

## RELEASE ACTIVITIES

### **CHOOSING WHEN TO CHOOSE**

*“Learning to choose is hard. Learning to choose well is harder. And learning to choose well in a world of unlimited possibilities is harder still, perhaps too hard.”*

— Barry Schwartz

As discussed earlier, we have so much choice in our lives that at times it can get in the way of our happiness. Barry Schwartz, in his book *The Paradox of Choice*, has a long list of excellent ideas that can help you navigate our world of constant choices. This activity focuses on just one of those steps and is called “Choosing When to Choose.”

Searching for a job is a process with constant choices. What should I be doing to find a job today? Should I contact that person I met a long time ago who might not even remember me? Should I apply for a job if I don’t know much about the company? The truth is, there is an endless set of choices about how to conduct your job hunt and the answers are far from clear.

We know that often, we are presented with many choices and that the high number of choices frequently isn’t helpful. Having more choices often clouds decision making without improving the quality or value of our choice. One of the most powerful ways to push back on this invisible force is to beef up our strength and *make a conscious decision to make fewer choices*.

The truth is, not every decision matters all that much. Becoming more at ease with consciously choosing to eliminate some choices can improve your sense of well-being.

In your journal, take the following steps:



1. Make a list of a few recent decisions that you have made. The list could include things like a recent purchase, a retirement plan allocation, or a relationship change. You may include work related decisions, but also include at least one other decision that was not solely about work.
2. For each one of those decisions, list what it took to make that decision. List the steps, research, time, anxiety and effort that went into making each decision.
3. Notice how it felt to do the work of step 2.
4. In conclusion, ask yourself how your decision benefitted from doing the work you listed in step 2.
5. Pick a few of the habits you want to release to work on in the next week or month.

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It's highly likely that this activity will help you realize that at least some of your recent decisions had you spending a lot of time in the analytic and consideration phase that didn't provide that much value. Maybe some of your decisions would benefit from a rule of thumb — like don't push yourself to visit multiple grocery stores every week just to pick up a single favorite item, or don't be angry at yourself for asking for help with difficult tasks.

Are there any takeaways you can use to simplify your job hunt? You might decide to make some rules of thumb for yourself, like to make it a practice to phone people the day after an unanswered email, or to always wait 24 hours to send a thank you note, to ensure the hiring manager is still thinking about you the next day. Whatever practices you can set up for yourself that help eliminate excess choice can do a lot to make you feel better about your hunt and spend your time productively.