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## Coach's Corner: The power of deciding

By: Sharon Pahlka , Journal Newspapers

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I like adventure, so a few years ago, I did a walking tour of Europe, seeing six countries in 12 days. Little did I know that what I learned on that trip would change almost every day of the rest of my life.

I had spent the previous year being hooked up to a kidney machine three times a week for five hours each time as I had done for 19 years. Getting a kidney from my wonderful brother (I would gladly kiss any muddy toe of his with a smile) seemed truly a miracle. Life without dialysis dazzled me with a freedom I had long since forgotten. Just planning this first trip out of the U.S. with my shiny new kidney made me giddy.

But there was one possible blemish in this glorious picture. I was going to travel with a friend and was having doubts about how well that would work, especially under the stress of travel. Spurred by my enthusiasm over my new-found freedom, I made a promise to myself: "Nothing - and I mean nothing - was going to get in the way of me having a marvelous time."

I had no idea how important this decision would be. As it turned out, my friend was not having fun, felt cranky the whole trip and found my enthusiasm intolerable. Here's the good part: I didn't miss a beat. I just let my friend be herself and hooked up with others who wanted to do fun things. I knew as I began each day I would love that day because I had decided ahead of time. I enjoyed all 12 days and all six countries down to the last cobblestone. And most of my enjoyment led right back to my decision to let nothing stand in the way of it.

Nowadays, I try to make a decision almost every day. It could be as simple as not letting anything get in the way of a workout, to more existential choices to not let anything prevent me from feeling gratitude for the gift of life.

Of course, life is full of things we can't control and can't choose. Thanks to my cranky traveling companion, I learned that we can decide ahead of time how to respond to our circumstances. That decision is always open. Decide ahead of time what your day will be like, and you will probably have a better day. Decide ahead what your life will be like, and you will probably have a better life

**Coaching Question:** Are you letting circumstances, people or things take away your joy in life? Why? What could you decide differently?

**Coaching Tip:** Try it. Firmly decide ahead of time that nothing is going to get in the way of a desired outcome. Notice what happens.

**Quotes:** "The last of the human freedoms: to choose one's attitude in any given set of circumstances, to choose one's own way."  
- Viktor Frankel

"As a man thinketh, so is he, and as a man chooseth, so is he."  
- Proverbs 23:7

"The thing always happens that you really believe in; and the belief in a thing makes it happen."  
-Frank Lloyd Wright

*Sharon Pahlka is a life coach and speaker. In her coaching, she helps her clients live well and meaningfully, especially those with chronic health challenges. Sharon's column, Coach's Corner, offers helpful tips from her work.*

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