

# SEIZING THE MOMENT OF CHOICE

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## A Guide to Moving Towards What Matters

Adapted from the Choice Point Model by Russ Harris (ACT)  
and the work of Dr. Viktor Frankl

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# The Moment Before the Move

There is a moment that happens dozens of times a day. Something arrives — an email that lands wrong, a conversation that shifts, a feeling you'd rather not have, a decision you've been deferring. And in the fraction of a second before conscious thought has fully formed, you are already moving.

*Not deciding. Moving.*

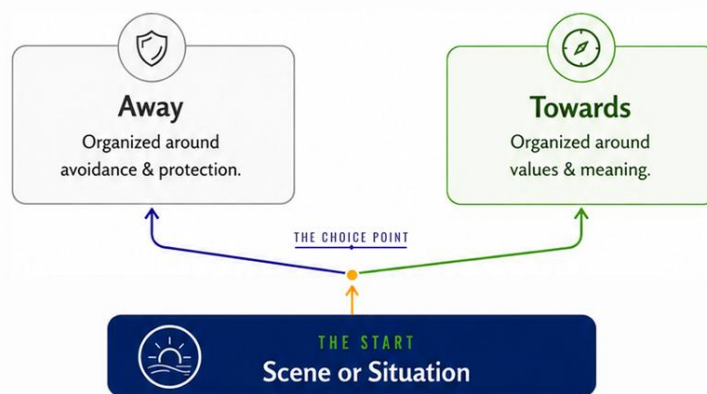
The question this guide is built around is a simple one: **which direction?**

In any moment, your actions are moving you one of two ways. **Towards** — towards your values, your integrity, the kind of leader and person you're genuinely trying to be. Or **Away** — away from any form of discomfort. Fear, yes. But also effort, awkwardness, boredom, irritation, grief, uncertainty, the weight of something hard, or simply not wanting to.

Both directions are human. Neither is a character flaw. But only one of them compounds in your favor over time.

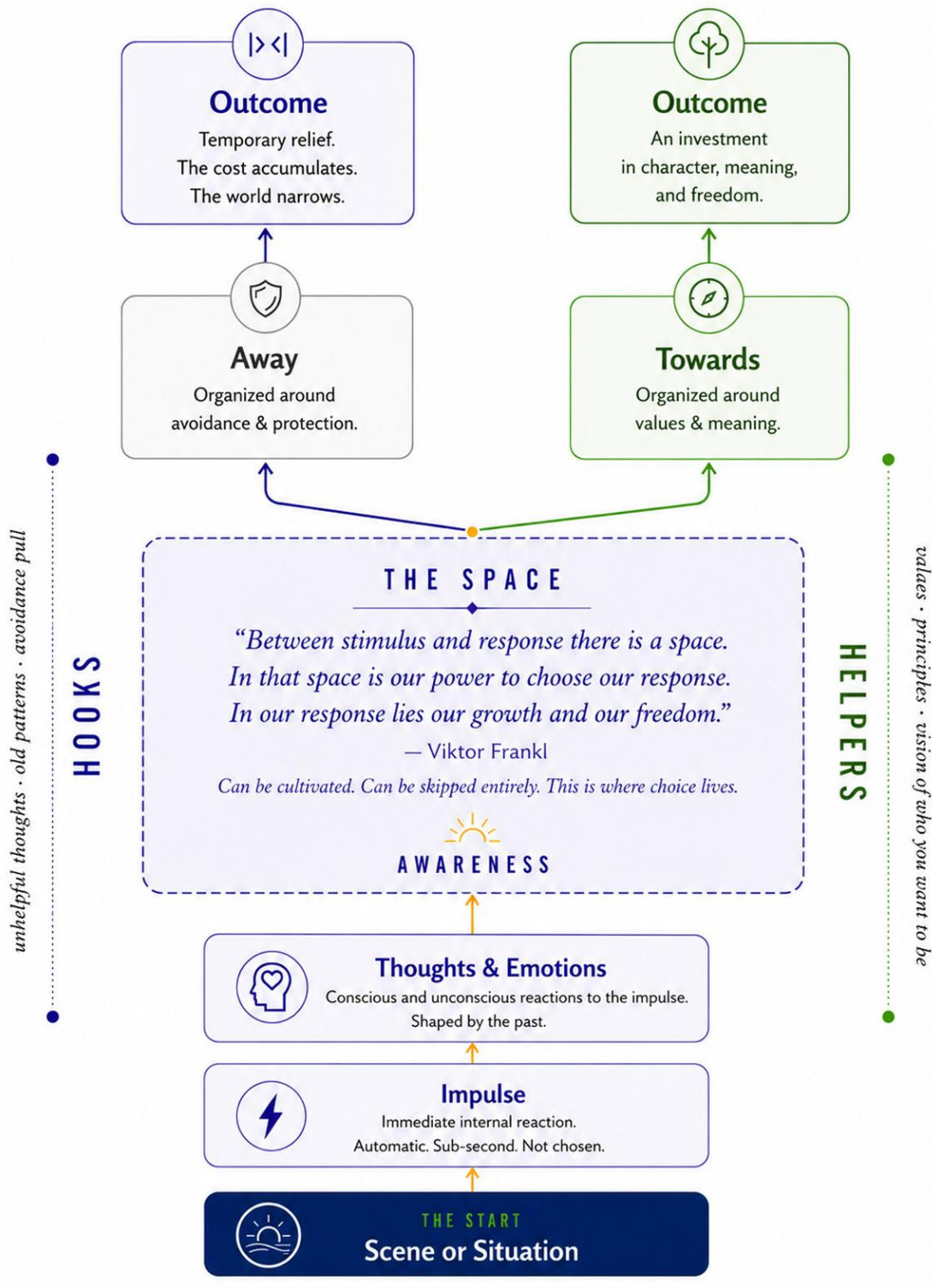
## THE CHOICE POINT — THE ESSENTIAL MODEL

At first glance, it looks simple. Something happens, and we move Away or Towards. But the space between the situation and the move is where the real work lives.



*The expanded model below maps what actually happens between a situation and a response if we **expand it**. It isn't a simple binary — it's a sequence — one you can learn to intervene in, and build a richer, freer life from.*

# THE HEARTRICH EXPANDED MODEL OF THE CHOICE POINT



Choice Point from Russ Harris / ACT built into the HeartRich Framework by Guy Reichard

## What Happens Before the Choice

The important thing to understand is that the Choice Point does not usually arrive as a calm, obvious decision.

Most of the time, something happens and your system reacts before you have consciously chosen anything. A situation lands. An impulse fires — immediate, automatic, sub-second. Thoughts and emotions gather around it, often shaped by old experiences, familiar fears, protective patterns, and well-worn stories about yourself, other people, or what might happen next.

This is where many Away moves begin — not as deliberate choices, but as automatic movements away from discomfort.

The space in the model is the moment awareness enters. Sometimes that space is wide and clear. Sometimes it is barely a breath. Sometimes it is skipped entirely. But when awareness is present, something different becomes possible. You can notice the **Hook** — the thought, the familiar pull, the old story — without obeying it. You can remember what matters before the old pattern takes over. You can let your **Helpers** — your values, principles, commitments, and vision of who you want to be — have a say.

This is the real practice. Not forcing yourself to make perfect choices. Not judging the impulse. Not pretending the discomfort is small. Simply learning to catch the moment a little earlier, so your next move can come from more of you.

### *Awareness is not a switch you flip. It is a capacity you build.*

Each time you catch the moment — even imperfectly, even after the fact — you are strengthening the very thing that makes choice possible. The space between stimulus and response is not fixed. *It can be widened.*

## Why Away Moves Exist

The Away move is not a character flaw. It is, in a very real sense, a survival strategy that worked — and that your system learned to apply broadly.

We are wired to move away from pain and discomfort before conscious thought has a chance to weigh in. For most of human history, that speed was the point — those who hesitated in the face of real danger didn't survive long enough to pass their genes on. In that sense, you come by the Away move honestly. It is ancient, it is intelligent, and it was shaped by conditions far more life-threatening than most of what you face today.

But the same system that once moved you away from genuine danger now moves you away from anything that registers as uncomfortable — and the range is far wider than most people realize. Yes, fear. But also effort. The conversation that would take something out of you. The task you keep deferring because it's just hard. The feedback you don't give because it would be awkward. The decision you avoid because the uncertainty is uncomfortable. None of these feel like survival. But your

system treats the discomfort the same way — and without awareness, the Away move happens before you've even registered there was a choice.

None of this is happening with your conscious willful agreement. That's the part worth sitting with. The Away move isn't a decision, most of the time. It's a default — running quietly in the background, shaping choices you believe are yours, accumulating costs you may not notice until they've already been paid.

***When Away moves accumulate — when they become the default response to anything uncomfortable — they begin to narrow the life around them.***

Avoided conversations become unresolved tensions. Unspoken truths become distance. Deferred decisions become drift. And over time, a pattern that was built to protect you starts to shrink your world — your sense of who you are, what you're capable of, what kind of leader and person you can be.

*Research is consistent: chronic avoidance doesn't reduce anxiety or distress. It relieves it briefly — and then reinforces it. The thing avoided grows in the avoiding.*

## What a Towards Move Actually Is

A Towards move is not optimism. It is not pushing through, toughing it out, or performing courage. It is not about denying that the discomfort is real.

A Towards move is simply an action — however small — that is organized around your values rather than organized around avoiding discomfort.

It might be having the conversation you've been deferring. It might be sitting with an uncomfortable feeling instead of numbing it. It might be saying what you actually think in a meeting or intimate conversation where the easier path is agreement or appeasement. It might be making a decision with imperfect information rather than researching indefinitely.

### **The size of the move matters far less than the direction.**

Each Towards move — however modest — does something that no Away move can: it builds. It reinforces something in you. It tells a part of you that you can be trusted, that your choices reflect who you are, that discomfort is something you can be present with without being controlled by it. Over time, that accumulation becomes the foundation of genuine confidence and resilience — not as performance, but as something earned.

*And a note worth making: a conscious Away move — chosen deliberately, with full awareness of what you're doing and why — is not a failure. Choosing rest, recovery, or safety when you know that's what's needed is not avoidance. It's discernment. The distinction matters: it's not which direction you move, but whether you are choosing or simply reacting.*

AWAY MOVES	TOWARDS MOVES
Avoiding a difficult conversation	Having the conversation you've been deferring
Saying yes when you mean no	Expressing what you actually think and feel
Over-preparing to delay deciding	Trusting yourself and making timely decisions
Withdrawing from feedback or conflict	Facing forward to meet challenges and grow
Self-criticism that stops you cold	Treating yourself with respect
Scrolling, numbing, staying busy	Staying present and choosing more intentionally
Shrinking to keep the peace	Holding a position under pressure

## Working with the Choice Point

The goal here is not to force values-aligned action before you've had a chance to understand what your values actually are. That kind of pressure rarely produces lasting change — and it doesn't need to.

What the Choice Point offers is something more fundamental: **a practice of noticing.**

Where do you shrink? Where do you take the easier path? Where do you avoid, appease, hide, or defer? Where does the choice slip by before you've caught it?

That noticing — without judgment, without pressure to be different — is where the work begins. Because once you can see the pattern clearly, you can start to ask what's underneath it: what the Away move is protecting, what it's costing, what a small step in a different direction might actually look like.

Clarifying your values and building Towards moves into your goals and commitments is the longer work. It's the work of understanding which Hooks pull hardest on you, and which Helpers you've been underusing. This is where coaching comes in. But it starts here — with a moment of honest attention.

## Three Questions Worth Sitting With

*Where do I notice myself moving Away most often — and what usually triggers it?*

*What is the Away move protecting me from?*

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*What would a one-degree Towards move look like in that moment?*

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### ***The Towards move won't always feel obvious.***

*Sometimes you won't fully know what it is until you've started moving. That's fine. The work isn't perfection — it's awareness. It's catching the moment a little sooner. It's asking the question, even when the answer isn't fully formed yet.*

You don't need to be fearless to make a Towards move. You just need to be awake to the fact that one is available.

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The Choice Point model was developed by Russ Harris as part of Acceptance and Commitment Therapy (ACT). The quote “Between stimulus and response there is a space” is attributed to Viktor Frankl. The framing, sequence, language, and application in this guide are Guy Reichard’s own, developed through the HeartRich framework.

## About the Author

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**Guy Reichard**

Guy Reichard is a Self Leadership, Resilience, and Executive Coach, author, and creator of the HeartRich body of work — a growing ecosystem of frameworks, books, and tools designed to help people understand themselves more deeply and lead themselves more wisely.

His heart-centered work integrates inner parts awareness, nervous system literacy, emotional intelligence, values-based living, and trauma-informed principles into a grounded, practical, and compassionate approach to personal growth and leadership. Through his books, essays, client guides, and the *Who's On Your Crew?* assessment, people gain language for their inner experience, clarity about their patterns, and a stronger sense of self-direction.

For those who want deeper, personalized support, Guy offers coaching as the most direct expression of this work — a thoughtful, nonjudgmental space to explore challenges, strengthen Self Leadership, and live with greater authenticity, resilience, and purpose.

*Your values don't just guide what you do.  
They remind you who you are.*

More resources, tools, and writing are available at

[HeartRich.ca](https://HeartRich.ca)