

Success

OCTOBER 2026

Savvy

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WORTH BUILDING

YOUR NEXT CHOICE COULD CHANGE EVERYTHING

By **Joseph Price**

"We are who and where we are because of the decisions we have made."

That statement can be uncomfortable.

It is much easier to point to our circumstances, our past, other people, or the things that have happened to us and explain why we are where we are.

And certainly, there are circumstances we did not choose.

But even when we cannot choose what happens to us, we are continually making choices about what happens next.

Those choices accumulate.

They shape our relationships, our careers, our health, our finances, our leadership, and our confidence—and, over time, who we become.

Which raises an important question:

If our choices and decisions have that much influence over our lives, shouldn't we become more intentional about how we make them?

The Decisions We Don't Realize We're Making

For more than four decades of working with people, leaders, and organizations, one pattern has appeared again and again.

People frequently know what they should do.

They know they should have that difficult conversation.
They know they should set that boundary.
They know they should stop procrastinating.
They know they should make that call, start that business, address that problem, change that habit, ask for help, or pursue that opportunity.

Knowledge is often not the problem.

The challenge is the gap between knowing and doing.

Something happens. Someone says something. An email arrives. A problem arises. Fear surfaces. We feel disrespected, threatened, frustrated, overwhelmed, or uncertain.

And we react.

Reaction is fast and automatic. It often happens before we have consciously considered what we want to accomplish.

Then something even more consequential happens.

We create a story.

"They don't respect me."

"I can't do this."

"I'm going to fail."

"They should know better."

"I don't have a choice."

"This always happens to me."

The circumstance matters, but the story we attach to it can quickly become even more powerful.

Those thoughts influence our feelings. Our feelings drive our actions. And our actions produce results. It is a predictable chain:

Thought → Feeling → Action → Results

Then we look at those results and wonder how we got there.

The Space Where Choice Becomes Possible

There is a way to break that cycle.

Between automatic reaction and intentional action lies a critical human capability: the ability to stop long enough to think. We call that response.

That small space changes everything.

Instead of immediately acting from anger, fear, frustration, habit, or assumption, we can ask:

What is really happening here?
What story am I telling myself?

What result do I actually want?
What choice will move me toward that result I desire?

This is the movement from reaction to response to intentionality.

Reaction is automatic.
Response introduces thought.

Intentionality goes further. It deliberately aligns our thinking and behavior with the result we want to create.

That distinction matters because simply slowing down does not guarantee a useful decision. We can calmly make choices that still move us in the wrong direction.

Being intentional requires clarity about where we are trying to go.

Purpose Without Choice Is Only Potential

That clarity—about where we are going and why—is called purpose.

Purpose gives us direction. It helps answer the question, *“Why does this matter?”*

But having that purpose alone does not guarantee a meaningful life.

Our choices do.

Someone can have a powerful sense of purpose and still spend years reacting to circumstances that continually pull them away from it.

A leader may value people but react harshly under pressure.
A parent may value connection but repeatedly allow distraction to consume the time meant for family.
An entrepreneur may have a compelling vision but avoid the uncomfortable decisions required to build it.
A person may deeply value health, relationships, financial independence, creativity, service, or personal growth while repeatedly making choices inconsistent with those values.

The gap is not necessarily hypocrisy.
Often, it is simply a lack of intentionality.

The question worth asking is:
Are my everyday choices aligned with the person I say I want to be?

Your Voice

Our voice begins internally.

Before we speak to the world, we are constantly speaking to ourselves.

We interpret.
We assume.
We judge.
We predict.
We remember.
We create meaning.

And those internal conversations influence what we believe is possible.

Becoming intentional begins with awareness.

Listen to the story running through your mind when something difficult happens.

Instead of automatically accepting that story as fact, examine it.

Is it true?
Is it useful?
Is there another way to see the situation?

What would change if you approached it from the person you want to be rather than from the emotion you are experiencing at this moment?

That is where your voice begins to become intentional.

Your Choices

Big moments certainly matter.

But most lives are not shaped by a handful of dramatic decisions.

They are shaped by thousands of seemingly ordinary ones.

Whether to speak or remain silent.
Whether to listen or defend.
Whether to prepare or procrastinate.
Whether to spend or save.
Whether to blame or take responsibility.
Whether to stay comfortable or try something difficult.
Whether to react to the person in front of us or become curious about what might be happening beneath the surface.

One choice may seem insignificant.
Repeated choices become patterns.
Patterns become behaviors.
Behaviors influence identity.
And identity influences the life we build.

This is why intentionality is not simply about making one great decision.

It is about becoming the kind of person who increasingly makes choices on purpose.

Your Impact

Impact is sometimes described as something enormous—building a company, leading a movement, changing an industry, or leaving a public legacy.

Those things can certainly create impact.
But impact begins much closer to home.

It happens in conversations.
It happens in meetings.
It happens in families.
It happens when someone is watching how we handle pressure.
It happens when we keep a commitment nobody else would have known we broke.
It happens when we choose curiosity instead of judgment, courage instead of avoidance, or purpose instead of convenience.

Our impact is the accumulated evidence of our choices.

That means legacy isn't something we suddenly create at the end of our lives.

We are creating it now.

One Question That Can Change the Next Choice

There is a simple practice you can begin today.

The next time you feel yourself becoming angry, defensive, fearful, overwhelmed, or pressured, don't immediately try to solve everything.

Stop.

Then ask:

"Is what I am about to do a reaction—or is it an intentional choice?"

That question creates space.

And inside that space is an opportunity.

An opportunity to examine the story.

To remember what matters.

To consider the result you want.

To choose who you want to be in this moment.

You will not do it perfectly. None of us will.

The objective isn't perfection.

It is becoming increasingly intentional.

Because the next chapter of your life will not be created only by what happens to you.

It will also be created by what you choose to do with what happens.

Your voice matters.

Your choices matter.

Your impact matters.

Be intentional about all three.

Connect With Joseph

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