

THE MASTER DECISION
Part I of II

By: Brian Matthews

By a show of hands, how many people here have ever said something along the lines of: "That person made me mad"? In my experience, I've been in situations where I've caught myself saying: "He did something to piss me off." I would often find myself upset about something somebody said or did. I noticed a theme: It was always somebody else's fault. What I didn't find out until much later was that by saying those words, I was avoiding a commitment to make "The Master Decision."

The Master Decision is simply accepting responsibility for your life and everything in it. It states that the starting point of personal freedom is for you to accept complete responsibility for who you are and for everything that you become. You must accept--without reservation--that you are where you are, and WHAT you are, because of yourself. If you want things to change, then YOU must change first. Your thinking determines your attitude, your conduct, and your behavior, and they in turn largely determine your success or failure in life. Because you are always free to choose the content of your conscious mind, you are always fully responsible for the consequences of what you think.

About 5 years into my prison sentence, it dawned on me that everything I would ever be is entirely up to me. Nobody else was going to do it for me, nobody else was going to come save me. If I wanted something better for myself, then it was up to me to make it happen. That means that I am the builder of my own future, so I went and got busy building.

The building of the new me started with realizing how many "White

Rabbits" I had. "White Rabbits" are the excuses that I used to avoid setting clear goals and making total commitments to the things that I really wanted in life. In learning how to build, one of the first things I picked up was that the quality of my thinking determines the quality of my life. I needed to learn to become a skilled thinker. Part of being a skilled thinker is to look at mental blocks or excuses which I may use as reasons for not moving ahead. Some of the more popular "White Rabbits" that we all use as excuses are just self-limiting ideas, such as: "I'm too young," "I'm too old," "I don't have the money," "I don't have the experience," "I have too many bills," or--the one we all hear too often--"I'm in prison." What if I told you that as I look out at this crowd right now, I personally know that four of the prisoners in this room successfully run and operate businesses, even though they're locked up? Some of us have already made the Master Decision to accept full responsibility for our lives and we stopped chasing the White Rabbits.

The acceptance of complete responsibility--the giving up of all your excuses--is not easy. It's one of the hardest things you'll ever attempt; or do. And that's why most people never do it. At the beginning of this speech, I talked about somebody else "making me mad." Whenever our actions are blamed on somebody or something else, we're attempting to give away responsibility for that action. Except that we can never give responsibility away; the only thing you can give away is CONTROL. Whenever you try to make somebody or something else responsible, you end up giving them control over your emotions. YOU are still completely responsible, though.

And although I still feel a certain way about the control that D.O.C.

has over my life, I shudder at the thought that other prisoners have action at controlling my emotions. That's exactly what happens when I attempt to give responsibility away. That dude didn't make me mad; I CHOSE to respond to his actions with anger and negativity. And by accepting complete responsibility for my life, I took the first step towards becoming greater than what I once thought myself to be.

I repeat it because it's important: THE QUALITY OF YOUR THINKING DETERMINES THE QUALITY OF YOUR LIFE. If you want a better life, learn how to think better. And that starts with making The Master Decision:

Accept responsibility for your life, and for everything that you are, and for everything that you will become.

I leave you all with something to seriously think about:

If you really want to do something, then you'll find a way to get it done; otherwise, you'll find a White Rabbit on why it's not done. Either way, the choice is yours.

Mr. Toastmaster....