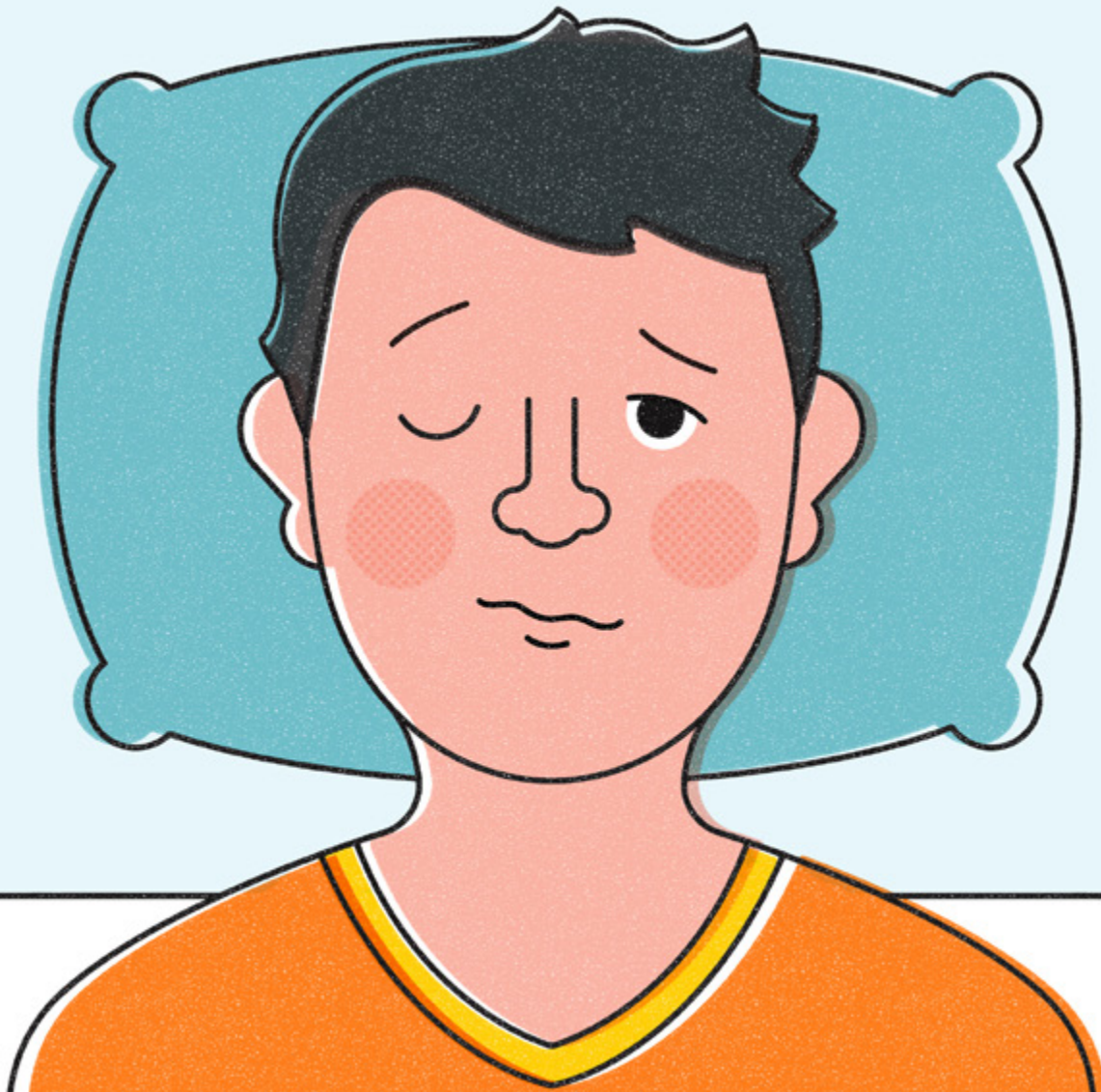


ON
SNOOZING AND
CHOOSING

THE POWER OF ONCE-AND-FOR-ALL DECISIONS



IT'S POSSIBLE TO MAKE A CHARACTER-DEFINING DECISION ONCE AND HAVE IT STICK.

By David A. Edwards

Church Magazines

I'm sure I've used a snooze button before, though I couldn't tell you exactly when. I mean, I know how the thing works and what it does. Surely I must have tried this out before. It's just that I can't remember it, because I never use the snooze button.

A while back, the fact of my anti-snooze-button lifestyle somehow crept into my conscious mind. It made me think. When did this start? Probably around the time I got my first alarm clock. But why?

On the one hand, my young self probably saw the snooze button as illogical (if you need to get up at a certain time, set your alarm for that

time and get up—simple). But more than that, I suppose I must have unconsciously seen my morning routine as a reflection of the kind of person I am or want to be.

Now, I'm not advocating that everyone stop using snooze buttons. If you choose to snooze, that's fine. The point is that I made a personal decision once—and only once—and it has stuck with me throughout my life. And whether we know it or not, such one-time decision making is something we all do, especially when we're young, and it can have a powerful effect on our character.



**YOU CAN MAKE
DECISIONS ONCE
AND FOR ALL**

The power is in you to determine the kind of person you'll be. And whether you realize it or not, you're making some once-

and-for-all decisions right now that affect your character—decisions about far more important questions than “Will I be a snooze button user?”

Such character questions include some of the more obvious ones about your commitment to the Lord, His commandments, His standards, and His Church. For instance: *Will I try to keep the commandments no matter what? Will I try to avoid temptation? Will I repent every time I've sinned? Will I pray and study the scriptures regularly? Will I serve however I'm asked?*

But there are also other character questions that can greatly influence the course of your

life. For instance: *What will be my attitude toward hard work? Will I be happy for others when they succeed? Will I complain about things I have no control over? Will I make excuses and blame others for my failures? Will I acknowledge my mistakes and learn from them? Will I hold grudges? Will I be patient and kind, even when it's hard? Will I be reliable and keep my promises?*

The way you answer each of these and many, many other questions represents a decision that could have a lasting effect. If you take time to think about such questions and turn to Heavenly Father and Jesus Christ for help, you can more consciously and deliberately make good decisions that will stick. Then you won't have to wake up a couple of decades later and realize that an unconscious decision (or a lack of decision) from long ago took you off course in harmful ways.

Consider just a few of the questions:

DECIDE TO DECIDE

“[You] need to make certain decisions only once. . . . We can make a single decision about certain things that we will incorporate in our lives and then make them ours—without having to brood and redecide a hundred times what it is we will do and what we will not do.

“Indecision and discouragement are climates in which the Adversary lives to function, for he can inflict so many casualties among mankind in those settings. . . . If you have not done so yet, decide to decide!”

President Spencer W. Kimball (1895–1985), “Boys Need Heroes Close By,” Apr. 1976 general conference.



WILL I BE HAPPY FOR OTHERS WHEN THEY SUCCEED?

Deciding now that good things that happen for other people do *not* take anything away from you will greatly increase your future happiness. As Elder Jeffrey R. Holland of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles once said: “What a bright prospect that is—downing another quart of pickle juice every time anyone around you has a happy moment! . . . Coveting, pouting, or tearing others down does *not* elevate *your* standing, nor does demeaning someone else improve your self-image” (Apr. 2012 general conference).




WILL I MAKE EXCUSES AND BLAME OTHERS FOR MY FAILURES?

Bitterness and stagnation are miserable. But that's what you get with excuses and blaming. You'll rob yourself of so much growth and joy if you choose not to take personal responsibility. Heavenly Father has a much better plan. Elder D. Todd Christofferson of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles has said, “In matters both temporal and spiritual, the opportunity to assume personal responsibility is a God-given gift without which we cannot realize our full potential as daughters and sons of God” (Oct. 2014 general conference).





WILL I BE RELIABLE AND KEEP MY PROMISES?



This one is huge. We should “keep all [our] pledges one with another” (Doctrine and Covenants 136:20). Decide now to be the kind of person who can be relied on. Otherwise, people may not trust you to be there when they need you—friends, family, Church leaders, employers. After a while, they won’t even ask you to be there, or they won’t give you the job or the calling or whatever. So, to begin with, *just show up*. Decide to be where you say you’ll be when you say you’ll be there. And if you really can’t be there, let someone know. It’s one of those small and simple things that make a huge difference. And then *do what you say you’ll do*. The decision to be a person of your word will bring you great joy and all kinds of wonderful opportunities.

You may not be literally asking yourself questions like these, but with each passing day, you’re making decisions about the answers. A deliberate, once-and-for-all decision is within your grasp.



HIT THE CHOOSE BUTTON

You probably have a pretty good idea of the kind of person you want to be. The Savior and the prophets have given many teachings and examples that help you know what kind of person Heavenly Father knows you can be. You can make a choice—once and for all—to be that person. That kind of choice can be powerful. Because it can help define you, it can have staying power and make future decisions easier.

There’s no formal process for making these kinds of decisions. It can even start unconsciously (like my snooze button decision probably did). But try making a conscious effort to choose. Make a statement—written, shouted, whispered, thought, however you want to make it. Declare who you are in simple terms: “I treat everyone with respect” or “I don’t procrastinate” or even something as simple as “I sing the hymns out loud in church,” for example.

A statement of decision like this won’t magically transform you into a different person, of course. But the combination of your sincere desire, your agency, your determination, and your faith in Heavenly Father and Jesus Christ can take you a long way and can eventually lead to a character decision that sticks. **NE**

WHEN YOU DEVIATE FROM YOUR DECISION

If you act out of character for the kind of person you’ve decided to be, that doesn’t mean your once-and-for-all decision is ruined. Through Jesus Christ’s Atonement, you can repent, be forgiven, and become better. And your continuing desire to be that kind of person means a lot.

If you have a sincere desire and real intent, Heavenly Father can bless you to become that person He knows you can be—the person you truly want to be.

As President Dallin H. Oaks, First Counselor in the First Presidency, has taught: “Desires dictate our priorities, priorities shape our choices, and choices determine our actions. . . . In addition, it is our actions and our desires that cause us to become something, whether a true friend, a gifted teacher, or one who has qualified for eternal life” (Apr. 2011 general conference).