

My Choice? Right!

We know how it happens. We have a plan, the day is laid out. And then...sometimes before we even get out of bed or leave home to come to work stuff starts happening. Maybe we oversleep, or get a call that the babysitter is out with the flu, or reach up only to find we're out of coffee, or get to the car and we have a flat tire! Sometimes best-laid plans get off track. LIFE HAPPENS.

- Maybe you came in this morning feeling energized ready to tackle the challenges of the day only to get to work and find a number of people have called in sick and you needed all hands on deck to get a big project out on time.
- Folks in your department are angry when you suggest they'll have to double up the workload, as no replacements are available.
- Then the CEO comes and reminds you that you promised those budget figures would be on his desk by 9 this morning and he's disappointed in you, says he thought he could trust your word.
- The mail brings more for the to-do list, the e-mails are all marked urgent and the phone hasn't stopped ringing since you got there.

As you're burying your head on the desk you see the sign. You remember the leadership banquet desk plaque you got that said...

**“Issues come up. Circumstances happen.
But, leaders choose their face every minute of every day.
Your power is in your choice!”**

Have you ever been envious of the folks around you who seem to take absolutely everything in stride? Nothing shakes them from their positive attitude. They keep smiling, stay calm, keep talking about options and Plan B. It seems almost inhuman! Don't they understand very important things are on the line here? People's careers may be at stake. Contracts can be won or lost. Futures can be determined or destroyed? They should be panicked shouldn't they? Have you thought to yourself—they just don't get it?

Or, perhaps these leaders have tapped into another power. **The power to choose their attitude or their face in times of adversity.** We all have the power and can cultivate it if we discipline ourselves to become conscious about our choices. A leading behavioral psychologist, Shad Helmstetter, Ph.D. has written a wonderful program for learning the power of choosing our attitude, he calls it What To Say When You Talk To Your Self. He reminds us that we do the spinning of our own situations. Maybe our real power is that we choose our perspective, our language, even the expressions on our face. We can choose our attitude.

Listen to your words and attitudes. Do you say things like:

- “I just can't get with it today.”
 - “That's impossible!”
 - “I'm just not cut out for that.”
 - “You can't trust anyone anymore!”

If your self-programming is filled with futility and negativity – how can there possibly be a good attitude outcome? What could change if we were instead programmed to believe things like...

- “Life does not have to be perfect.”
- “It is not awful when things go wrong.”
- “Don't amplify, multiply, inflate, magnify, escalate, blow-up, or pyramid unwanted or unpleasant circumstances and feelings.”

These statements come from another very helpful source called You Can Control Your Feelings! 24 Guides to Emotional Well-Being by Bill Borchardt.

When we accept that situations are what they are – life happens – we now have a choice how we'll respond. If you find yourself struggling with this idea maybe it would be helpful **to listen for the next 48 hours to the self-talk messages you give yourself.** Helmstetter teaches ways to change negativity. When able to program ourselves with empowering self-talk we learn that what happens next for each of us – is more up to us than we might have thought; **it is up to us what we choose to think.**

If you find yourself struggling with destructive self-messages and yearn for the ability to ride out the challenges with greater control but need some coaching on how to make that happen. The counselors at Directions can help. Call 402-434-2900 or 800-563-8201 today to schedule a free, confidential appointment. **The choice is yours-right?**