

Life Coach Training

Lesson 22

Accessing Preference

I have discovered an extraordinarily effective decision-making tool you can use for yourself and your clients. It is fast, easy, and always works if you are honest about your response. You can practice right now, and then pass the technique along to your clients.

1. Think of a decision you need to make, and boil the decision down to the two most basic alternatives.

For example:

Should I buy the Toyota or the Honda?

Do I stay in my job or leave?

Would I be better off confronting my mother about a particular issue, or remain silent for now?

You can focus on a big-picture question, such as “*Should I quit my job and coach full time, or keep my job and coach part time?*” or focus on something minor and right before you, such as “*Would I prefer to go for dinner tonight at the Thai restaurant, or Italian?*” To practice, you might want to pick something simple to start, and then work your way up to bigger-picture matters.

2. Take a coin and assign one alternative to heads, and the other to tails. It doesn't matter which alternative you assign to which side of the coin.

3. In a moment you will flip the coin. Before you do, imagine that the side that comes up will determine which path you will absolutely follow through on. If it says, “*Toyota,*” you will pick up the phone and confirm your Toyota order, and forget about the Honda. If it says “*Leave your job,*” you will begin to write your resignation.

4. Flip the coin and notice which side comes up. Then — *this is the most crucial part* — notice within 5 seconds what reaction you have. You will feel an emotional reaction of either relief or tension; expansion or contraction; joy or depression. You will probably also feel a visceral sensation, most likely in your stomach, solar plexus, or chest. It will be an “ugh” or an “ah.” Your reaction may be subtle or dramatic. In any event, observe your reaction immediately upon seeing which side of the coin came up, and be extremely honest about what you feel. If you wait longer than a few seconds, your mind will come in and you will be back to the confusion that clouded your decision in the first place.

This exercise will help you and your clients get in touch with your true choices because there is a part of you that knows where your joy lives, and it is seeking to communicate to you. Call this part divine mind, intuition, gut instinct, inner guidance, higher self, or any other name—it is all the same. You know where your joy path lives. When you are following this path, you feel alive, empowered, creative, and free. When you veer from this path, you feel numb, deadened, disempowered, uncreative, depressed, and stuck. What a gift we have in our inner guidance!

Poet Piet Hines put this process into the form of a simple poem:

Whenever you're called on to make up your mind

*And you're hampered by not having any,
The way to make solve the dilemma, you'll find
Is simply by spinning a penny
Not so that chance shall decide the affair
While you're passively standing there moping
But the moment the penny is up in the air
You suddenly know what you're hoping!*

The coin is simply a tool to help you tap into your intuition. Some clients do not understand the exercise and they think they are supposed to do what the coin tells them to do. Explain to them that the exercise is designed to help you discover *how you feel* about what the coin indicates, and use that feeling as your guide, rather than simply going along with the side of the coin that comes up.

After practicing with the coin for a while, you can glean the same benefit simply by closing your eyes for a moment and trying each alternative on for size. You will notice that simply thinking about choosing a path will yield a gut feeling. As Abraham says, "If thinking about something doesn't feel good, doing it will probably not feel better. If thinking about something feels good, doing it will probably feel better."

While this technique is extremely simple, it gets to the heart of decision making. After you have practiced it for yourself, you will be able to use it in coaching situations and give your clients a technique that will accelerate their decision making, growth, and happiness.

Exercise:

1. Consider a decision you have before you at the moment and use the coin toss exercise to help you get in touch with your true decision,
2. Over the next few days, whenever you have a decision to make, either do the above coin toss exercise or simply try the alternatives on for size in your mind. When you discern how each alternative feels in your gut, practice heeding the voice of joy.
3. Where appropriate, use the coin toss exercise with a coaching client.

Affirm:

I trust joy as my compass and I do what empowers and enlivens me.

I help my clients access their inner guidance

and I support them to do what brings them life.