



Sherry B. Jordan
Management Coach and Consultant

So Many Choices, So Little Time!

Several times a week this exchange can be heard in my house: “What do you want for dinner?” and the answer, “I don’t know what you want?” This very simple exchange is a symptom of our society’s *access to excess*. We are the first generation in history to have a choice of not only where to live and what profession to enter, but whether to work from home or the office, drive or fly, e-mail or text, be the bread winner or the bread baker.

From coffee flavor to birth control, we are assailed with options every moment in our day. These choices would have overwhelmed our parents and certainly their parents. We have evolved into a world where, for most of us, our basic needs are met and we are presented, chided, even romanced, into choosing not just more than we need but more than we can manage.

These choices often create anxiety when we compare what we have with what we *could* have or *should* have. We compare ourselves to our friends and work peers. We covet what others have. We devise ways to have keep up or have more. Debt piles up while we buy bigger televisions, take luxury vacations, build second homes, and send our kids for higher levels of education, just because we can. Work and life tilt out of balance as we spend more time to close the next deal, reach the next income level, or get the next promotion.

While we know that some of our choices might be frivolous, they rarely jeopardize our existence. Still, we find ourselves second guessing our decisions, fretting, worrying and often feeling remorse for our selections and the consequences they create. That leads us to a rally cry to “Simplify!” and we try, but do we give “this” up or “that” up? Even as we strive to reduce the excess, our choices challenge us. Why? Well, the need to hoard is a natural instinct. As long as it is available, we will want all we can get.

Do not dismay, choice can be great if we lay a few ground rules and refuse to obsess over the alternatives. How do you do that? Here are a few simple tips:

Don't sweat the small stuff. Make decisions quickly on things that are routine. Limit the time you spend and the options you give yourself. The dinner decision is a perfect example- have 3-5 standard options, chose among them and move on. You will have the same choice again tomorrow night.

Be realistic. "Keeping up with the Jones" is bound to make you unhappy and probably land you in debt. Know what you can afford. Plan for a few luxuries, but make sure you can fit them into your budget.

Be true to yourself. When making decisions ask yourself who you are doing it for. Make sure you are making the decision that will make you happy, not your friends or others who will not have to live with the outcome.

Look into the future. Make decisions for the long run, not just today but for months, maybe years to come. Buy a house you can afford on next year's income!

What's done is done. Refuse to spend too much time regretting a decision, accept it and let it go and, if you need to, learn from the experience

In the end, remember that choosing wisely is a choice in itself. No one knows better than you what choice will serve you best. Have confidence in your ability to make the choice that is right for you and don't look back.

Sherry B. Jordan, MA. a Management Coach and Senior Consultant with Coaching.ppr can assist you in identifying your career or business goals and set strategies to meet them. For more information, visit www.coachingppr.com or call at 904-616-9237.