

# The Power of Choice

## A Teen's Guide for Finding Personal Success

### Chapter Extensions

After reading each chapter and completing the exercises that are in the book, you may want to explore any or all of the topics further. If so, you can use the exercises below to delve more deeply into any subject. Choose the ones that will help you clarify or improve your understanding of anything you would like to investigate from each chapter.

#### Chapter 1:

- **Review** your answers to the questions in Chapter 1.
- **Select** one of the items from the section of things you wish were happening in your life right now.
- **Create** a list of specific things you can do right now to make this a reality. This list should include even the smallest things that you can change.
- **Review** your list and prioritize them by writing numbers 1 to ... next to each item. Number one should be most immediate thing you can work on.
- **Make a plan** to begin that action today.
- **Post the list** or keep it in a place you will see it daily. You can repeat this activity with each of the items on your wish list but, don't overwhelm yourself. Small changes create big results.

#### Chapter 2:

- **Think** of a person that you have difficulty getting along with. It can be a family member, classmate, teammate or anyone that you see regularly.
- **Write** down exactly what it is that bothers you about this person.
- When you are in this person's company, what is your attitude about them?
- What do you do with that attitude? (express it, keep it to yourself, talk about it to others in an unkind way, whatever you do)
- **Write** down what you do.
- **Examine** for a moment how you feel when you are around this person.
- **Write** down why you are expressing your attitude in the way you have chosen. If you are complaining to others or being unkind to this person, write down how you feel when you are do these things?
- Now, **imagine** that you have never met this person before. You are at a party and you have no idea who they are. You don't know anyone else at the party either so basically, you are just watching everyone. If you knew that you would never see this person again, how would that change your attitude toward them?
- **Write** down how do you think you would feel if you made this shift in attitude?

### Chapter 3:

- **Think** of someone you consider to be excellent. This can be a celebrity, athlete, friend, neighbor, teacher, family member or whomever.
- **Make a chart or fold a piece of paper** in half lengthwise with two columns.
- **Label** the left side: “Things (this person) always does”.
- **Label** the right side: “Things (this person) never does”.
- **Fill in** both sides of the chart with actions that describe this excellent person.
- **Review** your lists and circle any of the things on both sides that are also true about you.
- Now, **review** the list and write the answer the following question: “If I want to be excellent, why am I not doing the things that this person is doing?”
- **Decide** which of the things on the list you want to start doing or stop doing.
- Again, **make a chart or flip the paper over** so you have two columns.
- **Write** “Traits of Excellence” on the left-hand column and fill in the chart with the actions this person always or never does.
- On the right-hand column **write** down how you can exhibit this trait in your own way.
- **Notice** what you would have to shift about your attitude or actions that would make excellence possible.

### Chapter 4:

Take some time to **think** about society as a whole. What is the world like, your country, community or school?

- **Make** a list of what you see as truly valuable in the world. List things that improve the lives of others. (Consider different areas, such as, medicine, agriculture, entertainment, government, transportation, and anything else you see as valuable in your life and to many people.)
- **Circle** the topics that you think are interesting.
- **Consider** some ways that you could see a future that includes these things. For example, if you love cars and think they are very important, how could that be a focus in your life? (car designer, car sales, building roads and bridges, repairing cars, building cars, etc.)
- **Repeat** this for each item that you found interesting on your list of societal values.

Close your eyes and take a moment to send your thanks, silently and powerfully, to the people who are involved with those valuable contributions.

### Chapter 5:

- **Take your phone** and/or some photo albums of you when you were younger.
- **Look through the pictures** of you doing things that you loved at the time. It can be anything that you played with in your early life or you standing in places that have a

special meaning to you. Whatever pictures that have you in them and you really like – and hopefully, love.

- **Gather** them all into an album on your phone and turn it into a video with music.
- **Play it through** and notice how you feel as you watch it.
- **Repeat this process** with pictures of family, close friends and people you love. You can keep this recording to look at any time you want.
- If you do not have a phone with camera capability, make a collection of photos on paper and with permission, **make yourself a collage** of pictures to post in your room. These videos and collages are reminders that you should love who you have become up to this point in life and that you are loved. Although we know this, sometimes it is nice to have these collections to help us feel it.

#### Chapter 6:

- **Write a letter to yourself** about how you will feel once you commit to doing something or not doing something that you have on your list for Chapter 5. It sounds a bit corny but, sending yourself a letter of inspiration can be a boost to your motivation to make this improvement in your life.
- **Write it out on paper.** Put it in an envelope and mail it. When it arrives, read it, save it, and keep it in a place where you can look at it from time to time. Later in the book you will be encouraged to start a journal. This would be a great place to keep it. But a drawer in your dresser or nightstand, your wallet or any other place that is yours alone is also a good spot.

#### Chapter 7:

- **Make a list** of things that you consider embarrassing. Include things that have happened to you or you have imagined happening to you.
- Once you finish the list, **read it over** and decide on a scale of 1 to 10 how embarrassing each item is. Ten being the most embarrassing.
- **Look** at the items that you have assigned the numbers 1 or 2 to and think about how you would feel if this actually happened to you.
- Now, **look** at the number 9 and 10s and see if you feel a difference in your reaction to these items. If you're like most people, the ones and twos would not be nearly as awful as the nines and tens.
- **Imagine** some of the lower number things happening to you. Find a way to laugh at yourself and the situation if these were to actually happen. No one is looking at you or judging you. These things are in your imagination. Realize that being able to laugh at yourself when things go wrong is a way to let go of the fear you have about anything going wrong. It can also take a pretty embarrassing situation and turn your perceived humiliation into something a little awkward, which is much easier to deal with.

## Chapter 8:

- Write a few sentences about a time that you feel you had failed at something. It could be something academic, athletic, social or personal.
- Now, **reexamine** this failure. Was there anything good that came out of it?
- If so, **write down** all the positive things that were a result of this event.
- If not, take time right now to **rewrite the story**. Understand that this is a work of fiction. This did not actually happen but, if you could go back in time and relive this experience, how could you have turned this into a win and not what you considered a failure. What could you have done differently? What would you have changed about your attitude, effort, or execution that would have turned this failure into success?
- Here's the important thing: What did you learn from the experience? Everything we think is a failure is actually a lesson. If don't learn something from the lesson, only then is the experience wasted.
- If you didn't learn anything back then, when it happened, **write down** what do you know now after looking back on it?

## Chapter 9:

- **Draw a line** down a piece of paper or fold it in half so there are two columns.
- **Label** the left-hand side "When I Feel Good About Myself"
- **Label** the right-hand side "When I Feel Bad About Myself".
- **List** as many things in each column as you can think of that fit in each category.
- **Review** the list of things that help you feel good about yourself.
- Is there anything that the times you experience positive feelings have in common? What is that?
- Can you **think** of a way to have more of this happening in your daily life?
- Now, **review** the list of experiences that create negative feelings? Is there anything that many of the events have in common? What is that?
- Can you **think** of a way to reduce these experiences in your daily life? The items in both columns can only be affected by *you* making some changes. They cannot and will not change themselves.

## Chapter 10:

- **Make a list** of the things that keep happening in your life that annoy you. Little things and bigger things should be included on this list.
- **Circle** anything that you have the ability to do something about. If someone is constantly bothering you, you cannot change their personality or actions so this is an example of something you cannot change. However, if you are constantly misplacing your things or cannot find time to do things you enjoy, that should be on your list. These are examples of things that are within your control.

- **Select one of the items** that you have circled and write down everything you are doing about it right now. That's your vertical solutions.
- Now, **write down** anything that you could be doing differently about the situation. That's your horizontal solutions.
- **Look** at all the options. Decide what is the simplest action that you could take today to start decreasing this annoyance. Become aware of how easy this change could be.
- **Write** down all of the benefits you would experience if you reduced this problem.

#### Chapter 11:

- **Look back** at your answers from Chapter 11 in the guide book and review your answers to question number 3.
- **Review** what you wrote down as your motivational statements, quotes, or song lyrics?
- **Consider** how many of them do you want to pay attention to on a daily basis?
- Once you have selected the ones that are most important to you, **write a list** of ways to display this so you see it every day. Make a poster for your room, screen saver, home screen, sticky note, inside your notebook cover, whatever works for you.
- **Spend some time creating** the reminders and then place them where they will be most effective.

#### Chapter 12:

**Go to YouTube.** Search for Louis Schwartzberg Gratitude. Sit back, relax, keep your eyes open and watch. It will be 10 minutes well spent.

#### Chapter 13:

Try these helpful tips for avoiding the snooze button.

1. **Make a list** of things you want to accomplish tomorrow. Essentially, give yourself a reason to get out of bed.
2. **Move your alarm** to the other side of the room. Do not keep it in arms reach from your bed.
3. **Prepare** any clothes or items that you will need when you first wake up so you can easily get dressed.
4. **Brush your teeth.** This wakes up your whole face.
5. **Have something** that you are looking forward to seeing or doing waiting for you in another room. For example, have a favorite breakfast food ready to go or a favorite playlist already set to play on your device. Make it a small reward for getting out of bed without hitting the snooze button. However, if you hit the snooze button, you are on the honor system to not give yourself that treat.

#### Chapter 14:

- Since this is an extension of Chapter 14, **take a look** at what you wrote as a small change you decided to make. What was your first domino?
- Now **make a list** of anything that changed because that first domino got in motion.
- **Circle** the items on your list that have made an improvement in your daily life.
- Based on these positive changes that have already occurred, **decide** where you can put your effort and intention to start your next series of positive change. Remember that it takes only one domino to start the chain reaction. Use the momentum from your first domino to improve other areas of your life.

#### Chapter 15:

- **Bring to mind** someone whom you are having trouble getting along with.
- **Write down** specifically where the problem lies. Perhaps there is some topic that you are repeatedly disagreeing about with a parent, sibling, or friend?
- **Make a chart** with two columns.
- **Write** your name on the left-hand side and the other person's name on the right-hand side.
- In your column, **write down** reasons that support your side of the conflicting argument.
- On the right side **write down** as many reasons as you can think of that support the other person's perspective on the issue.
- **Review** both lists and see if you find any common ground. Communicate what you discover with this other person and see if you can come to an agreement you can both live with.
- If you prefer you can also make adjustments in your actions that you feel would lead to closing the gap between your two sets of standards and potentially improve the situation.

#### Chapter 16:

- **Select one** of your favorite TV, movie or book characters.
- **Write** down a list of actions they have done either on screen or in a story.
- **Use the same blank box** you filled out in Chapter 16 of The Power of Choice book and place their actions in the appropriate categories.
- **Look** at where most of their actions fit.
- **Answer the following questions:** Why does this make this person interesting, funny or mysterious? What is it about their actions that makes you like this character?
- **Circle** any healthy habits this person is exhibiting that you would like to add to your lifestyle.
- **Focus** on the habits you circled that you want to start doing. Use this information to motivate change in your daily habits.

## Chapter 17:

**Make** a calendar page or print one out from the Internet. You can easily find one in an online search.

- On the top of the calendar page, write down *one goal* that you want to change based on your work in chapter 17.
- Post this in your room or in the front inside cover of your notebook or any place where you will see it daily.
- For one month write down what actions you took to help you reach this goal. (If you notice that you have skipped a day or two, use your empty calendar space as a reminder to get back on track.)

At the end of the month, **compare** where you were at the beginning and where you are now. Have you made a lot of improvement in this area? If not, how can you adjust what you are doing? Once the change becomes part of your routine, ditch the calendar and start a new one with a different goal. If you want help reaching your goal, find someone who you trust to share your goal and calendar with. Then, when you make progress, you can celebrate together.

## Chapter 18:

- Using your computer or phone, **search** out something that you are interested in creating. This can be anything from artwork to music to a new snowboarding trick.
- **Look** at what other creative people have done before you.
- **Make a digital collection** of these images and videos on your device. Turn this collection into a movie and add music if you like. Use this as a tool to motivate you into creating your personal thing. Then share what you've created on your social media or with family and friends. Finally, **celebrate** your accomplishment.

## Chapter 19:

- Make a list of people who you feel have high integrity. They can be family, friends, celebrities, sports figures or people you respect for any reason.
- **Write down** what actions they take that show they have a high degree of integrity.
- **Circle** the qualities on the list that you also demonstrate.
- **Examine** the actions or qualities that these people have that you don't have yet.
- **Think** about how you can grow these attributes. Is it a matter of attitude, action or effort?
- **Write down** how you can make the shift in your life.

## Chapter 20:

- **Imagine** yourself at the age of 40. Whoa.
- **Write down** what your life looks like. Include your thoughts about your family, career, home and lifestyle.
- Now, **write** yourself a thank you letter for all of the positive things that you did to create such an amazing adult life.

## Chapter 21:

- **Write** down the name of one or two people who you know are a positive influence on your life.
- **Make a list** under each name of the qualities they have that contribute positivity to your life.
- **Circle** any of the items on your list that you also have.
- Take a moment to thank whomever taught you these qualities. Perhaps it was your parents, friends, teachers, coaches or someone famous. You can do this silently to yourself or you can actually thank them in person.
- **Write** down one way that you can pay it forward. Who can you extend your positivity to in order to add quality to their life? What actions can you take to add value to someone's day or even their life? Take one of those actions today.

## Chapter 22:

- Take out a piece of blank paper and a pencil.
- Place a couple of ordinary objects in front of you. A chair, a drinking glass, a plant or whatever else is handy will do just fine.
- **Look** carefully at the object or objects.
- Now **shift your attention** to the space around the objects. Draw the space around the objects without actually drawing the objects themselves.
- Once you have finished drawing the space around the object, notice if you can make out what the object was that you were not drawing. If you want to, go ahead and draw the actual object you picked out. Consider how drawing in this way changes how you see things.

## Chapter 23:

- **Write** down something you would like to learn about. Use the Internet to research ideas that some people have about this topic.
- After looking at some things people have created, use your imagination to push it farther. It doesn't matter if it defies the laws of gravity or physics, the idea is to imagine something that has never existed before.

- **Draw or write about** your creation. Write down what aspects of this creation are actually possible. Welcome to expanding your imagination.

#### Chapter 24:

- **Think** of a character from a book, TV show or movie that is a control freak.
- **Write** down some things that they did that show you their controlling actions.
- Now examine how the people around them respond when they are being manipulated.
- **Think** of a time you tried to control a situation **and jot it down**.
- **Circle** anything on the list of controlling actions your character did that you have also used to influence a situation you were involved in.
- **Circle** anything on the list of responses that you have experienced when you were trying to control someone or something. Think about how you respond when someone is trying to control you.
- **Answer the following questions:** Are your responses similar to or different from the character you analyzed? Why?

#### Chapter 25:

- Bring to mind a difficult situation that you have coming up. Think of something that you really wish wasn't going to happen. Write down all the reasons why you want to avoid this situation or event.
- **Review** your list. Cross out anything that is not within your control.
- Using the things on your list that you have not crossed off, **write** down as many positive outcomes that you can think of.
- **Narrow down your list** to no more than 3 outcomes that would allow you to feel satisfied. Create a mindset that no matter what happens, you can accept all or part of the outcome with a feeling of satisfaction with the event or situation. What actions would that require?

#### Chapter 26:

- **Write** down everything that is bothering you right now. Yup. Give yourself permission to just be annoyed, frustrated or angry about stuff.
- Look at the list. Assign a number from 1 to 10 according to how much each item bothers you, 10 being most bothered.
- Look at the numbers from 1-3. Are these impacting your life in any way? Decide if they are making you feel negatively.
- Now, consider that you scored these things very low on your scale of things that are bothering you. If you can change it, do so. If you can't change the problem, let it go. You're robbing yourself of some energy that could be used more productively.

- Next, look at your 4 through 7 scores. These items are more bothersome than the low score items. Again, can you change it? If so, then get busy improving the situation. If you can't change them, work on your attitude and reread Chapters 2, 12 or 21.
- Finally, let's look at your items scored 8 through 10. These are your biggest issues. Are there any things on this list that you are holding a grudge about? Giving somebody some attitude or maybe the silent treatment about? Are you telling yourself some less than positive things about yourself over any of these problems? Reread Chapter 10 and come up with your solutions.

#### Chapter 27:

- **Think** of some things that make you feel happy. Write down as many activities, people, material things and places that increase your level of happiness.
- **Select 3 to 5 items** on your list. For each item, write down *why* they make you feel happy. What is it about these things that increase your sense of happiness? Really look at your why. In other words, what is it about each of these things that causes you to feel happy?
- **Write** down how this happiness affects your day. Then figure out how you can expand that feeling so you find more enjoyment in your day, even when these particular things aren't available.

#### Chapter 28:

- Write down something that you feel you cannot do well. It can be academic, athletic, artistic, musical, or anything else that comes to mind.
- **Think about:** Who has expressed criticism toward you about this? Write down, as closely as you can remember, what they said to you that you perceived as criticism.
- **Take an honest look** at what they said. Is it true? If so, is this skill or ability important to you? If you answer yes, what are some things you can do to improve in this area?
- If the answer is no, this is not true, how are you planning to let go of this criticism so that it doesn't become a grudge? Either way the decision to improve or let it go is the only way to create some personal success. You can build a skill or focus your efforts on things that are important to you. Being able to tell the difference is the key to successful use of your time and energy.

#### Chapter 29:

- **Write** down one thing that you are motivated to do, be or get.
- What is required in order for you to get that one thing? Opportunity? Practice? Money? On a scale of one to ten, how badly do you want this. Here's your opportunity to create some synergy of motivation. Tell someone who is not in competition with you for this goal how much you really want to do, be or get your wish. Brainstorm some ideas of

actions you can take to achieve your desire. When you are working toward getting what you want, remember to **thank everyone** who helps you.

### Chapter 30:

Well, you've made it through the book and hopefully created some life habits that are serving you well. The key to your continued success is to maintain those habits as long as they serve you well and change those habits for more suitable ones when you need to. It's a journey. That phrase is said so often that it has become almost meaningless. But the reality is, your life is a long series of choices about what direction you will take. The road is winding, bumpy, steep, smooth, beautiful, surprising and headed to a unique destination. I encourage you to start a journal. It doesn't have to be anything fancy. A spiral notebook or composition book will do just fine. Write down what you want to accomplish, places you want to go, things you're grateful for or ideas you'd like to dive into more deeply. I actually use those marble composition books, the kind where you can't tear out the pages. At the end of each month, I go back and reread what I wrote. I use a highlighter and highlight anything that I want to accomplish or any useful insight that I come across. You'll be surprised how many great ideas you have that just need some of your attention and energy. My final advice is to bring to the world what only *you* can offer. Create something, help someone, build something or improve a situation. Whatever you contribute will be uniquely yours and will change the world in a way that is only possible through you. Do it because you owe it to yourself.