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I DO Have Choices ... What Choices DO I Have?

"You have a choice to make." No response.

"What are you going to do?" Nothing.

"Do you like it here?" No.

"Oh, you don't?" Nope.

Soooo, what are you going to do about it?"

"Huh?"

It seemed like this conversation would NOT leave me alone! It seemed to bounce back and forth from wall to wall of my brain. I couldn't shake it, I couldn't get away from it!

You see, this is an actual conversation I had with myself (multiple times) after my firstborn, Savannah, moved into Eternity. Sometimes I was in the bed deep under the covers. I might be alone at home or I could be with people somewhere else when this internal conversation took place.

Sometimes I would find myself complaining about me TO myself. *I am sick of feeling sad...All The Time!!! I just hate this feeling. I'm just worn out! Nobody cares. Nobody even cares.*

One afternoon, in May 2017, I was having a conversation with a delightful, wise woman. She had asked me to come speak in June at a ministry event at her church. I had 25 minutes to speak. When asked what she would like me to focus my talk on, she responded, "Whatever the Holy Spirit guides." To which I gave a half-hearted "Thank You". It was "half-hearted because I knew to get in line with the Spirit may cause me to go to places I did not want to go. This might force me to uncover hidden things I might not want to know about. I might be perfectly fine in my misery.

Then, she said something terribly profound to me... "I tell you what I want to know. I want to know how do you get out of the bed when you just don't think you can. What keeps you putting one foot in front of the other when you don't want to." She wasn't finished there. She told me she wanted me to take the pain out and hold it in my hands and look at it from all angles/perspectives." She said emphatically, "That's what I want to know!"

Psalm 118:24 *"This is the day that the LORD has made; let us rejoice and be glad in it."*

"I derive just as much happiness from the process as from the results." Carol S. Dweck

Hebrews 13:16 *"And do not forget to do good and to share with others, for with such sacrifices God is pleased."*





Newsletter, Volume 3

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Here's my choices...

And, so, I did just that. I realized that I, indeed, had some choices to make. Was I in charge of my mindset, or did my mindset have me? I could continue to ask myself questions with no answers, "Why Savannah?" "What did she do to deserve this?" "Why a loving, decent human being?" "Why me?" I realized these questions were keeping me in the pit of despair. I was caught up in a vicious circle at these times.

That exercise of taking that pain out, holding it in my hand, and looking at it from all angles and perspectives was so very powerful. I discovered I had choices to make. I want to share three with you I live my life by.

- **I choose to appreciate each moment...whether pleasurable or not.** God created time for us. Oh, how I wish I had another moment with Savannah and don't have to wait until Eternity!!! But, I don't. You; however, do! You and I have moments RIGHT NOW. I believe that God created time for us AS A GIFT to be appreciated. Some moments are pleasurable, some are not. I have learned to appreciate ALL moments with those I love and thank God for the gifts. We can choose how we approach and appreciate each moment.
- **I choose to evaluate my mindset in every situation.** We have a choice to make. Do we want to stay here? Are we learning and growing here? We aren't hard-wired to think of things positively. We are wired to remain in the status-quo which many times looks judgmental, pessimistic, and safe. A positive mindset is cultivated. We can learn get in charge of our mindset by simply asking ourselves new questions. How can I think about this differently? What are the possibilities for growth here? What does this person need from me? Train yourself to see possibilities and opportunities not fault and failure.
- **I choose to put others before myself...look toward the Greater Good.** Research is clear that we receive more fulfillment and well-being when we are helping and supporting others. When I focus more on others, and not so much my situation, I receive the benefit. I can't change the fact that we are a family of 3 instead of 4. Yes, it makes me sick. But, when I reach out to others who are hurting, I receive healing.

I encourage you to realize you DO, in fact, have choices. You may not can change your circumstances, but you CAN choose how you think about them. Take that pain, disappointment, stress, loss, frustration, or whatever out and put it in both of your hands. Look at it from all angles. What do you get? How can you look at this situation differently? What choices do you have?

Good Reads

Man's Search for Meaning by Viktor E. Frankl

Change Your Questions, Change Your by Marilee Adams, PhD

Now What???

If you do this exercise and determine you DO have choices, I would love to hear about it! If you want some coaching in helping you determine your choices, please let me know if I can help. You may use the contact form found at my website www.imalive2thrive.com. I'd love to hear from you.

Stephanie Payne

