

Decisions



Recently, I was asked a very good question: “When life dishes out so many challenges, and decisions have to be made—some critical, some less so—how do we know what to go with? Do we look in our hearts or do we use our mind to tell us what’s right and what’s wrong?”

My answer was, first of all, we have to understand something in our lives when things come our way and things happen to us. Bad things *do* happen. Sometimes things get really bad, and we wonder, “Why is this happening to me?”

The best way to make a decision about which way to go can only be made by a person who is calm and collected, not a person who is panicking. Not by making a random choice: “Okay, let’s throw a coin.” What is calmness? Imagine there is a pond where you see your reflection. If you throw a rock in it, you will see ripples, but you won’t see

your reflection anymore. The ripples are there, but the reflection is gone. When the pond is still, the ripples are gone, and the reflection returns. You have to be still to see how it really is.

Going within, being calm, is the best possible thing you can do to be in that neutral position where you can look at the whole picture and not just a bunch of ripples, because the ripples are not going to show you the situation as it really is.

As a pilot, every six months I have to take a refresher course and go into a simulator. And, of course, things happen. When you lose an engine, you have to be very calm. You can’t start pushing buttons or doing a lot of things. You have to just be calm and think, “What do I need to do right now? Let’s get out the checklist and start that engine again.”

When we get confused or hurried, we lose the priority of what is important. I have seen a mother in a busy shopping mall carrying bags, and her child is crying, “Mommy, help me.” And you *know* the mother is frustrated, “If I drop my shopping bags, somebody will steal them.” Yes, but if somebody steals your child, it will be a lot worse. What is your priority?



So, in this life, what is your priority? I don’t care *what* the problem is—whether this has to resolve it or that has to resolve it, it is important to be calm. Calmness does not come from the head. It comes from only one place—within you.

This calmness can give me time to understand, “Do this and do that, because this is the priority.” In my refreshers, when we get into the airplane, the instructors throw things at us that are absurd—right down to both engines quitting. What is my priority? Staying alive.

Have you seen people driving on the highway and they realize that they’re about to miss their exit? Suddenly — *pow!* They’ve lost their priority. You may miss your exit, but drive safely. Go to the next exit, turn around, and come back, instead of swerving to drive across the lanes to the ramp.



Calmness comes from the heart. This head can never be calm. It will drive you crazy—like a ping pong ball. “If you do this, this will happen, but then if that happens. . .” What is important?

It’s from calmness that the priority can be perceived, not from turmoil. The head is very good at turmoil. And this heart is very good at calming. So come from here, then decide.

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