CHECK-IN — DO THIS NOW

Review of Understanding & Practice

BEFORE YOU begin Session 11, use these questions to guide your review of Session 10 and the time since then.

In **general**: What happened? What did you notice? What opened up for you?

In terms of **identifying and using activities as opportunities to get into the flow state**: What happened? What did you notice? What opened up for you?

In terms of **getting into the animated state and acting despite not feeling like it, in order to get into the flow state**: What happened? What did you notice? What opened up for you?

With regards to **making progress towards achieving your coaching outcomes / main goals**: What happened? What did you notice? What opened up for you?

Before you begin this session, do the check-in exercise on the opposite page. ☚

11 | Decision & Commitment

ARE YOU the kind of person who just drifts along and lets life happen? Or, when you know you need to do something, do you take a long time to convince yourself? Then, are you easily distracted? Or are you someone who makes clear decisions and commitments even before you know how you're going to achieve that goal. Do you keep yourself on track when you've made a commitment?

In this session, you'll discover the importance of consistently making clear decisions and the power that a commitment has to shift your mental state and your level of energy in any situation. You'll also see how commitments spark new ideas and solutions that you would never have had otherwise.

Session Theme Outcomes

Discover or learn more about the importance of decisions and the power of making firm, clear commitments.

By participating in this session you will:

- ✓ Discover the need for, and the secret to, quick, easy, clear decision-making;
- ✓ Recognise where you might be lacking clarity and what you can do about it;
- ✓ Learn what you can put in place so that you can make quick, clear decisions in every situation;
- ✓ Know how to organise your life according to what's most important to you and what you're best at.

CHECK-IN — DO THIS NOW

Decision & Commitment

USE THESE questions to guide you to set clear objectives for the session.

Question 1 (of 3) Identify the single main (or maximum two) challenge(s) that you experience in relation to this theme and which you'd like to have an answer for by the end of this session. (For example, "I make commitments too quickly and impulsively and then I get into trouble," or, "I struggle to commit—I always see too many options," or, "I avoid commitments entirely, the very idea makes me exhausted," etc.)

Question 2 (of 3) What is the main obstacle you've experienced or question that comes up when you think about making a shift with regards to that challenge? (For example, "I don't like to think about things, I just like to commit," or, "I get nervous if I'm forced to commit before I've considered all the options," or, "I can't deal with the pressure of commitments at all, I never make them.")

Question 3 (of 3) Now try to imagine what experience you'd have, or how you'd show up if you could have things exactly as you'd want them. Describe your desired outcome as objectively as possible—in other words, make it specific and measurable. (For example, "I'd remain calm long enough to consider all the options," or, "I'd actually make some commitments within the same day, or even hour, or right away," or, "I'd be able to consistently commit to things without feeling exhausted by them," etc.)

Remember, if you want to get the best out of your participation in this program—or anything in life, for that matter—then you should define some outcomes for your participation, as you've just done and then commit to achieve them. Your mind will then naturally focus on, and pay attention to, the things you need as and when they come up—not only during the sessions, but in your daily life in between the sessions too. So go ahead and make that commitment now!

Self-Coaching Notes Use this space for the self-coaching that you'll be directed to do later in the session.

KEY CONCEPT - TAKE NOTE

Decision & Commitment

A DECISION is a mental action that leads to the elimination of one option—or range of options—for the sake of another. In fact, the Latin root of the word decision is most telling: *decidere*, meaning "to cut off". If you look at it, every decision—even a win-win decision—always involves a cutting off of one path, or course of action, over another. To be with one person, you're asked to eliminate being with others. To pursue a career in one field, you have to forego others. To own a Windows PC, you have to walk away from a Mac. Sheesh, this is difficult stuff!

In addition, decisions are forced on you by the movement of life. You get to a certain age and you have to decide on a career. You get to the end of your contract and you have to decide whether to renew it. The important point to note here is that life keeps moving, and it gives you a brief window to have your say. You can take that opportunity or not. The train is going to leave the station and you can get on that train, or not.

In fact, as Napoleon Hill, author of one of the earliest and best self-help books, *Think & Grow Rich*, wrote, "Life is a draughts board, and the player opposite you is time. If you hesitate before moving, or neglect to move promptly, your draughts will be wiped off the board by time. You are playing against a partner who will not tolerate indecision!"

No wonder that the world-famous life coach Anthony Robbins places so much emphasis on the importance and power of decisions. "It is in the moments of decision that your destiny is shaped," he says.

Right there sits the clue as to why you may sometimes struggle to make decisions. The ego, you saw in the session on the enneagram, starts out as a defence mechanism. It gets set up, to a large degree, as a strategy for avoiding what you don't like. This continues into adult life, where your ego still tries to either control, or resist, any movement or change in a direction that it doesn't like.

You're likely to demonstrate this control or resistance by either leaping forward impulsively with decisions, in an attempt to control the situation very tightly, or, at the other end of the spectrum, by avoiding the decision

entirely. Either way, those are indicators that the ego is trying to prevent the changes that it doesn't want.

Decisions are necessary, as we saw, to keep pace with life, and life doesn't really stand around waiting to find out what you want. Therefore, it's not about getting those decisions "right" so much as it is about making them fast enough that you don't get left behind. Therefore, you're better off being like that sportsperson on the field, who knows that any decision is better than no decision. This was certainly the view of Theodore Roosevelt, who said, "In any moment of decision, the best thing you can do is the right thing, the next best thing is the wrong thing, and the worst thing you can do is nothing."

Of course, a deliberate decision to *not* act, or to leave a situation to take its own course, is still a decision, which is different from doing nothing in the sense of just ignoring it and hoping it will go away. It's about making decisions and being willing to deal with the consequences. The more you can do this, the more you'll reduce stress and improve your experience of life.

THE SCIENCE / THE SOURCE

The Role of Emotions in Decisions

EMOTIONS HAVE received a bad rap when it comes to decision-making. They've been seen as interfering to the point that, in business, it's often said that you need to "keep emotions out of the decision". Women, in particular, have borne the brunt of this prejudice. Yet, a number of studies have shown that emotions are essential to good decision-making—and that you use them in ways that you don't even realise.

Back in the 1950s, the prefrontal lobotomy was a widely used "treatment" for people who had been diagnosed as schizophrenic, or who had severe OCD or depression. Essentially, it involved severing the fibres that connected the prefrontal cortex to the rest of the brain.

The prefrontal cortex is the area recognised for, inter alia, complex cognitive behaviour, decision-making and social behaviour. Yet these operations removed, not only intellectual capacity, but also emotional capacity. This served as an early clue that emotions and decision-making were bound up.

Many years later, one of the world's leading neuroscientists, Dr Antonio Damasio, made a similar finding with one of his patients, a successful businessman whom he named Elliott. Elliott had suffered brain damage as a result of a tumour and subsequent surgery for removal. According to Damasio, "Elliott emerged as a man with a normal intellect who was unable to decide properly, especially when the decision involved personal or social matters." Apparently, it took Elliott 30 minutes to choose an appointment time, and even longer to decide where to have lunch, and he even struggled to decide what colour pen to use to fill out office forms. All this despite the fact that he remained in the 97th percentile in terms of his IQ score.

Damasio provided Elliott as a case study in his 1994 book, *Descarte's Error*, in which, according to the Amazon blurb, Damasio "challenged traditional ideas about the connection between emotions and rationality" and proffered that "emotions are not a luxury, they are essential to rational thinking and to normal social behaviour". In fact, far from excluding them, we can't do without them, he insists.

The orbitofrontal cortex is a region within the prefrontal cortex of the brain which is involved in the cognitive processing of decision-making. The amygdala, we know, is the seat of our most primitive reactions, in particular our fight-or-flight response, and therefore the wellspring of our emotions. Damasio's somatic marker hypothesis describes the interplay between the two. It has the amygdala and the orbitofrontal cortex being intricately linked to form a neural circuit critical for judgment and decision-making.

"Nature appears to have built the apparatus of rationality (the orbitofrontal cortex) not just on top of the apparatus of biological regulation (the amygdala), but also from it and with it," he wrote in *Descarte's Error*.

This statement implies that emotions provide additional information, for example in the form of motivation and meaning, to rational factors when making decisions. Without it, for starters, we'd get stuck in analysis paralysis. Then, as the author of *How We Decide*, Jonah Lehrer, points out, "Emotion and motivation

> share the same Latin root, *movere*, which means to move. The world is full of things and it is our feelings that help us choose [and therefore move] among them."
>
> Lehrer postulates that our best decisions are a finely tuned blend of both feeling and reason—and the precise mix depends on the situation. He states that "Emotions are profoundly smart and constantly learning, they are not simply animal instincts that must be tamed."

So, what goes into making a good decision? Well, the first thing to recognise is that when you're facing a decision, you're effectively attempting to answer a question. Usually, that question is something like, *How can I get what I want?* This usually points you back to your values, which, remember, you're committed to more than anything, to the point that you're willing to die for them—assuming that you're human and just like everybody else.

This is the one reason why we tend to make the same decision again and again throughout our lives, each time with different content. Think about that guy who misses his child's birthday, not once, but again and again. Although the content of the situation appears different each time, in effect, he's just demonstrating—unconsciously, without awareness—his commitment to his priority of values.

When you're facing a decision, you're effectively attempting to answer a question.

Or, another question that you might effectively be trying to answer when facing a decision goes like this: *How can I make sure that the thing I fear most doesn't happen?* Remember that enneagram avoidance area, that red zone trigger? Well, presuming again that you're human and much like everybody else, then you're likely to be just as committed to avoiding that thing as you are to living out your priority of values. No wonder, then that you can often find yourself getting stuck, or getting into conflict with other people, with regards to a decision because you're trying to control or resist a particular outcome.

In the *Practical Mindfulness* program we show that you're not so much in charge of every situation as you are a part of the situation—and that you're far less able to direct the situation than you would like to believe. Therefore, if your question is all about you and what you want, it's likely to be out of sync with the reality of the situation, or the reality of life. It's a harsh truth that's coming up here, but life doesn't always care too much about what you want. It's not a giant ATM waiting for you to come and type in your PIN code and make your withdrawal.

Therefore, a better question that you can use to guide your decision-making would be one that takes the reality of life into account—the reality that you're part of the bigger picture, you're part of what wants to happen in the situation. So that would be a better question then, wouldn't it? Asking, *What wants to happen in this situation?* Or, *What might happen in this situation that might turn out OK, even if it's not what I want?* Then you might ask, *What's my part in that?* Or, *What do I need to do?*

If those questions don't entirely work for you, the principle still stands. When you're making a decision, you're effectively asking a question. If you can identify what question you're asking and then address whether that's the best question to be asking in the situation, you'll be taking the essential step towards better decision-making. The next step would be to determine what would be the best question to be asking and addressing, preferably one that doesn't assume that you're the master of the universe, because that's not realistic, no matter how much you've developed the power of your word!

REAL-LIFE EXAMPLE

Vasbyt!—The Mother of All Challenges

I SERVED my mandatory national service in the South African military during the late 1980s. On the officers' course, you knew that one day you would be woken up for the endurance hike that was commonly known as *Vasbyt*.

Vasbyt is an Afrikaans word that translates to "bite the bullet" and it's a perfect moniker for this activity, which is an adventure race on steroids in which the training officers do their very best to break you psychologically.

To kick it off, they woke us with sirens in the middle of the night. They allocated equipment for us to carry, but insufficient materials to make the braces we needed to carry it on. Even so, we had to lug this equipment along a narrow crevice of space that ran between a steep embankment and a railway line. For miles. For hours. For a whole day, it turned out.

Towards sunset, we were allowed to drop our load and we marched on easier terrain. Up ahead was a luxurious-looking tent. Ah, this would not be so bad, we all thought. We were directed past the tent, down the road and into the night.

All through the night we were given scouting exercises to do. If you returned without the right information, you were sent back. It was freezing cold, so that if you sat still for too long you froze. All the while, officers drove along the route in trucks offering you a ride back to camp if you wanted to give up. Many did.

The next day things got tougher, and more pointless, and the encouragement was still there for you to give up and hop on a truck and go home. Today, thirty years later, I still remember clearly the moment on that second day when I decided that I would not give up. I would finish this. I would own it. I would conquer it. I would make it my own.

At that moment I felt a surge of energy flood through me. I felt alive and powerful in a way that I had never known.

By day three I had no food left. By day four, it was each to his own and you had to find your way home, before cut-off time. For the last half a day we walked back along that railway line. Everyone was too exhausted and hungry to even speak. You just put one foot in front of the other and dared not stop.

I just made the cut-off time and, soon after, I found myself back in my bungalow. I felt reluctant to remove my backpack. *Is that all?* I thought. *That wasn't so bad! I could go again!* I felt that I could do more. The four days seemed to have flown by.

Before the army, I had always enjoyed running for fitness. I had run a distance of five to eight kilometres, almost daily, throughout

> my teenage years. When I returned home after having completed *Vasbyt*, I noticed that my running times dropped by a quarter.
>
> The reason? I had always paced myself and kept something in reserve. After *Vasbyt*, I knew that it was all in the mind, that you could push yourself so much harder and that, when you did, you entered the zone, that place where nothing mattered, where pain was pleasure, and you could go forever—and all because of a decision to totally own an apparently impossible activity!

Think about times when you've made a decision. Perhaps it was to resign from your lousy job or to finally leave a destructive relationship. Or to start a new business, or a new relationship. There's a tremendous amount of energy that comes with any decision, as illustrated in the previous, real-life example. It's easy, then, to take action at the point of decision. In fact, the energy compels you to. Very often, you get a positive response from life. Some big coincidence happens that seems to confirm your decision. It's like you're being given some big reward from the universe for finally taking action.

More than anything, decisions require courage.
You need to embrace the movement of life.

The challenge, then, is to sustain that energy and continue with that commitment, with taking action in that direction. You can quickly develop doubts, like that good old buyer's remorse. It's realistic to pay attention to that, and more often than not, it's the old ego defence mechanism, that old self, that small self that held you in that place for so long, that's having one last-gasp attempt to survive by getting you back. Be careful, when you've made a decision, to refer back to the principle of integrity and being your word. Stay with the decision, stay with the commitment, despite what those niggly doubts may tell you—and you can be sure they'll know exactly what arguments to throw at you!

You can probably see that, more than anything, decisions require courage. They also result in movement and the elimination of options. So, apart from asking yourself better questions, you need to embrace the movement of life and see that things often turn out OK, or even better than you'd hoped. This

will give you the courage you need and the willingness to move with life. In fact, you'd be well advised to gather some evidence from your past when that was the case.

Secondly, you need to have—or to develop—the willingness to let go of options, to cut your losses, to take one single path and find the riches that become available by taking that path, that would not have become available if you'd tried to keep your options open. Once again, gather some evidence from your life of when eliminating a range of options for the sake of one particular option resulted in a positive outcome, whether it was in terms of knowledge, experience, love, career, money, or some other factor.

Here's one more thing to know about decisions. When you get up on a weekday morning, and you have to get the kids to school and yourself to work, there's not much debating to do, is there? Your priorities and decisions are handed to you by the very clear and tight deadlines you have, and to which you are most definitely committed. Conversely, when you wake up on a Sunday morning and there are no plans, you can debate endlessly about what to do, and when. The difference? There is no commitment to any particular activity or outcome, and no deadlines.

The thing to see here is the link between having a tightly defined context and decision-making. The more clear your context is, the more the decisions just present themselves, there's no debate needed. On weekdays, your context for decision-making is provided by the "clear and tight deadlines" and the loop is closed by your commitment to those deadlines. On weekends, there's no such thing and so you lay around, slow to decide anything.

Naturally, this brings us back, once more, to the Kilimanjaro example. You gave yourself a clear context (climb Kilimanjaro) and a tight deadline (six months), and made a firm commitment to that deadline. Suddenly, you knew exactly what to do, evidenced by the new thoughts that arose the next day.

So, what does this mean? It means be as busy as you can. Ha ha, that's a joke. It means that you should always know where you're going. Begin with the end in mind. Have a clear goal or outcome or intention. Then commit to a deadline. You'll find that most of your decisions will make themselves.

We'll revisit this subject on a much bigger scale in Session 12, when you create your authentic leadership brand statement. For now, before you leave this page, what decision do you choose to make?!

THE EXECUTIVE CONTEXT

Context & Content

IF YOU plant a tree into fertile soil, and water it, it will grow. If you put that same tree into soil that is not fertilised, or that is too dry or too moist, too stony, and so on, it may not grow, or it will grow slightly differently. Norwegian pine, for example, grows very slowly in that cold climate. The rings are very close, which gives it strength, and a certain look that works for yacht-building and modern Zen-style architecture. Placed into the warm climes of South Africa, however, pine grows very fast. The rings are further apart and so the wood is soft, and it has a look that lends itself more to cottage-style furniture.

So you can say that the *content*, being the tree and its wood and the uses for that wood, arises uniquely out of the *context*, being the climate.

As you've seen, we human beings are linguistic creatures. We create our reality by first speaking it into being, using words, and we communicate with each other using words. So let's have a look at how context and content apply in terms of this linguistic framework.

Earlier, we used the example of being given a role in the end-of-year charity play. You were given the role of bad guy, with no script. That's the context. And, you discovered, you didn't need a script, because the content—the specifics of your actions, facial expressions, the words that you spoke—arose spontaneously out of that context. You just knew what to do and say to be the bad guy; it just happened naturally.

Another example we've used is the one of climbing Kilimanjaro. When you heard someone talk about, but made no decision yourself, you didn't think about it again. No new content. However, when you made a commitment, you found yourself spontaneously thinking about what training and equipment you'll need, where you'll find it, what it might cost, and so on.

So you can see, firstly, that content arises spontaneously out of context; secondly, that by changing the context you change the content; and, thirdly, that within a human linguistic framework, when you make a decision and commit to something, you create a linguistic (mental, abstract) context out of which new content arises.

So that's an indicator of where this can help you. If you want to change content, what's the best, most efficient and effective way of doing that? Change the context.

The context can be seen to be that broad idea that you are most committed to. It's like those Russian dolls, when you open up the big one and there's another one inside; you open that, there's another one inside, and so on. So your broadest beliefs about a situation, or about life—for example, your core values and beliefs—inform the content that naturally arises out of your mind.

If you believe the world is a dangerous place, well, you're going to spontaneously notice and point to evidence of risk and danger. You'll even take perfectly neutral situations and give them a negative spin. Like the shoe salesman who gets sent to a foreign land and telegrams back: *Bad news, nobody here wears shoes.* If, on the other hand, you believe the world is a safe place, well, you'll spontaneously find and point to the evidence for that. You'll be more like the other salesman who gets sent to the same foreign land and telegrams back: *Great news, nobody here wears shoes!*

As human beings, we often make the mistake of getting lost in content, instead of looking at the context.

As human beings, we often make the mistake of getting lost in content, instead of looking at the context. In the *Practical Mindfulness* program, we say we're going to show you the habits and the structure of your mind. What we show you is how your attention gets captured by content and drifts away. For example, you're in your car and you hear something on the radio that reminds you of a holiday you once took. That, in turn, reminds you that you need to book your own family holiday. That reminds you that you need to send that invoice so you can afford to pay for it. And so it goes, on and on.

You become unaware of your context, which is that you're sitting in traffic, lost in content. If someone was to walk up to your car and tap on the window, you'd get a fright, because you weren't paying attention. When you arrive home, you won't remember what route you took, or what other songs played on the radio. If that content suddenly became about the financial challenges you're facing, you'll very likely follow it until you feel anxious and depressed. Then you'll try to fight that content with other content, in the hope of getting yourself out of the funk.

What mindfulness teaches you to do is to draw back and recognise that thinking goes off on its own, then to become aware of when that's happening, and finally to observe your thinking instead of blindly following it. When you do that, you draw back into context, versus getting lost in content. That helps you, for example, when you are anxious or depressed. You draw back to the context. You see that, firstly, your mind is producing those thoughts quite randomly; and, secondly, whatever you're worried about isn't happening right now. That creates some space for you to apply the emotion regulation techniques that you learned in Session 8. When you do that, you shift the context from, *Emotion is bad and I must get rid of it,* to *Emotion is useful, what's the message, what's the call to action?* Once you've done that, you can decide where to put your attention that would be more purposeful and constructive.

Working at the level of context is far more powerful and effective than trying to fight content with content.

As you can see, working at the level of context is far more powerful and effective than trying to fight content with content.

You can access the context of any situation when you draw as far back as you can from the situation and put it in its most simple terms. You might do that by asking, for example, *What's happening here out of which all this content is arising?* If you sit and look at the situation directly, from the outside, you might recognise, *Well, there is fear.* Once you recognise that there is fear, then, instead of asking the "why" question which takes you into content—*Why is there fear and what caused that?*—you bring yourself into presence and then ask, *What can you do about it?* This question becomes a more empowering context that sparks new thoughts which are likely to be solution-oriented thoughts. Those thoughts will inevitably lead you to a decision that will take you off in a new direction.

So for you as a leader, how can you apply this? Well, the first thing is to recognise when you and your people, your team, are getting lost in content. One example would be when there's an argument going on and everybody is trying to push their own point of view. Chances are you're all getting lost in content, in your story of things, and each of you is trying to force *your* version of things, *your* opinion of things, onto the world.

What's useful at that point is to draw back as far as you can and to ask yourself questions such as, *What's really going on here?* You might think of it as, *What's the elephant in the room here?* Or, *What's nobody saying?* Or, *What's everybody trying to say?* These are just some questions that can help you draw back and look at the big picture, and see the situation for what it is. What you might recognise is, for example, *There is a lack of trust.*

The context that is defining any situation from which the content is arising is usually expressed in a simple statement like that: *There is fear,* or, *There is a lack of trust.* So you try to get to what's really going on in the room and call the situation as it is, call out the elephant in the room, point to the bigger picture. These are ways in which you start to reach into context and when you start working at that level, the content then shifts naturally by itself. It's a far more effective level at which to be working.

Another way to phrase that question might be, *What's true for you right now?* That's also a good one to use to interrupt people who are lost in their story, in the content of things. You might also use it in a group setting. You could go around and give everybody a turn. *What's true for me is, we're getting nowhere. What's true for me is, we don't trust each other. What's true for me is, so-and-so is not listening to reason.* Those are your context statements that will help you to draw back to the level out of which the content is arising, and deal more effectively with the situation.

Another way to do this might be to ask a *what-if* question. People's ideas—their content—are often defined by a context that accepts limitations. *Well, we only have these resources, so we can only do X or Y.* You could ask, for example, *What if resources were not an issue?* That would cause people to look into possibility. They would be more likely to come up with ideas they would never have considered. Some of those ideas might seem hare-brained, but then you'd ask a question like, *What would have to happen to make that possible?* That would bring it back down to earth. From there you might ask them to make commitments to time frames and budgets, which, as you've seen, will activate the context out of which the practical solutions will arise. Often, the greater the limitations, the greater the creativity that emerges!

So you'd be wise to develop the competence—and perhaps a set of questions that you can use—to shift people out of content and into context. As you can see, it will dramatically increase your effectiveness as a leader.

SELF-COACHING — DO THIS NOW

Decision & Commitment

DEVELOP YOUR understanding of and ability to apply this session's theme by responding to the statements and questions below.

Ways in which I currently use, or have used, decision and commitment in a powerful way include…

How not making a decision when I needed to has cost me in terms of being successful or achieving my goals:

I sometimes focus too much on the *how* of a goal, instead of focusing on the clarity of the goal and people's level of commitment. True / False. Some example of this include…

Where, in my executive context, right now, could I harness the power of commitment to produce creative solutions and effective decision-making?

Now take a look at the outcome you set for yourself on p.291 with regards to the theme of this session, and which you committed to getting an answer for. Reflect on the extent to which you've achieved that. If not to the degree you would like, you may want to turn to the coaching questions in Appendix A and apply those in order to get you closer to the result. Or you may ask a question via the *Handbook Support Program* on the website.

SELF-COACHING — DO THIS NOW

My Main Goal: Taking the Next Step

REFER BACK to the Main Goals that you set in Session 1, and which you wrote out on p.37, then read and follow the instructions below.

For each of your Main Goals listed at the beginning of this program, reflect on what needs to happen next for you to move forward with regards to that goal. Then complete the steps below.

Session Step 1

For ANY or ALL of your main goals, write down the next big step that you need to take to get closer to achieving that goal, and the challenge that needs to be dealt with:

My Main Goal [A] | Next big step & related challenge:

My Main Goal [B] | Next big step & related challenge:

My Main Goal [C] | Next big step & related challenge:

NOTE You may not find it necessary to deal with ALL of your goals in EVERY session. And it's fine if you do. Either way, just work on what's relevant.

Session Step 2

What question do you have with regards to that issue (as in, if you could ask your genie—or your coach—for an answer right now, what would you ask)?

My Main Goal [A] | Question I have about this next big step & related challenge:

My Main Goal [B] | Question I have about this next big step & related challenge:

My Main Goal [C] | Question I have about this next big step & related challenge:

Session Step 3

Now take a look through the coaching questions in Appendix A. Try each one on and see what feels right. Select the ONE or TWO that produce a useful insight or empowering answer for EACH of the main goals you're working with. These will effectively "replace" the questions you asked in Step 2. The questions you choose should open up a new possibility and/or energise and excite you. Write down the question(s) and then write down your response in the form of a decision or plan.

My Main Goal [A] | Coaching question(s) I'm choosing to work with:

My responses (in the form of a decision/plan)

My Main Goal [B] | Coaching question(s) I'm choosing to work with:

My responses (in the form of a decision/plan)

My Main Goal [C] | Coaching question(s) I'm choosing to work with:

My responses (in the form of a decision/plan)

Session Step 4 (Optional)

If you're unsure that you're doing it right or you're really stuck, then you may choose to submit your responses for feedback. If so, do that via the *Handbook Support Program* on the website and following the instructions. You'll get two opportunities to submit. If you have registered, decide whether to submit this response as one of your three.

CHECK-OUT — DO THIS NOW

Learning Review

TAKE SOME time to reflect on the questions below and write down your responses in a way that they can act as a reminder to your future self.

Question 1 What **insights** have you had during your engagement in this session that you would choose to record in order to *refer back to* later?

Question 2 What **realities** are you *facing up to* as a result of your engagement in this session?

Question 3 What **beliefs** or **attitudes** are you choosing to *let go of*?

Question 4 What new **decisions** or **commitments** are you choosing to *make and act upon*?

Question 5 Is there **anything else** that you're choosing to *stop doing* or *start doing,* or *do better*, or *do more of* or *do less of*?

Question 6 What is your single most valuable takeout from this session?

If there are any of these that you'd like to refer to on a regular basis, then transfer them now to the *Key Take-Outs* summary pages that are available at the end of this book as Appendix B.

PRACTICE - SAVE FOR LATER

Off-the-Field Practice: Monitor & Record

YOU CAN only do the things on the field that you've practiced off the field. Here is your off-the-field practice to carry you forward until Session 6.

At the end of each day, or as often as possible, don a white coat, grab a clipboard and, like a scientist, record a challenge you overcame, what tools you applied, what you did differently, and what different, better outcomes you experienced, for each of the following:

Paying attention to my motivational state

Event:

Tools I used / What I did differently:

Outcomes I noticed / experienced:

Making quick, clear decisions and dealing with what happens

Event:

Tools I used / What I did differently:

Outcomes I noticed / experienced:

Transforming my experience of an unpleasant event or circumstance by making a commitment to engage or participate wholeheartedly

Event:

Tools I used / What I did differently:

Outcomes I noticed / experienced:

Decisions or actions taken towards my main goals

Event:

Tools I used / What I did differently:

Outcomes I noticed / experienced:

Anything else

Event:

Tools I used / What I did differently:

Outcomes I noticed / experienced:

NOTE This practice is important to get your mind to register the bigger picture of what's happening, rather than just be happy with the content of what happened. It will arm you with evidence that your mind will draw on in future situations, even when the content of those situations looks different. Instead of just going back to old ways of dealing with things, you're more likely to remember what worked if you made a mental note of it, and especially if you wrote it down.