



EXCEPTIONAL WOMEN'S COACHING

## **No Choice but to Choose**

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**Consider this for a moment, “the secret to erasing all signs of victimhood and martyrdom is being conscious of and taking responsibility for all of your choices.”**

Yes, we mean that you are 100% responsible for every choice you make in your life. And, in fact, you are constantly choosing something. To say you have “no choice” is simply not true, because you are never truly stuck, you always have choices. We like to say, you do have a choice, however, you just might not like your choices. But choice is present in our lives at ANY and EVERY moment . . . whether we see it, feel it, or believe it --- it is there.

- Even when you think you are NOT making a choice you are actually making a choice. I know this idea may sound a bit tricky, but it is important to realize not choosing is still a choice. By not choosing to do something different or new, you are choosing to stay your course and maintain the status quo. And, that is a choice.
- Even when you have very real limitations facing you, you still have choice in the matter. You can choose how you respond to your situation or circumstances.

Nelson Mandela is a powerful living example of how human beings can recognize choice and choose powerfully even when no choice seems apparent. Mandela was physically in a prison for 27 years and yet he is quoted as saying, “...It is only my flesh and blood that are shut up behind these walls. In my thoughts I am free as a falcon.” Nelson Mandela chose to be a free man. Some would argue he had no choice – he was in prison, but clearly waking up every day he made the choice to feel free and therefore be free regardless of his circumstances.

We are aware as we write these words that you might be a woman in a job, marriage, financial circumstance, political situation, or other scenario that might cause you to make serious considerations about your choices. AND, yet, you still have choices.

The overarching question is “Am I really stuck?” The answer to all scenarios is ... maybe. That might seem flippant but it’s not meant to be. It’s meant to be illuminating and liberating. If you choose to feel stuck, you will feel stuck. However there are many choices in every situation. No situation is either/or and you are always choosing whether you recognize it or not.

One of the most powerful tools to help us realize we are not really stuck is to think back and recall the “moments of choice” that have occurred in our lives. We all have them and we tend to remember the big ones:

- Should I have a baby?
- What university should I go to?
- Is this man the one for me?
- Will I be happy in this profession/job?

If I asked you to think about “your moment of choice,” what would you say? Think about it for a moment. What comes to mind? A memorable moment of choice for me occurred when I was a CEO of



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a \$10 Million start-up company. I was never home and rarely present with my sons even when I was physically at home. One night, my youngest son made a comment about how my opinion wasn't important because they do things their way because I was never around. I realized in that moment I was not acting like their mom, but rather the CEO of an 8 and 9 year old. And it didn't work on ANY level. In that single moment I saw my life was out of alignment. What I truly loved and valued most in my life was getting the least and worst of me. I kept feeling I had no choice, because I had to support my family.

And instead, I chose to choose! I made a choice to change my life and find a way to be a Mom, Wife, and Professional Business Woman on my terms. I resigned from my position, negotiating an excellent transition package, and launched a consulting firm with several business partners.

By looking back over your life you will see a "defining moment" – a "moment of choice." Some of these "moments of choice" are big enough to shape the trajectory of your entire life; others are little momentary choices that have accumulated over a life time. Perhaps your moment of choice was a time when you took a very specific action, or it could be the time you chose to let the moment pass you by. Both of these could be defining moments in your life.

It is also important to realize that our life is more than just a few "big moments of choice." Our life is actually an on-going, never-ending, series of choices. In any given moment we can:

- make the choice to be annoyed by something or let it go
- choose to be happy or to dwell on the things that don't make us feel good
- love a spouse or a child, or to focus on their short-comings
- go to bed and get a good night's rest or sit up and have that extra glass of wine

And, the list goes on and on and on.

Every day, we face and make hundreds of little choices. The most impactful of any of these is the choice to be personally responsible for you: to be personally responsible for your own happiness, to be personally responsible for your own well being, and to "own" the results you are receiving in your life.

When we act and feel like we have no choice, we are giving away our power. When we take full responsibility for our choices, both big and small, we are powerful beyond measure.