



opt-in worksheet-o-matic

Our stories don't just happen to us; they are the culmination of a series of (hopefully conscious) CHOICES that we make. Deciding whether or not to go to work is, in fact, a choice. Granted, the consequences for NOT going to work may not be very appealing, but it's a choice nonetheless. Similarly, staying in a job you don't particularly like is also a choice. So is deciding not to tinker with a possible escape plan that could lead to something better.

First, list every single thing that you do over a course of a week. The more thorough your list, the more effective you'll find this to be. Below are some ideas to jog your memory. Please note that it is by no means exhaustive, and not every item will be applicable to you.

- I choose to make / not make my bed every day.
- I choose to go grocery shopping.
- I choose to make breakfast / lunch / dinner.
- I choose to go out to eat for breakfast / lunch / dinner.
- I choose to eat healthy foods.
- I choose to continue living in this house / condo / apartment in this city / state / country.
- I choose to clean the house / cut the grass / shovel the snow / organize the garage.
- I choose to send my kids to school / homeschool my kids.
- I choose to help my kids with homework.
- I choose to send the kids to child care.
- I choose to drive the kids to child care.
- I choose to go to work at my current job.
- I choose to commute ___ hours a day for my job.
- I choose to put in those extra hours to earn that promotion.
- I choose to start / not start that small business.
- I choose to allow my kids to be in ___ extracurricular activities.
- I choose to attend none / some / all of my kids' extracurricular activities.
- I choose to ask / not ask that person out on a date.
- I choose to spend ___ hours a week working on my marriage.
- I choose to exercise / go to the gym / do yoga / pilates.
- I choose to spend ___ minutes a day on my personal appearance.
- I choose to watch the news every night.
- I choose to subscribe / not subscribe to cable.
- I choose to own ___ vehicles.
- I choose to earn that degree.
- I choose to care for my spouse / sick child / aging parent.

I choose to clean the house.
I choose to pay for a cleaning service.
I choose to attend that upcoming family obligation.
I choose to keep my house organized / disorganized.
I choose to play with my kids / grandkids.
I choose to keep that second job.
I choose to give myself / not give myself “me” time.
I choose to sleep ___ hours a night.
I choose to pursue my hobby.
I choose to spend ___ hours in prayer / meditation.
I choose to watch ___ hours of television a day.
I choose to have a Facebook / Twitter / Instagram / etc. account.
I choose to spend ___ hours on the internet a day.
I choose to write that book / make that jewelry / play that music / scrapbook those memories.
I choose to spend ___ hours a week in my secret hideout.
I choose to volunteer for that cause.
I choose to serve on that board.

Ok. Once you're finished, you'll notice that each item on the list has a blank checkbox next to it. In effect, you are currently opted-out of every single one of them. (Which may cause you to jump for joy or incite a panic attack!) Now, go through each item, one-by-one, and literally CHECK the box next to each one you CHOOSE to opt-in to.

A couple helpful reminders:

- 1) You can't do it all. You only have 24 hours in a day. Give yourself permission to say no to good things so you can say yes to the best things.
- 2) It might help you to ignore the “shoulds” and heed the “musts.”
- 3) Another good rule of thumb: make the choice you'll wish you'd made on your life's last day.
- 4) We all experience different seasons of life. Now that Kim and I have three kids, we cannot reasonably expect to get as much work-related stuff accomplished as we did before we had kids (while being the kind of parents we want to be). So keep in mind that just because you don't check a box today doesn't mean you can't check it three months from now or three years from now, during a different season of life.