

News Release

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255,168

Tampa, Florida (September, 2012). Think about some of the life struggles you have faced over the years starting with your earliest memories. Once it was a simple decision as to whether you wanted Cheerios or Fruit Loops, French toast or pancakes, chocolate milk or juice for breakfast. Later it was a decision as to what sport you really, really liked or what language to study. Then it was a more serious matter as to who you wanted to have a relationship with or where to go to school. Then it was what you would major in, where you would work, where you would live, who you might marry, how many kids you would like etc. Notice that a lot of these decisions involve two options: a or b. Oh sometimes we have a few more like having three favorite types of food and trying to figure out which one you would like to have for dinner. Think about what specific process you use in making such determinations. Do you choose the one that is the easiest? Do you choose the one where you might have help and support? What are your specific decision-making guidelines? Do you basically think inside the box and look at what is familiar? So often our guiding choice is based by our need for control which in turn limits our ability to consider options that might involve some calculated risk taking. Granted we need to consider what is implied in any decision that we make – both the positives and the negatives – but we also need to be open to possibilities we might not have considered.

So often we view the world in terms of “all or nothing” or “black and white.” This limits our options, our dreams, our hopes, and our life. Years ago, Ann Landers had a column in which she included a thought-provoking passage by an anonymous author titled, The Dilemma:

**To laugh is to risk appearing the fool;
To weep is to risk appearing sentimental;
To reach out for another is to risk involvement
To expose feeling is to risk exposing your true self.**

**To place your ideas and your dreams
before the crowd is to risk their loss
To love is to risk not being loved in return
To live is to risk dying
To hope is to risk despair
To try is to risk failure.**

**But risk must be taken,
because the greatest hazard in life
is to risk nothing
The person who risks nothing, does nothing,
has nothing and is nothing;
They may avoid suffering and sorrow,
but they simply cannot learn,
feel change, grow, love, Live
Chained by their certitude, they are a slave,
they have forfeited freedom;
Only the person who risks is free.**

Author unknown

Think of the simple game Tic Tac Toe usually played by only two people. How many options are there? What if a mathematician told you that in total, disregarding symmetry, there are 958 final positions which can be reached in a total of 255,168 different ways. Life is kind of like that – lots of ways to grow and develop, think and live. So why lock ourselves into limited possibilities.

Remember that the Employee Assistance Program (EAP) is a benefit available to all contracted organizations' employees and dependents and provides confidential free professional assistance 24-hours a day, 7 days a week. Remember that you

or a dependent may contact the EAP regarding any concern that you might have – you don't have to wait until a problem becomes big to seek help. Above all, keep in mind that concerns develop over time but the way you address them can be changed. We have all found ourselves locked into the same limited choices and points of view. Sometimes we need to learn how to overcome our limited vision, our anxiety, and our need for certitude to reach out and be open to the unlimited possibilities available to us. So, if you find yourself struggling to make new choices and decisions – help is a phone call away.

Call: (813) 870-0392 (Hillsborough County), (727) 576-5164 (Pinellas County), or (800) 343-4670 (out of area toll free).