

A composite image featuring a portrait of Ruben Gonzalez on the left and a speed skater in motion on the right. The speed skater is wearing a blue and white suit with the number 50 and the text "SALT LAKE 2002".

Ruben Gonzalez
Four-time Olympian | Award-winning Speaker
Highly Acclaimed Business Author

*"If you will listen to Ruben Speak,
your life will change."*

Lou Holtz - Notre Dame Football Coach

The Power to Choose

In his book “Roots,” Alex Haley tells about something unexpected that happened right after slavery was abolished. The newly freed slaves did not know how to be free. All their lives they had had others make their decisions for them, consequently, they had never learned how to make choices. You could say their “choice-making muscles” needed developing. Many of the slaves actually stayed with their masters and worked for them for the rest of their lives.

In the movie “The Shawshank Redemption,” when Brooks, the prison librarian, who’s been an inmate for 50 years, is set free, he does not know how to be a free man. He does not know how to use his power to choose. All his life he has been told what to do. For Brooks, life as a free man is so overwhelming, that he ends up committing suicide.

Most people’s “choice-making muscles” could use a little strengthening. After all, when we are young, our parents and our teachers tell us what to do. Then we get a job and our boss tells us what to do. It seems like there’s always someone out there eager to tell us what to do – if we let them.

We start drifting through life instead of designing our future. We start existing instead of living. And we end up using a fraction of our God given gifts. We forget that we have the power to choose who we want to be, what we want to accomplish, where we want to live, etc. We stop taking responsibility for our results, and start living as a victim, instead of as a victor.

You and I have the power to choose what we do with our lives. You are where you are because of the choices you've made. If you don't like where you are, you need to start making different choices. It's not rocket science.

My Dad always told me, "It's not what happens to you, it's how you handle it!" He also said to me, "You have the power to choose your destiny." It wasn't until I started acting like I believed those things that my life started getting interesting.

I have a little secret for you. There is a magical moment between your circumstances and your results. That moment is called **choice**. When something happens to you, when circumstances happen to you, when things that seem unfair happen to you, don't whine and complain. The instant you start blaming your circumstances is the instant you become a victim. Once you do that, you can kiss your future goodbye.

Remember, you can choose your response to those circumstances. Make a wise **choice**, handle it properly, and watch your results improve tremendously. What kind of life do you want? The good news is that you have the power to create it.

Once you stop making excuses and start taking responsibility for your results, your life will start getting really exciting. It did for me.

Put it into action:

Have you been making excuses? Don't you realize that **everyone** has challenges? Stop making excuses. Resolve to do something right now about what's holding you back. Resolve to become an inspiration to others who share your challenges.

FourWinterGames.com

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