

The Very Worst Decision You Can Make

The very worst decision you can make during an emergency situation is to not make a decision. During life or death situations, Indecision can kill a person who is indecisive, as well as those **they are** responsible for.

You might think to yourself, well I am not involved in any life or death decision making. However, many things can be life or death besides human life or death. For instance, Indecisions can kill an organization, or indecisions can kill a program being managed by an indecisive person.

Habitual indecision is a difficult challenge for those who suffer from it. To keep putting off a decision that we know should be made (once we have examined and analyzed the facts and options, but are still indecisive) can become far more detrimental than may be realized. Nine times out of ten, indecision is far worse than an incorrect decision.

How is that? Because indecision is actually a decision, to let things remain as they are, coupled with the inner knowledge that we didn't really make a determination that SHOULD have been made.

For instance, let's say threatening weather is approaching your area and you are the one responsible for calling up the severe weather net on your local repeater. The storm is only one county line away and the NWS has issued warnings for that county, but has not done so for your county at this time. You think, do I go ahead and start up a net and get people focused on the task at hand. However maybe the storm will miss us, and I don't want to jump the gun, and have people think I am the boy that cried wolf. Therefore, I will just wait and see what happens. Out of indecision, you just wait for the storm to hit. Then you begin to see news reports where a tornado has damaged many homes in your county. The truth is the only wrong decision was the decision to not make any decision. You could have decided to call a net and ask for spotters to report in, or you could have decided to watch the storm system and start a net as soon as the weather information met a certain criteria. Indecision is always a decision to do nothing. It would have been far better to call the net and call out spotters to monitor the approaching threat. So what, if the storm changes course or intensity before it actually reaches your area. So what if the storm has passed through with no real danger to anyone. You can still hold your head high and say to yourself, well I called it and maybe I called it wrong, but no one was left not knowing what to do. In addition, no one had to wonder, if their leaders were ready to act. With that approach, by making a decision, at least everyone knows that they can count on you to do something.

I learned a long time ago that if I ask someone to do something and they couldn't give me a yes or no answer after a reasonable period of time. The answer was by default NO.

Ask a train engineer to shut down the train because there is a vehicle stranded on the track ahead. If he says he doesn't have the authority to make that decision, guess what, he made it anyway. Unless he does something, the train will not stop. He just might as well say, well it is my decision to just do nothing and let this train hit the vehicle. The same is true with any position in any organization or even in your family. If you can't make a decision, then you choose to do nothing.

Deciding to "do nothing" about a situation that we know NEEDS a decision, never really eases the situation, although we may think otherwise. It really does the opposite. It puts pressures on the body and mind in addition to real pressure of the situation. It affects you and those who look to you for leadership.

Managers who characteristically put off a decision on an issue usually do so because they are afraid they may make a mistake. One study indicated that 95% of what we "fear" never occurs, so the odds are strongly in favor of those who move beyond such fears, and make the best decision they can with the facts they have.

Hindsight, might lead us to another decision, but the ability to see in the future will never be ours. We will always have to make the best decision we can make, with the facts, as we know them, and feel confident that we did our best, and always know at least we did something.

The risk of decision-making is a part of managing, and the odds are in a manager's favor that he/she will make the best decision. Decision creates an opportunity for something to happen. By making the decision, it opens the way for a program to move, change, or do something that overcomes a problem. If your first decision doesn't overcome the problem, just make another decision. That way you control the situation, rather than allowing the situation to control you.

To let the problem "simmer on the back burner" is a clear indicator of a manager who is afraid to make the decision for fear of possible adverse consequences.

Life is full of choices and Decisions, which are usually dual in purpose. Do we make the decision, to do what we know to be the right thing, or, do we make a conscience decision, to not rock the boat, to let slide the rules and training taught to us by Elmer's who cared and had pride in this hobby called Ham radio? Decisions can build an organization of people on a strong foundation, and the lack thereof, can destroy parts or all of that foundation simply by not making a decision to do the things they know they should! If you know you should be a good Elmer and a great example to a new ham, and that is as far as you ever go with it, just understand, that really you did decide to do nothing, and just let the hobby turn into a far less respected service than it once was.

Here is a clear example to illustrate my point. I drive past a police officer and I am speeding 98 MPH and driving in a reckless manner. He makes no decision to stop me; maybe he thinks I might get mad. He wants to run for sheriff next year, and you can't make any friends writing tickets you know. By choosing to do nothing about it, he actually made a decision to let me drive that way, and the possible consequences of his actions may not be evident at first. Eventually however, tragedy will be the result, and because of his indecision, or a conscience decision to do nothing, to some degree he shares the burden of responsibility.

There may be times as an emergency manager or NCS that you know the decision you need to make is not going to be popular with everyone. Putting off a decision like this will not help the situation, but rather allows it to grow into a more serious situation. Trying to decide what will be the most popular decision instead of the correct decision, based on what you have learned and know to be right, could have tragic results. If you make the decision to do what you know is the right thing to do, at least you can hold your head high and know you did the right thing.

Making decisions when they need be made allows life to be a lot more fun, and we are even healthier, because the stress of indecision is eliminated.

Making a difficult decision, and implementing it, can be one of life's most rewarding experiences.