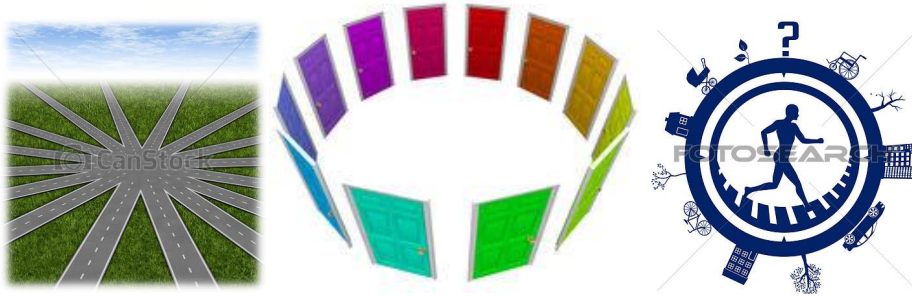


THE POWER OF CHOICE



Every minute of every hour of every day every person make **choices**. And all **choices** whether manifested internal or external originate from inside of us. Even when bad things are happening to us that may be out of our control, we still have the **choice** to determine how we will respond to, endure, or overcome our circumstances. And every **choice** that we make, whether long contemplated or made in a split second leads us and others down a path of life time. Much of the time this path of life time cannot be completely seen or understood at the time we make our **choice**. And once a **choice** is made and action occurs, there is no turning back. I will share with you a couple examples of people's **choices** and the power that was unleashed as a result.



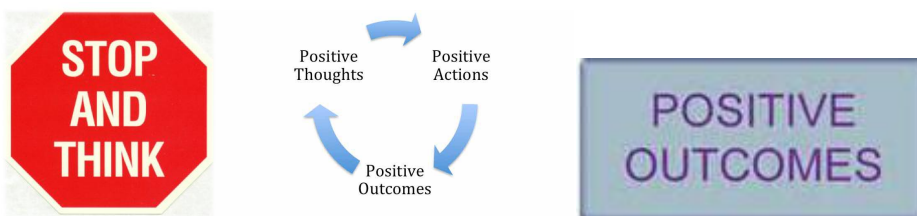
On December 1, 1955 Rosa Parks was traveling home from work on a segregated bus in Montgomery, Alabama when the bus driver ordered her to give up her seat in the "colored" section to a white person who did not have a seat. Rosa decided in her mind that she was tired of giving in to an unjust system and refused to give up her seat. She was arrested and booked. Her actions later led to a boycott of the city bus system and changed the laws for all riders. And though others had resisted before her, Rosa's **choice** is said to be the catalyst that galvanized the entire civil rights movement which led to the signing of legislation that improved the rights for not only people of color but for all people in the United States. The Civil Rights Act of 1964 is a landmark civil rights and US labor law in the United States that outlaws discrimination based on race, color, religion, gender, or national origin. It ended unequal application of voter registration requirements and racial segregation in schools, at the workplace and by facilities that served the general public. And it started with a powerful personal **choice**.



In the early morning of December 7, 1941 the Japanese government and military made a **choice** to bomb the United States military facilities at Pearl Harbor in Hawaii. Japan intended the attack as a preventive action to keep the U.S. Pacific Fleet from interfering with military actions they planned in Southeast Asia against overseas territories of the United Kingdom, the Netherlands, and the United States. All eight U.S. Navy battleships were damaged, with four sunk. The Japanese also sank or damaged three cruisers, three destroyers, an anti-aircraft training ship, and one minelayer. 188 U.S. aircraft were destroyed; 2,403 Americans were killed and 1,178 others were wounded.



The attack led to the United States' entry into World War II in both Europe and Asia. World War 2 continued until the United States dropped nuclear weapons on the Japanese cities of Hiroshima and Nagasaki on August 6 and 9, 1945, respectively, during the final stage of World War II. The United States had dropped the bombs with the consent of the United Kingdom as outlined in the Quebec Agreement. The two bombings, which killed at least 129,000 people, remain the only use of nuclear weapons for warfare in history. Roughly half of the deaths in each city occurred on the first day. During the following months, large numbers died from the effect of burns, radiation sickness, and other injuries, compounded by illness and malnutrition. In both cities, most of the dead were civilians. Many deaths occurred as a result of powerful **choices** that were made.



Choices can be made as individuals or as a group, but all **choices** have consequences. Each of us should examine how we make the **choices** everyday that will impact ourselves and others. If we want **choices** to have positive consequences, We must slow down....We must think what is best for others and creation....We must recognize that our **choices** are powerful and may one day return back to us or our loved ones. You have the **power of choice**; choose carefully.