

Insights from *Smarter Faster Better* by Charles Duhigg

“The choices that are most powerful in generating motivation are decisions that do two things: They convince us we’re in control and they endow our actions with larger meaning.” – Charles Duhigg

Feel in control by choosing:

- Where to work (office, conference room, coffee shop, etc.)
- How long to focus on a particular problem (work intensely for 20 minutes, 30 minutes, 50 minutes?)
- What to do while working (listen to music, have a cup of coffee, drink a cup of tea, etc.)

Generate meaning by choosing to see the connection between what you do and how it:

- Benefits other people
- Increases your skill level
- Leads to a result that you’ll be proud of

3 Choices that Increase Productivity:

Increase Focus	Improve Decisions	Increase Team Performance
<p>Before the day starts, CHOOSE to predict how the day will unfold.</p> <p>Your mind is a prediction machine. It loves to know whether it’s predictions are right or wrong. Envisioning tomorrow causes the brain to focus intently on what it failed to predict.</p> <p>“We aid our focus by building mental models—telling ourselves stories—about what we expect to see.” – Charles Duhigg</p> <p>To stay focused during the day, make the following predictions at the start of the day:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Given my current schedule, how much progress do I expect to make today? • What distractions am I likely to encounter? • How am I likely to handle those distractions? <p>At the end of the day ask yourself: “What was I wrong about?”</p>	<p>When making decisions, CHOOSE to consider the desirable and undesirable outcomes. Then assign approximate probabilities to each possible outcome.</p> <p>“Making good decisions relies on forecasting the future, but forecasting is an imprecise, often terrifying, science because it forces us to confront how much we don’t know. The paradox of learning how to make better decisions is that it requires developing a comfort with doubt.” – Charles Duhigg</p> <p>By seeing decisions as a range of possible outcomes with approximate probabilities (i.e. there’s an 80% chance of getting into the college I want to), you’ll be less prone to seek absolute certainty before making a decision. This speeds up the decision process and leads to more action.</p> <p>“Learning to think probabilistically requires us to question our assumptions and live with uncertainty. To become better at predicting the future—at making good decisions—we need to know the difference between what we hope will happen and what is more and less likely to occur.” – Charles Duhigg</p>	<p>When leading a team, CHOOSE to give team members the authority to make decisions.</p> <p>If you crave autonomy, so does your team. Empower others to make choices and provide them with a safe environment to do so.</p> <p>“By pushing decision making to whoever is closest to a problem, managers take advantage of everyone’s expertise and unlock innovation.”</p> <p>A sense of control can fuel motivation, but for that drive to produce insights and solutions, people need to know their suggestions won’t be ignored and that their mistakes won’t be held against them.” - Charles Duhigg</p>

“Productivity is about recognizing choices that other people often overlook... Productive people and companies force themselves to make choices most other people are content to ignore. Productivity emerges when people push themselves to think differently.” – Charles Duhigg