something out of it every time. It may not be remarkably significant, but open your mind to pull whatever thoughts you can out of what you’re experiencing- no matter how many times you’re exposed to the same stimulus. Think of the movie, “Groundhog Day.” Every morning, Bill Murray’s character experienced the same exact sequence of events, and eventually, his entire outlook on life changed. This is an excellent example of what we’re trying to illustrate here.

The best leaders are those who choose to learn from every situation, even if it feels familiar or repetitive. Some are natural students, while others develop the skill. Either way, **learning is an active choice**. It creates new perspectives, presents new opportunities and solutions, and promotes continued interest in the everyday. Here are a few ways to train yourself to be a lifetime learner:

Step #1: Get rid of these words: “I know.”

Listen differently.

- Want to grow your brain? Stop saying “I know.” When we stop telling ourselves that we already know the information being handed to us, we lose the opportunity to perceive. With every new thought, experience, and ah-ha moment, our brains physically grow new neural pathways. Chemicals are released that signal us to remember these new experiences, and bam - you just got smarter. We’ll admit, it’s not an easy shift to make, so we suggest replacing the words “I know” with something like “isn’t that interesting,” or “let me give some thought to that.” Ask yourself, “What don’t I know about this topic?” “What’s the intended message behind that?” “Why do we do that that way?” This keeps you alert and engaged, opening numerous doors to make improvements in your organization.

Step #2: Be Curious

Ask questions.

- Take those questions you thought of in Step #1 and ask them aloud. Have the curiosity of a child. The more questions we have, the more answers we get, the more we learn.

Research.

- If someone else doesn't have the answer you need, go find it. Research it. The Internet is a powerful ally. Individual instruction can be just as, if not more, valuable than simply listening to others. Be your own teacher! How many professional development classes have you taken or books have you read? The average American reads one book per year...are you average?

Share what you learn.

- Take what you learn and share it with your team. Discuss it. Teaching allows us to better retain the information ourselves. The more educated your team is, the better prepared everyone is to tackle obstacles in a creative, constructive manner.

Step #3: Reflect

Grab your journal.

- Try this: keep a pocket-sized "Curiosity Journal", and bring it with you everywhere. Write your free-flowing thoughts, questions, and reflections in it daily. What were the goals set at this morning's meeting? How will you go about achieving them? Is there a common theme in your journal entries? Go back and read these notes you make, and answer your own questions from previous entries., Albert Einstein and Leonardo Da Vinci did this almost daily. The simple exercise of writing down your thoughts, feelings, fears, and dreams can be so cathartic and the experience of reading it back can be profound.
- Schedule time to think and reflect, and you will discover that the opportunities for expanding your mind are truly endless.

Write down one thing you intend to do differently...



CHAPTER FOUR: EMBRACE MISTAKES

“I can accept failure, everyone fails at something.
But I can't accept not trying.”
- Michael Jordan

Here's a fun fact: no one tries to fail. Like that? Here's another one: success can't exist without failure. Thomas Edison, the guy we have to thank for the light bulb, famously said, “Just because something doesn't do what you planned it to do, doesn't mean it's useless.” Edison also claimed he never failed when describing the process it took to invent the lightbulb when he said, “I have not failed. I have found 10,000 ways that won't work.” Failure is nothing more than an ugly word for feedback, it has nothing to do with character. Use each mistake (whether it's yours or someone else's) as a learning or coaching opportunity, and fortify your relationships within your team.

On the way to success, mistakes are inevitable. Once you've reached success, mistakes... are still inevitable. The only thing you can do when you make a mistake? Embrace it. Here are a few guidelines to help you out when you've missed your mark:

Step #1: Accept

Remember to “Own It.”

- There's a reason “Own It” is listed first in our fundamental choices. Accept your role in the situation, recognize where you could have done better, and choose to make the tweaks to improve for the future. If it feels right, don't be afraid to apologize. A simple apology can go a long way, and most people will respect you more for giving one when appropriate.

Be playful--Don't let it inhibit you.

- Focusing on what you did wrong/what someone else did wrong won't produce the results you're looking for. Positive reinforcement, not punishment or judgement, will increase desired performance. Brainstorm ways to turn the situation around. Just because you made a wrong turn doesn't mean you can't take another route!

Be grateful for the feedback.

- No one necessarily likes their mistakes to be pointed out, but a simple change in perception can turn someone's critical words into self-coaching. Perfection doesn't exist, so don't see imperfection as failure. It's also important to remember what "failure" really means. True failure is quitting or not taking opportunities to learn from mistakes and improve. Don't think of feedback as commentary on your shortcomings, but rather suggestions on how you can improve your game. Don't fear feedback. Seek it out. Ask yourself: what is the wisdom I can get out of this? **You have the choice to absorb what is helpful and ignore what isn't, but you never learn if you never listen.**

Step #2: Communicate

Dig a little deeper.

- Mistakes turn into conflict when we confuse action with intention. We need to inquire on a deeper level when mistakes are being made. The real issue could be something easy-to-tweak, or an underlying problem you weren't aware of. When you aren't sure: ask.
- When you make an effort to understand others, they will generally reciprocate. Work together on finding a solution and set a process to prevent similar mistakes in the future.

Step #3: Fail Fast, Learn Faster

Move to Improve.

- Remember how we challenged you to "Seek Enlightenment?" this would be an ideal time to put that fundamental into action. Choose to learn, and be open to new ways to improve yourself.

Write down one thing you intend to do differently...



CHAPTER FIVE: CHOOSE FUN

“Choose a job you love, and you will never have to work a day in your life.” –Unknown

The final choice you’ll make on your journey to success is to **choose FUN**. When you find joy in your work, it’s often reflected in your performance. We’re not asking you to sing “Let It Go” from Disney’s Frozen while going over your balance sheet, or to “whistle while you work,” but when you focus on the positive, you influence culture to do the same.

So how do exactly do you choose fun?

Step #1: Choose Less Stress

Watch your language.

- Your body language, that is. Take 30 seconds every hour to practice deep breathing to rid yourself of tension you may be unconsciously showing.
- Smile more. Even when you don’t have anything particular to smile about. Studies show that just changing your facial expression releases chemicals to match what your face is saying. Plus, your perma-frown is scaring everyone.

Talk the talk.

- When you or someone else says something negative, counteract it with a couple positives. Ex. “We didn’t make last month’s revenue goal... but I’m confident we’ve got what it takes to make it up this month!”
- Say hi. Ask how people are doing as you pass them. Not only does this mean a lot to your staff, but will also be a good indicator to which areas of your business may be struggling.

Step #2: Fuel Learning with Play

Nothing has to be boring.

- Trainings and education are opportunities for you to influence culture, and align your people with your purpose. Go the extra mile to keep it entertaining, rewarding, and effective.

Step #3: Don't forget about what you want

Schedule fun into your day.

- It doesn't have to be something huge, but schedule some time for yourself every day to do what you enjoy. Happy you, happy them.

Write down one thing you intend to do differently...

RECAP

So there you have it. A complete blueprint to success, no matter its definition.

To recap these fundamental choices:

- 1. Own It** - Choose accountability, ownership, and responsibility.
Get rid of blame, denial, and excuses.
- 2. Fully Engage** - Choose to be interactive.
- 3. Seek Enlightenment** - Every moment – good or bad – is an opportunity to learn. Be curious. Take notes. Reflect. Remove the phrase “I know” from your brain and encourage the mind to process things in a new way.
- 4. Embrace Mistakes** - Choose to see them as part of the journey. They're essential to your success. Forgive, fix, and focus on the future.
- 5. Have Fun** - No matter what you're doing, there's fun to be had.
Choose to have it!

With these 5 fundamentals, you're equipped to do anything you put your mind to. You've got the tools, now it's your choice to use them to build something great. Expect to win.

NOTES/BRAINSTORMS

At Multivariable Solutions, we're constantly seeking enlightenment. If you have something to share with us, or if you want to learn more, visit our website or connect with us via social media!



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