
talking about...

... designing better relationships for better outcomes

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Talking About Pty Ltd

"Beside the noble art of getting things done, there is the noble art of leaving things undone. The wisdom of life consists in the elimination of nonessentials."

... Lin Yutang, *O Magazine*, October 2002

Emotional Decisions...

"The essential difference between emotion and reason is that emotion leads to action while reason leads to conclusions."

... Donald Calne, author of *Within Reason*

Each one of us makes many choices each day. Most of these choices are very trivial in the context of our lives. What shirt will I wear today? What will I have for breakfast? And so on. However, we often make much more significant decisions as we go through life. We each go through our own unique way of coming to a major decision. Some will exhaustively explore the various options before arriving at a decision. Others will jump right in and decide with little or no evidence on which to base their decision. No matter whether we are talking about the bigger or smaller decisions in life, it is useful to recognise that in the moment of making a decision, it is our emotions that are at the forefront. In other words, we decide to take action because it feels right.

The idea that we make decisions emotionally has been verified through the research into the parts of the brain known as the pre-frontal lobes that are associated with our emotional life. This research shows that people whose pre-frontal lobes are damaged in certain ways not only lose various aspects of their emotional life; they also lose the ability to make even the simplest decisions. They can come up with all of the rational pros and cons on which to make a decision, yet not bring themselves to actually make the decision.

What does this mean for you in life? As we have seen in previous articles, our moods and emotions are a predisposition for action. Hence our emotional space at any point in time will be a predisposition for the quality of the decisions we make. If we want to make more effective decisions, it would pay to make those decisions when our emotions are conducive to making the optimal decision.

Certain emotions predispose us to certain actions. For example, fear can predispose us to varying levels of flight or fight. Anger can predispose us to hurting someone who we may see as being to blame for a certain situation. Making a decision to make a major purchase when you are feeling fearful may not allow you to make the optimal decision. However, running away in the face of imminent physical danger may well be the most appropriate thing to do.

Research has shown that emotional intelligence (EQ) is a better predictor to success in life than rational intelligence (IQ). One of the reasons for this lies in the role our emotions play in making

our decisions. The key to making better decisions is to be aware of the impact our emotions may be having on those decisions. This has to stem from self-awareness about our emotions and an ability to manage our emotional space to deal with situations in the best way possible.

"Science may have found a cure for most evils, but it has found no remedy for the worst of them all--the apathy of human beings."

... Helen Keller, 1880-1968, US blind & deaf educator

What will matter...?

This had me pause for thought. What matters to you?

WHAT WILL MATTER

By Michael Josephson © 2003

Ready or not, some day it will all come to an end.
There will be no more sunrises, no minutes, hours or days.
All the things you collected, whether treasured or forgotten will pass to someone else.

Your wealth, fame and temporal power will shrivel to irrelevance.
It will not matter what you owned or what you were owed.
Your grudges, resentments, frustrations and jealousies will finally disappear.
So too, your hopes, ambitions, plans and to do lists will expire.
The wins and losses that once seemed so important will fade away.
It won't matter where you came from or what side of the tracks you lived on at the end.
It won't matter whether you were beautiful or brilliant.
Even your gender and skin color will be irrelevant.

So what will matter? How will the value of your days be measured?

What will matter is not what you bought but what you built, not what you got but what you gave.
What will matter is not your success but your significance.
What will matter is not what you learned but what you taught.
What will matter is every act of integrity, compassion, courage or sacrifice that enriched, empowered or encouraged others to emulate your example.
What will matter is not your competence but your character.
What will matter is not how many people you knew, but how many will feel a lasting loss when you're gone.
What will matter is not your memories but the memories that live in those who loved you.
What will matter is how long you will be remembered, by whom and for what.

Living a life that matters doesn't happen by accident.
It's not a matter of circumstance but of choice.
Choose to live a life that matters.

"When more people are focused on meaning and less focused on 'success', the world will start to make sense. People will pitch into help without worrying about who gets ahead in the company hierarchy. People will live their values and follow their hearts, and do the work they were born to do, even if it does not lead to power and wealth and prestige. Decisions will not be made on the basis of power rivalries but on the basis of what is best for individuals, organisations, and society. People will not create problems to enhance their own power, but will solve problems to enhance their personal meaning. The world will be a lot less crazy when meaning-oriented individuals are out in front, addressing real needs and solving real problems without worrying about recognition or applause."

... Kent M. Keith, "Anyway"

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