The Walch Real Life Series

Way to Go!

Solving Problems and Making Decisions

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CHAPTER 1

Why Is Deciding So Hard?

In this chapter, you will learn that:

- **Life doesn't just happen to you. You can make choices.**
- **Decisions can be hard. But there are ways to sort them out.**

* * *

Good decisions—about work, friendships, money, and many other things—can give you the kind of life you want. True, you can't control everything. But you do get many chances to solve problems and make decisions. Gain some skills in those areas. Then your real life will come closer to your dreams.

Are you ever afraid to make a decision? _____

Do you make big decisions fast, like flipping a coin? _____

Do you take a long time to make a decision? _____

Do you wait until it's almost too late? _____

Do you wait until it <u>is</u> too late, hoping the problem will fix itself?

_____

If you answered yes to any of these, you are not alone. Maybe you are a good decision-maker sometimes. But perhaps certain areas of life still confuse you. Then read on. Read the case studies that follow. Try to figure out what kind of decision-making problem the person has. Do you see yourself in any of them?

A. Isaac's boss asked him to organize the yearly meeting for his department. Isaac was pleased. He was smart and his boss trusted him. It was really a chance to look good. Soon, however, he was in a panic. Would the speaker he hired be good? What kind of food should he order? He asked for advice from everyone. But he still felt nervous. Every night he had bad dreams about the meeting.

Why doesn't Isaac feel good about his decisions? _____

_____

Have you ever felt like this about a decision? Explain. _____

_____

B. Carlos will be getting his high school diploma soon. His father wants him to work in the family's hardware store. That makes sense. His favorite teacher thinks he should go to business school. That makes sense too. But he can't decide what to do. Everyone's waiting for him to give an answer.

Why can't Carlos make up his mind? _____

_____

Have you ever felt like Carlos? When? _____

_____

C. Toni has a good job, but she hears that another company promotes people faster. She wants to get a new wardrobe and a new car. So she applies for a job at the new company. She does not have enough experience to do the new job. But she convinces the interviewer to hire her. At the end of her three-month trial period, the company decides not to keep her on. Now Toni is in debt for her new car and clothes.

What's wrong with the way Toni made this decision? _____

_____

Has something like this ever happened to you? Explain. _____

_____

D. Anita has finally saved enough money to go on a vacation. She just can't decide where to go. Finally she narrows it down to two resorts in the same area. Both resorts sound good and have nice brochures. Anita goes back and forth in her mind. If she doesn't decide soon, both resorts will be full and she won't be able to go.

What is the nature of Anita's problem with decision-making? _____

_____

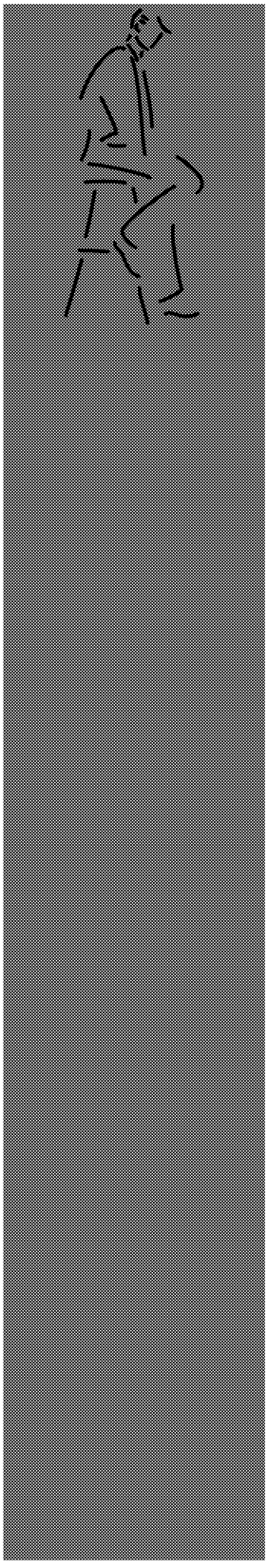
Have you ever had a problem like this? Explain. _____

_____

_____

_____

_____



What Are You Working On?

What are some of the problems or decisions you have worked on lately, or are working on now? Do you have a problem to solve or a choice to make involving any of the following? State your problem next to any subject that applies. You don't have to use all the subjects.

Money: _____

_____

A major purchase: _____

_____

Education: _____

_____

Work, career, or job: _____

_____

Living situation: _____

_____

Family member: _____

_____

Friend: _____

_____

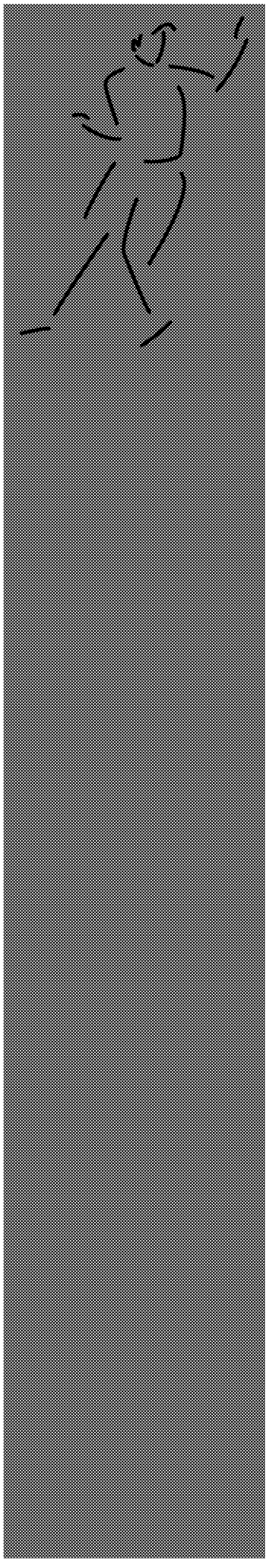
Girlfriend, boyfriend, or partner: _____

_____

Other (_____): _____

_____

Why Hang onto Your Problem?



Sometimes we don't want to let go of a problem. We may not realize we're doing this. It's just that for some reason, having the "problem" saves us from dealing with something else.

Why might each of these people be hanging onto their problems? Take a guess.

1. **Jon was very quiet and shy. When people asked him to a game, meeting, or party, he would smile and say no. Or he would agree to come, then not show up.**

   What could be one reason Jon does this? _____

   _____

2. **Melba's piano teacher says Melba has a lot of talent. The problem is, Melba hardly ever has time to practice. She has activities at school. And she has a part-time job. She wishes she had time to practice. But her schedule is just too tight.**

   Why can't Melba find time to practice? _____

   _____

3. **Carrie says she's no good at math. She says she just can't follow what the teacher is saying. "I guess I don't have a head for math," Carrie sighs. She often has to look at her friend's homework to get ready for class.**

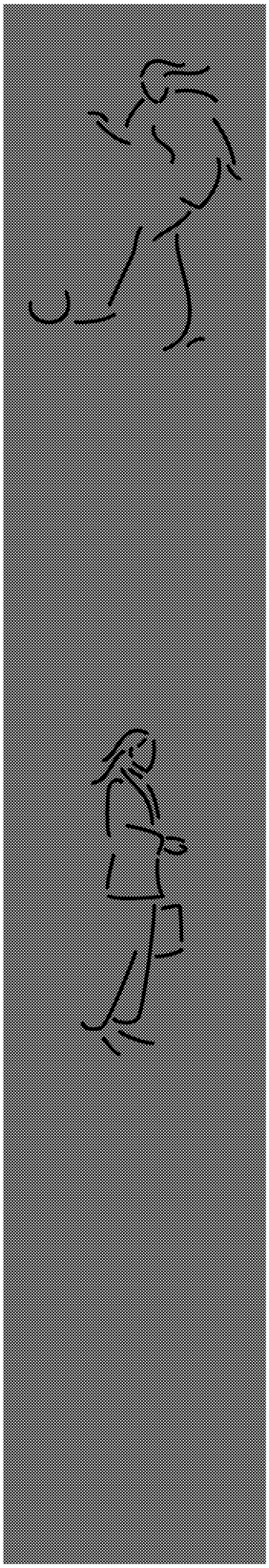
   What could be a reason that Carrie can't "get" math? _____

   _____

If your problem is with a person . . .

Ask yourself:

- Are you focusing on this problem to avoid dealing with a deeper, more serious problem?
- Are you afraid of losing the person if you bring up the problem?



Do you have a problem that you have put off dealing with? What is it?

_____

Do you have any idea why you're putting it off? _____

_____

Attack Problems Head-On

You make many small decisions every day. You decide what to wear. You decide what to eat. You decide what to do after work or after school. These decisions aren't usually too hard. Why are others?

Maybe there is more at stake with bigger decisions. Maybe it feels as if you have too many choices. Well, there are ways to deal with bigger problems. We'll give you some steps to follow in this book.

You don't have to take every step every time you have a problem. But knowing what to do gives you some control. You will feel better just knowing that you really tried. In the next chapter we'll look at the first step in the process.

Chapter Checkup

In this chapter, did you:

___ See that you have some control over problems and choices?

___ Learn that even though decisions are hard, there are ways to sort them out?