

The Seven Decisions: Understanding the Keys to Personal Success (Andrews, Andy)

I asked questions like these: • What's the first thing you do when you're depressed? • What's the most important decision you've ever made in your life? • What's the worst decision you've ever made in your life? • If you were to give an eighteen-year-old one specific piece of wisdom, what would it be? • What's the smartest thing your parents ever did? • What's the last thing you do before you go to bed? • What difference did someone make in your life as a child?

General George S. Patton, who served in both world wars, said, "Be willing to make decisions. That's the most important quality in a good leader."

Where I am today, we tell ourselves, is a consequence of what other people [our parents, for example] and circumstances have done to me. In blaming other people and events, we weaken our power.

The problem with this line of thinking is that if you don't accept responsibility for where you are right now, you have no hope of changing your future.

your choices in response to those things are what have led you down this path you don't like.

Until we accept responsibility for where we are, we have no basis for moving forward in our lives.

However, “How can I enjoy sculpting my ideal body and reclaiming my energy?” will move you in the direction you want to go.

Are you trading your beauty and freedom to help someone else’s dreams come true? Way too many people trade out their freedom for security, and they don’t even realize it.

To take responsibility for your life, you must first take a personal inventory of where you are right now.

In your journal, on a scale from 1 to 10—1 being miserable and 10 outstanding—rate how you feel you’re doing in each of the following categories: emotionally, physically, financially, spiritually, socially, professionally, and with your family.

Your life should not be an apology; it should be a statement—an extraordinary demonstration of the possibilities within all of us.

When you view your failures as opportunities for growth and discovery, you free yourself from the fear of failure. How can you fail when your failures are merely lessons you learned on your way to success?

CHALLENGES ARE GIFTS, OPPORTUNITIES TO LEARN.
PROBLEMS ARE THE COMMON THREAD RUNNING THROUGH
THE LIVES OF GREAT MEN AND WOMEN. IN TIMES OF
ADVERSITY, I WILL NOT HAVE A PROBLEM TO DEAL WITH; I
WILL HAVE A CHOICE TO MAKE.

I began to wonder, Is adversity what helps people become great? Overcoming adversity strengthened my problem-solving skills, and demonstrating a positive response to adversity magnetically drew people to me.

Adversity prepares you for greatness. Challenges are gifts. Problems present opportunities to learn and grow. In times of adversity, you don't have a problem to deal with; you have a choice to make.

I am who my friends are.

Amazingly, the national average for books read by American adults is less than two books a year.

It's critical to choose your friends with care. I often ask people, "What is a true friend to you?" More than 80 percent of the time, I hear, "A true friend is someone who accepts me as I am." My friend, this is dangerous garbage to believe. A true friend is someone who accepts you as you are? The kid who works the drive-thru at your local fast-food restaurant accepts you as you are—because he doesn't care anything about you. A true friend holds you to a higher standard—he or she expects you to do what you said you were going to do, when you said you were going to do it. A true friend makes you better by his or her presence.

By serving others, we value them, and this increases our own value.

I DO NOT FEAR FAILURE, FOR IN MY LIFE, FAILURE IS A MYTH. FAILURE EXISTS ONLY FOR THE PERSON WHO QUILTS. I DO NOT QUIT.

We all are either in a crisis, coming out of a crisis, or headed for a crisis. It's just part of being on this planet. Things may feel horrible right now, but you are still here. And if you're here, you haven't finished what you were put here to do.

It's going to be a struggle to maintain a decided heart; otherwise what you're struggling for isn't worth the struggle in the first place!

It will amaze you! The people you thought would be on your side—but aren't—might be a larger group than you imagined. If you worry about what other people think, you will have more confidence in their opinions than you do in your own. Your future does not depend on the opinions or the permission of others.

I don't know why people feel so threatened by their perception of your success that they manage to make you the focus of their lives. I do know, however, that you cannot let them become the focus of yours.

There are some people in your life who are never going to like you. Some people won't like anything you do as you become more successful.

When we are bothered by criticism, what we most need is a good dose of perspective. So here is ours. Folks, the critics are bad-mouthing Oprah and Mother Teresa! Who are we to be exempt? We must accept it for what it is . . . the babbling of

rabble that ultimately cannot help you or do harm. Ignore them.

I actually felt pretty good after I found a rejection letter of *The Diary of Anne Frank*. The publisher said, “This girl doesn’t have any special perception or feeling that would lift that book above the curiosity level.” More than twenty-five million copies of *The Diary of Anne Frank* have been sold worldwide.

When the manuscript for the classic *Lord of the Flies* was submitted, the publisher commented, “It does not seem to me that you’ve been wholly successful in working out this idea.” More than 14.5 million copies have sold to date. An unknown writer called Dr. Seuss presented a publisher with a manuscript titled *And to Think That I Saw It on Mulberry Street*. The manuscript was rejected by twenty-seven publishers, including one who said, “This is too different from the other books for juveniles on the market to warrant its selling. We pass.” Most of us read George Orwell’s classic *Animal Farm* in school. The publisher said, “It is impossible to sell animal stories in the United States.” *Animal Farm* has sold more than ten million copies.

What are five limiting beliefs you have about yourself? Think back to the fears you defined in the *Overcoming Fear* exercise on page 55. Behind every fear is at least one debilitating belief about yourself. Uncover your destructive beliefs and write them down.

**POOR IS THE MAN WHOSE FUTURE DEPENDS ON THE
OPINIONS AND PERMISSION OF OTHERS. REMEMBER THIS: IF
YOU ARE AFRAID OF CRITICISM, YOU WILL DIE DOING
NOTHING!**

Distilled into one word, the idea of a decided heart is passion.

Passion assists you when you have a great dream. It breeds conviction and turns mediocrity into excellence in everything you do.

At this point, I must tell you two of the most important lessons I learned from those and other challenges I have faced: (1) don't dwell on disappointment—determine to do your best anyway, and (2) we don't always know what's best.

Success without adversity is not only empty . . . it is not possible.

We all are either in a crisis, coming out of a crisis, or headed for a crisis. It

AVERAGE PEOPLE COMPARE THEMSELVES WITH OTHER PEOPLE. THAT IS WHY THEY ARE AVERAGE. I COMPARE MYSELF TO MY POTENTIAL. I AM NOT AVERAGE. I SEE EXHAUSTION AS A PRECURSOR TO VICTORY.

Do what you are afraid of.