



# Making Choices - How to Choose

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## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Dr. Hancock has written a regular weekly column entitled "All Psyched Up" for newspapers in two Canadian provinces for more than a dozen years. Over the years, her readers and clients have said that they have benefited from her common-sense solutions, wisdom, and sense of humour. Dr. Linda Hancock, the author of "Life is An Adventure...every step of the way" and "Open for Business Success" is a Registered Psychologist who has a private practice in Medicine Hat. She can be reached at 403-529-6877 or through email [office@drlindahancock.com](mailto:office@drlindahancock.com)

## Published

August 22nd, 2019

Often, people tell me "I don't have a choice". They continue doing things that are unhealthy or unsatisfying even though they are miserable while doing them.

I think it is important to consider the types of choices that we face in life:

1. **Too many choices** - There is an interesting video on YouTube that describes the psychology adopted by Costco. Their inventory is based on research that suggests people with too many choices tend not to buy. When you shop there, you might only find a 180-tablet bottle of pain reliever rather than a range of sizes. You likely will purchase the one that they offer. They planned that!

Parents often complain about the fact that their child's room is frequently a mess. When you dig down for details about this you might hear that the child tries on an outfit in the morning and then quickly decides not to wear it that day. Instead of hanging it back up in the closet, the discarded outfit is just dropped on the floor. This can go on repeatedly for days and days until it is time to do the laundry. The child then just gathers up everything that is on the floor and, even though it is all clean, offers it up to the parent to wash. Perhaps the child has too many choices when it comes to clothing. Or toys. Or other possessions. Too many choices can cause a myriad of problems.

2. **Not enough choices** - When you are feeling "trapped" by life it is a good time to consider what is holding you back from making changes. Is it your own fears or negative attitude? Are you laden by so much debt that you are forced to keep putting one foot in front of another even though you don't like the path ahead of you? Are you living in an environment that stifles creative thinking?

No matter how limited your options might be, there are always choices that you can make. It might take time and sacrifice to pay down your debt, but you can do it! More education or another job search might just open a door that you couldn't previously see. Consulting with a professional or individual who has overcome trouble in the past might provide you with exactly the information and inspiration that you have needed.

3. **Making healthy choices** - Delayed gratification is the antidote for impulsivity. When you jump into something without gathering enough information or weighing the options, you will likely face regret.

We all want to have fun and nice things, but it is important to consider the difference between needs and wants. I frequently tell teenagers that growing up means doing all the things that you don't want to do - anyway! You need to get enough sleep and a healthy diet even if that means having to invest your time and efforts into planning and preparing for them. The good news is that once you have established a routine you will find realize the benefits.

This week think about the choices that you have and the ones that you have been neglecting. What could you do differently in the future to make your life happier and healthier?