

# LIFE ESSENCE

April 2012

12th Edition

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## STAND IN FOR THE CONSEQUENCES OF YOUR DECISIONS

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Recently my wife and I came upon the gruesome scene of a hit-and-run pedestrian accident. Someone's life was taken and the guilty person was too much of a coward to stand-in for the consequences of his/her act.

In the same vein we take daily decisions about our finances, relationships, work, education and religion. These decisions can have a good or bad outcome for us. However, we need to be prepared to stand-in and take responsibility for the consequences of our decisions.

Here are six areas in our lives where we make decisions or not, each having specific implications for us.

### 1. Planning

*Decision:* It is not important enough for me to plan my personal- and work life.

*Outcome:* I will have to accept that I will have to fall in with the plans of other people and that I will become a resource for them to achieve their goals.

### 2. Relationships

*Decision:* I do not think it is important to work at my relationships.

*Outcome:* My relationship life can fall apart right before my eyes.

### 3. Faith

*Decision:* I still have a lot of time available to grow in faith.

*Outcome:* When life happens, I can lose direction like a boat without a rudder. I can try to rely upon my own strengths and insights, often with tragic personal consequences.

### 4. Job

*Decision:* I do the minimum to keep my job.

*Outcome:* I may be overlooked for promotion and even retrenched in difficult financial times.

### 5. Health

*Decision:* I persist with unhealthy habits (smoking, drinking alcohol, substance abuse) in contradiction with good advice.

*Outcome:* I have to know that my life expectancy and -quality are adversely affected.

### 6. Personal growth and development

*Decision:* There is no need to hone my skills and knowledge, because I am already qualified for my job/career/sport.

*Outcome:* You will not stay on top of your game. It makes you less marketable, deployable and even competitive.

### What should I do when I'm at the crossroads of decision making?

#### Endeavour not to be re-active

Reactive behavior is a response to a particular set of facts and is not necessarily an appropriate response to a

specific situation.

If possible at all, we should always seek preventative actions, especially if the outcome of our actions have negative consequences.

#### Think carefully

Consider your options properly. Think about the possible outcome of each available option. This will put you in a position to make better decisions.

#### Did I make similar decisions in the past?

We all have a wealth of experience that can help us to make better and more informed decisions in the future. We really do not need to bump our heads more than once.

#### What is the impact of my decision?

I need to understand if my decision affects other people apart from myself. My decision can also impact upon the financial wellbeing of me and my family.

Entrepreneurs often step into this trap. They take unilateral decisions to benefit their business, but to the detriment of their family.

An example is when they single mindedly decide to use savings earmarked for another purpose to fund a new business opportunity, without doing the necessary homework.

#### Test the opinion of other people who have appropriate experience

Be careful whose advice you act upon, we often accept people's advice at face value, without validating their opinions.

#### Do I have alternatives?

We need to consciously consider all available options before making any final decisions.

#### What is the worst possible outcome?

If we do not like or can live with the worst outcome of a decision, we need to consider other, more plausible options.

#### What is my plan of action if the worst possible outcome materialises?

It's good to be prepared to address adverse effects expediently, if only to ensure that you will not land up in a similar situation where you will not have the luxury to make better decisions.

#### Conclusion

Every day we have a choice - we can be victims of bad decisions or we can stand up and take responsibility for our decisions and learn from the outcomes in order to exercise better choices in the future.