

Choice



“Choose or not to choose, that is the choice”

I don't know about you, but I didn't choose to be here; I was born in 1954 in London in the UK. It just happened to me, one day I wasn't there and the next day I was, nobody asked for my opinion and I had absolutely no choice in the matter; it was “forced upon me”.

With a bit of luck, I still have a good few years ahead of me; however, when the end comes I probably won't be asked and I probably won't have much choice but to go; one day here and the next day not.

I guess that most of you are like me; didn't choose to be here and probably won't choose to go.

Between those two “non-choices”, there is a time-span of about 80 odd years.

For the first eighteen of those years most of our choices are governed by our parents and for many people the last few years are limited in the choices we can make. That leaves around 60 years, during which we can make choices; choices about what we do, choices about what we say, choices about how we behave, etc.

Sixty years is not a lot in terms of humanity but it's all we have. I am aware that some religions believe that we get a second (or even a third or fourth) chance at life, but what interests me is the “one in hand”.

Many (most?) people live in “horizontal” or chronological time where things tend to happen “to us”; from baby to child, from child to adolescent, from adolescent to adult, from adult to parent, etc. with many “unconscious” choices on the way. Drifting in and out (or staying put) in jobs for no particular reasons, changing partners without really thinking, finding yourself with an unwanted child, etc.

Then there are those people who live in “vertical” or “in the moment” time where they “seize” the opportunity or the moment and make “conscious” choices. Deciding what you want to do with your life, deciding to leave your job and work for yourself, deciding to start a family, etc.

The ancient Greeks had two words for time; Chronos, the origins of chronological time and Kairos, the origins of “in the moment” time.

Sixty years in horizontal time is like living life in the blink of an eye, sixty years in vertical time is like living life in eternity.

Unless you are a Zen Monk it’s maybe it is unrealistic to spend all of one’s time living “vertically”; most people have moments of self-awareness, reflection and stillness but these are often quite fleeting and hidden between the vast amount of “eating, drinking and being merry”.

However, it is invariably our conscious choices which enable us “verticalize” and accelerate the movement towards becoming “who we are”.

Where do you spend most of your time?

To finish, here are some quotes I like around “choices”

“Morality may consist solely in the courage of making a choice.” – Leon Blum

“Man has a choice and it’s a choice that makes him a man.” –

John Steinbeck

Destiny is not a matter of chance; it is a matter of choice. It is not a thing to be waited for, it is a thing to be achieved.” – William Jennings Bryan

“When a man cannot choose, he ceases to be a man.” – Anthony Burgess

(Note: man was in the original quotes)