



The Power of Choice

As I begin this my second book, I am assuming that you, the reader, have read my first book and thus know my background. I am a simple, canine creature, living upon planet earth during this, the most wonderful and exciting time in Mother Earth's history. Having said that, I'll now jump right into the many things I have to share with you.

I have chosen "*the power of choice*" as the topic of the first chapter of this book as indeed "choice" is a very powerful action. You, for example, have made a choice to read this book and for that I am eternally grateful. "Choice" is defined by The Merriam-Webster Dictionary in noun-form as the "*power or opportunity of choosing.*" The dictionary further describes "choice" in adjective-form as being "of high quality." With words like *power*, *opportunity* and *high quality* associated with it, choice is obviously a very important concept.

One of the things I have noticed about human behavior in my one short year of canine life is that humans really do not appreciate how much "power"

they really possess, especially as it relates to choice. I often hear my human, Blaine, make excuses to Gram that he can't do this and he can't do that because someone did this or someone did that to prevent his timely action.

Gram will gently but firmly remind Blaine that he made the choice to sleep late and thus be late to school for example or he chose to slack in a particular class and receive a less than favorable grade. Gram tells Blaine that his actions carry particular consequences and that this is the way of the cause-and-effect three-dimensional existence we reside in on earth. She urges Blaine to carefully consider each choice that he makes because while one choice may seem insignificant, when the choices all combine together over the course of time they become very powerful.

A good example of choices accumulating over time would be Thomas Edison. Thomas Edison invented the phonograph in 1877 which was the first sound recording device available to the public. During the course of his lifetime, Edison registered 1,093 patents in the United States Patent Office plus many other patents in European countries. He is considered one of the most prolific inventors of his era. Edison made a choice as a young man to keep detailed notes and journals of his many experiments. His *choice* to take this one small action resulted in the creation of a very thorough record of experiments that did work and experiments that did not work. This record prevented Edison and others from repeating the experiments that did not have favorable outcomes. Research time could then be efficiently

spent pursuing possibilities instead of wasting time and effort.

This idea of “choice” makes a lot of sense to me. I sit with Blaine sometimes while he’s watching television and I see the young actresses often referred to as the “brat pack” crying because they have been arrested for drunk driving. They’ll lament that “it’s not fair” and “I just want my mother.” The simple reality is they made a *choice* to drink, they made a *choice* to drive and the legal system has specific guidelines for the protection of the populace. When a “brat pack” member makes a *choice* to resist the law and engage in drunk driving, that *choice* results in subsequent penalty of incarceration, being locked up with all freedom taken away for a specified period of time. This time then allows for the “brat pack” member to carefully consider those choices and ponder whether that choice was appropriate. That all seems pretty fair to me!

Likewise, however, when an individual from the “brat pack” steps forward and boldly states before the public, “I chose to do this, I didn’t think about what I was doing and that was stupid on my part. I could have hurt someone. I will accept the consequences.” That’s beautiful! Not only can you see in the eyes of that individual the *power* the choice of honesty has given them personally, you can also see personal growth and self-respect blossoming behind their eyes. It’s hard not to respect someone brave enough to make the choice to step up and take the heat of responsibility for prior actions taken and prior choices made.

Every moment of every day contains the incredible potential of the *power of choice*. The mindset of the *power of choice* when practiced every day becomes a lifestyle and that lifestyle creates and attracts positive results. A good example of the *power of choice* in action involves a project my human, Blaine, undertook with his mother, Gram. When Blaine was about 14 years old, he began bugging Gram for ways to earn money so that he could buy his first car just prior his 16th birthday. Blaine has health challenges. He was diagnosed with Type I Juvenile Diabetes when he was six years old. This condition made activities like mowing lawns too dangerous as it could cause a rapid drop in his blood sugar which could result in seizure and death.

Gram suggested they develop stick horses which Blaine could make at home by using the leg of old pair of denim jeans. The stick horses could then be marketed and sold on eBay and at local craft shows. Blaine agreed to the project and soon he was spray painting three foot wooden dowel rods in colors of pink, red, purple and yellow, wrapping yarn around cardboard forms for stick horse manes, and cramming polyester fiber-fill stuffing into jean legs that would later become the horse head.

Gram got a copyright on the stick horse pattern and name, *Horse-Reddish Handmade Denim Stick Horses*©. Gram next set up a Horse-Reddish Handmade Denim Stick Horse website and a Horse-Reddish Handmade Denim Stick Horse store on eBay and they were in business.

Blaine worked and worked. He carefully kept track of his activity and the amount of time it took him

to complete various aspects of the stick horse production. Blaine created an assembly line for painting the dowel rods. He would wrap a large rubber band around the top end of each wooden dowel stick, hold that end in his rubber-gloved hand and paint the rest of the stick using canned spray paint. He would then hang the stick to dry from a wire hooked over the garage door tracks on one end and hooked to the rubber band on the dowel rod on the opposite end. Blaine could paint many sticks at one time using this method and leave them hanging to dry in the garage. The unpainted end of the stick would later be covered up by the horse head so it was not necessary to paint the entire stick.

Blaine next would sit in front of the television and wrap yarn in a variety of colors around cardboard forms which Gram would later use to make the horse mane. Blaine would also sit in front of the T.V. with a huge pile of jeans and cut the legs off at the crotch and then cut the pockets off of the back of the jeans and finally cut off the waistband. Gram would then sew the yarn mane onto the denim jean leg and then sew one end of the leg closed and that would become the head. The jeans pockets became the horse ears.

Blaine would put stuffing in the head, attach the head to a color coordinated dowel stick, attach felt eyes, wrap part of the jeans waistband around the neck to secure the head to the stick and also hold the stuffing in place. Finally, he would add a nylon rope bridle and a bandana and the horse went to the Horse-Reddish corral.

Working hard and saving his money, Blaine was able to buy a 2000 Dodge Neon as his first car

just before his 16th birthday. Blaine used the *power of choice* to create an income via Horse-Reddish Handmade Denim Stick Horses©. He chose to work hard, discipline his time and his intention and along the way he received recognition when a local journalist met him at a local craft show and did a front page article in the *Broken Arrow Ledger Newspaper* titled “Baird redefining horsepower.”¹ The power of choice allowed Blaine to realize his dream of driving his very own car to take his driving test on his 16th birthday when he obtained his drivers license. He felt a great sense of accomplishment and satisfaction as a result of his actions.

I must now share with you a very funny choice I made just yesterday that got me into a lot of trouble with my human. Blaine loves golf. He lives golf, breathes golf, and talks constantly about golf. His idol in the game, of course, is the great Tiger Woods. One month ago in August of 2007, Tiger Woods won the PGA Championship at Southern Hills Country Club in Tulsa, Oklahoma. Gram’s boss, knowing how much Blaine admires Tiger Woods, got Blaine a practice golf ball actually used by Tiger while practicing for the tournament. Blaine treated the ball as if it were the golden egg laid by the goose.

He said it was, “Touched by the master’s hand.”

Well probably because Blaine handled that ball all the time it just smelled really good to me. I’m not quite one year old yet so I still like to chew on

¹ *Broken Arrow Ledger Newspaper*, “Baird redefining horsepower.” Vol. 103, No. 119, September 29, 2005.

things to cut my adult molar teeth as they grow in at the back of my mouth. I was at home alone while Blaine was at school and Gram and Bill were at work. While sitting on Blaine's bed, I looked over and saw that Nike® golf ball that Tiger Woods had used in practice.

I sniffed the ball, picked it up with my mouth and discovered it fit between my upper and lower teeth perfectly. I chewed it a time or two and that felt so good to my incoming new teeth that I chewed it some more. The consistency and density of that ball made it a perfect teething device for me. I figured if Blaine left it within my reach, it must be okay for me to play with it.

When Blaine got home from school, I had half the cover chewed off of that golf ball. Blaine was so livid he yelled at me. He then called Gram and told her all about what happened. I felt terrible. It never occurred to me that the ball was so important to him ... I just enjoyed chewing on it.

Gram explained to Blaine that I am still a baby and if he didn't want me to do things like that it was his responsibility to put the ball in a place that I could not get to it. She told Blaine that I had probably picked the golf ball because it smelled like him since he touched it so much. (Gram joked with Blaine that I needed some of that "touched by the master's hand" magic too.)

Gram also said that Blaine made the choice to trust me to be outside of my kennel. She urged Blaine to consider what might result from his actions in the future and then make his choices accordingly

and accept the subsequent consequences of both his choice and his action.

When Gram got home from work, she assured me that I was just a baby girl and she loved me. She then took me for a run. She rode her new bicycle that Bill gave her for her birthday earlier in the week and that made me feel so loved despite the mistake that I had made.

Another example of one of my choices that led to a very favorable outcome was my choice, described in detail in my first book, to escape the backyard of my birth following the death of my mother and seek my purpose. While I was nearly paralyzed with fear on that cold winter night, I knew my only hope for meaningful survival required that I face that fear and take action anyway. Of course my choice, initially, placed me in a situation where I had no idea what would happen next. I was completely at the mercy of the situation. Yet, I followed my heart.

Today, I am so happy that I took that chance because had I not made that choice and taken the subsequent action, I dare imagine what my life today may be. Instead of writing books with Gram I would still be stuck in that backyard of abuse and neglect ... or worse ... deceased. Making a choice and taking action brought powerful change to my life and by way of these books, maybe even to the whole world. You too have that power!