



# CELEBRATIONS

LIVING LIFE TO THE FULLEST

SESSION 1.

# CHOICES

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Celebrations – Choices





**CELEBRATIONS**  
LIVING LIFE TO THE FULLEST

## DEAR PRESENTER

Thank you for being willing to make a difference in your community. You are about to begin a journey that can have an everlasting effect on those who come to your presentation. The Life Hope Center is dedicated to helping people improve their lives through gaining knowledge and applying that knowledge to their lives.

Below are the steps, as well as some helpful hints, to make your presentation a success. If you have any questions please feel free to contact us.

### **OBJECTIVES:**

Participants will:

- Learn one key decision-making element.
- Learn what wise decisions are based on.
- Learn how to make informed choices.
- Learn seven lifestyle habits that promote longevity.

### **MATERIALS NEEDED:**

- Leader's notes
- PowerPoint
- Participant worksheet
- Computer (for your PowerPoint presentation)
- Projector and screen
- Tables and chairs
- Sound system (for large classes)

## TIPS AND GUIDELINES

01. **Come prepared.** Review the entire content and handout materials before the session. Arrive early for your presentation. Set up your equipment and test everything before the participants arrive.
02. **Greet the participants as they arrive.** One of our goals is to build relationships within the community. Greeting people as they enter puts them at ease and can open doors for further dialogue.
03. **Start on time.** The presentations are designed to be less than 1.5 hours. Honor that time frame.
04. **Welcome students and introduce yourself.** This introduction should take only 30 to 60 seconds.
05. **Introduce the topic of the presentation.** A brief introduction appears in the script under slide 2. Keep it short. Introductions should get the participants' attention, not bore them.
06. **Distribute the participant worksheet for note taking.**
07. **Give the PowerPoint presentation.**
08. **Introduce and distribute the quiz.** Detailed instructions are given in the script. Have the participants work in small groups of two to four, discussing and completing the quiz together. (If the nature of your group warrants it, lead the discussion of the quiz questions from the front, soliciting responses from the participants.) Give the participants about 20 minutes to complete the quiz. Monitor the participants' progress, adjusting the time as needed to allow them time to complete the worksheet. Then call them back together as a group and discuss the answers using the answer key.
09. **Closing remarks and reminder.** Introduce the next session's topic, and remind them of the date, and time of the session.
10. **Thank the participants for coming, and visit with them as they are leaving.**



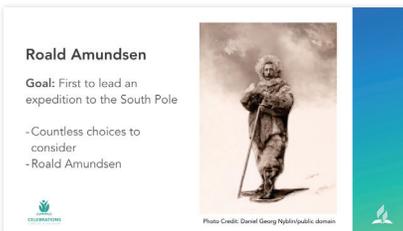
## WELCOME



### SLIDE 1 (CHOICES)

Welcome to CELEBRATIONS!

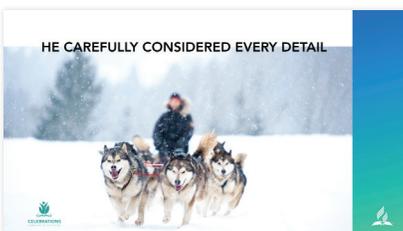
CELEBRATIONS is an acronym for twelve healthful living principles. Today we will look at the first principle, which starts with the letter C. It stands for **choices**.



### SLIDE 2 (ROALD AMUNDSEN)

Some 100 years ago two team leaders adopted the same goal: they both sought to be the first to lead an expedition to the South Pole.

Achieving the goal presented the two explorers with countless choices: selecting the clothing to wear, the food to eat, and, most important, the mode of transport. Roald Amundsen, the Norwegian explorer, gleaned from Inuit methodology the best type of equipment and clothing to use.



### SLIDE 3 (ROALD AMUNDSEN)

He chose dogs to pull the sleds. He placed his supplies and foodstuffs strategically along the early part of the proposed travel route before the main expedition set off, thereby lessening the loads his dogs would have to pull. He carefully considered every detail, and from his informed base he made decisions as to how to proceed.





#### SLIDE 4 (ROBERT FALCON SCOTT)

Robert Falcon Scott, however, a British naval officer, chose to use ponies and “modern” motorized sledges. He was a brave and daring man, but his sleds ceased functioning after a few days, and the ponies could not stand the frigid conditions. By the time he and his team reached the Transantarctic Mountains, the ponies were in such poor condition they had to be killed. Scott arrived at the South Pole to find that Amundsen had beaten him to the goal.



#### SLIDE 5 (AMUNDSEN AND SCOTT)

The outcome for one team was triumph; for the other, death and disaster. The diaries of Scott’s heroic team chronicled a story of frostbite, starvation, and eventually death on the return journey from the pole.

Decisions made or neglected by Amundsen and Scott represented choices. Some were made very consciously and intentionally; others were possibly influenced by emotion, personality, culture, or whim. Brave and courageous though Scott and his men were, they suffered the consequences of their choices and decisions, perhaps made in ignorance, but nevertheless lethal in outcome.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Roland Huntford, *The Last Place on Earth—Scott and Amundsen’s Race to the South Pole* (New York: Random House, Inc., 1999).



### **SLIDE 6 (CHOICES THE CRADLE OF DESTINY)**

Choices often determine our destiny. To a large extent even our health can be determined by the choices we make on how we live, the risks we take, and the balance we seek in life. We each come into the world with an endowment for health that may vary from that of others, but how we care for the gift of our health influences the expression of our genetic capacities.



### **SLIDE 7 (CHOICES THE CRADLE OF DESTINY)**

The intricacies of handmade Asian rugs are remarkable and often represent hundreds of thousands and sometimes even millions of individual knots. For those rugs with 800 hand-tied knots per square inch, the maker has to select a colored thread to create the pattern 800 times every inch. In the overall pattern, the subtle variety in the shapes that make up the whole speaks to the importance of each knot.

Our lives are patterned in a similar way. Every day we make countless seemingly insignificant decisions, the sum of which determines the overall fabric of our lives.



### **SLIDE 8 (INTENTIONALITY IS KEY)**

**Intentionality** in decision-making brings direction and order to our lives. Successful people generally set goals and objectives. Highly successful individuals make evidence-based decisions that move them deliberately toward those goals.





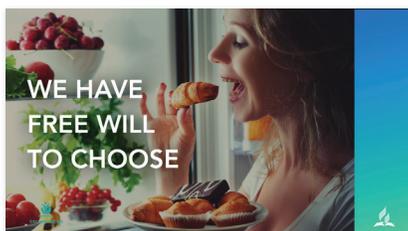
### SLIDE 9 (DECISIONS MADE IN YOUTH)

Unfortunately, some decisions made in youth—because of ignorance, rebellion, or stubbornness—can have lifelong repercussions. Similarly, poor parenting practices can weigh down children with a lifetime of consequences. In many cases the current epidemic of obesity in children in the Western world reflects parental resignation to allow too much electronic entertainment at the expense of physical activity. Fast and convenient foods replace simple, unrefined, natural foods. The immediate gratification of fast, oily, and high-calorie foods pleases both parents and children, but the consequences of such choices may last a lifetime. Once formed, fat cells persist for years, awaiting excess calories to be stored as fat. Chubby children are obese adults-in-waiting. The fat baby carries a legacy for life that perhaps reflects the parental inability or unwillingness to control caloric intake. Conscious intentionality is an important part of making such choices.



### SLIDE 10 (DECISIONS MADE IN YOUTH)

Choice and freedom are closely linked. Many correctional institutions seek to discipline by limiting available choices. In most societies even the greatest of freedoms permits only the choices that do not negatively impact others, because freedom to choose does not permit the freedom to harm others and escape consequences.



### SLIDE 11 (WE HAVE FREE WILL TO CHOOSE)

We have free will to choose, provided previous choices have not enslaved or—as it were—imprisoned us. Choices, however, are not always easy to make, yet avoidance of choice is still a choice that also carries consequences. These choices cover every aspect of life, from health and lifestyle issues to those involving integrity, spirituality, and relationships.



### **SLIDE 12 (BASIS FOR INFORMED CHOICES)**

It's tempting to make choices based on personal bias rather than on evidence and well-qualified studies. We need to recognize that there are differences in the quality, consistency, numbers, importance, and generalizability of studies. Such awareness can temper our rigidity, help us to weigh the evidence, and ultimately influence our choices.

In 2010 the Dietary Guideline Advisory Committee of the United States Department of Agriculture and the Department of Health and Human Services recommended that studies be classified by the body of evidence supporting their conclusions. They designated as "strong" those studies in which the quality, consistency, numbers, importance, and generalizability were of the highest order. Studies deemed "moderate" contained factors that were less conclusive, and "limited" studies were those of weak design. Such choices and practices based on this type of information are called "evidence-based."



### **SLIDE 13 (CULTURAL TRADITIONS)**

We all live in conformity with cultural traditions, some of which have gone on for centuries. The reasons for certain behaviors and beliefs are often hidden in the mists of time. Many practices have absolutely no basis in fact. It's not difficult to debunk the benefits of practices such as applying cattle dung to a newborn's umbilicus, but possibly harder to argue convincingly with a cultural belief that a woman should not bathe for a month after giving birth.



**"Health Reformers"**

- Principles of balance and moderation.
- Avoidance of harmful substances.



### SLIDE 14 ("HEALTH REFORMERS")

In the first half of the nineteenth century, "health reformers" developed a litany of health laws based on scant evidence. Fortunately, today a wealth of evidence can guide us in making choices. Principles of balance and moderation, while avoiding harmful substances, will pay dividends in the health of temperate and well-informed people.

**Basis for informed choices**

- Get adequate sleep (7 to 8 hours per night)
- Avoid eating between meals
- Eat a nutritious daily breakfast
- Get regular physical activity
- Avoid use of tobacco



### SLIDE 15 (BASIS FOR INFORMED CHOICES)

One of the early classic studies on lifestyle and health was published in 1972. Drs. Nedra Belloc and Lester Breslow, from the U. S. Department of Public Health in Berkeley, California, were among the first researchers to present convincing answers on lifestyle habits that promote longevity. In their study of 6,928 adult residents of Alameda County, California, they found that some lifestyle habits influenced longevity:<sup>2</sup>

1. Get adequate sleep (7 to 8 hours per night)
2. Avoid eating between meals
3. Eat a nutritious daily breakfast
4. Maintain the recommended weight for one's height, bone structure, and age (BMI, or Body Mass Index)

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<sup>2</sup> N.B. Belloc, L. Breslow, "Relationship of physical health status and health practices," *Preventive Medicine*, August 1972, 1 (3):409-421.



## SLIDE 16 (BASIS FOR INFORMED CHOICES)

5. Get regular physical activity
6. Avoid use of tobacco
7. Reduce the use of alcoholic beverages (the GC Health Department advocates abstinence)

In a nine-year follow-up they showed that the more of these seven habits a person regularly followed, the greater their chance of longevity. Of the group following all seven habits, only 5.5 percent of men and 5.3 percent of women died before the end of the nine-year period; whereas in the group that followed only three of the seven habits, 20 percent of the men and 12.3 percent of the women died.<sup>3</sup>



## SLIDE 17 (STAY OBJECTIVE)

Even when clearly intentional, freely made, and informed, choices and decisions are not always easy to make, particularly when trying to maintain objectivity. So, keep in mind the following:

- Get the facts and weigh them on the scale of **common sense**.
- When possible, **don't make choices in the midst of highly stressful situations**, when it's more difficult to think clearly.
- Watch out for the distortion your emotional state can bring to decision-making. **Anger, depression, and elation can influence decisions.**
- **Don't assume things.** Just because sugar tastes good, it doesn't mean it's good for you. Similarly, something that tastes bad isn't necessarily improving your health.

<sup>3</sup> N.B. Belloc, L. Breslow, "Relationship of physical health status and health practices," Preventive Medicine, August 1972, 1 (3):409-421.





### SLIDE 18 (STAY OBJECTIVE)

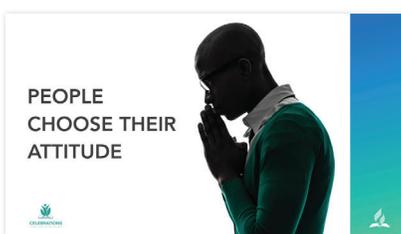
- **Beware of wishful thinking.** Don't overlook that lump because you wish it would go away. Don't think you can walk a mile to get rid of the calories in a piece of coconut cream pie.
- **Be careful where you get your health advice.** Quackery is still thriving in a multitude of guises.
- **Trust in intelligence;** choose the smart over the unwise, the good over the bad. Also, beware of the dead-end path that takes you nowhere.
- **Choose to do what you can do, not what you want to do.** Our wants are often beyond us, and they are so many.



### SLIDE 19 (A GIFT FROM GOD)

**Adventists see good health as a gift from our Creator God.**

The proper "preventive maintenance" reduces risk and leads to a happier, healthier, and longer life. No one lives forever, though, and **even the best maintenance cannot guarantee a disease-free life.**



### SLIDE 20 (PEOPLE CHOOSE THEIR ATTITUDE)

Recent scientific studies also indicate the importance of spirituality to mental health. With anxiety disorders being the most prevalent of the emotional disorders, spiritual exercises such as Bible reading and meditation on the life of Christ can bring great peace—one of the ingredients of mental health.

For some, the quality of life is more important than its duration. There are chronically ill people who are happy and content, because they intentionally have chosen to make the best of their situation. Similarly, many who are perfectly healthy physically may nurture a negative mind-set that destroys their serenity. **People choose their "attitude,"** and this affects the way they relate to triumphs or disasters—and many situations in between.



### SLIDE 21 (FAITH)

One area of choice, of course, is what we believe. Science does not illuminate all aspects of life, and so people live in or by **a system of beliefs**. Some call this “faith.” Many—including me, as the writer—have chosen to believe in God as our Creator and heavenly Father, even though we cannot see or touch Him. Having chosen to believe, a huge amount of supportive evidence may be amassed to support this belief. At its core, however, it’s a choice—the most important choice any person can make, because it’s only by developing and maintaining a close walk with our Lord that we will truly obtain optimal whole health and know the joy of living well, both here and throughout eternity.



### SLIDE 22 (LIFE APPLICATION QUESTIONS)

We will now focus on some life application questions regarding choices. We will review them carefully so that you have time to consider the questions and apply what you are learning to your life. Please write your responses in your Celebrating Choices participant worksheet. You are welcome to ask questions and to look back over the material.



### SLIDE 23 (LIFE APPLICATION QUESTIONS)

What choices am I making, consciously or unconsciously, that are not based on evidence?

How do these choices affect my use of time; my health; my relationships at work, at home, or with God?

What are my reasons for making these choices?





**LIFE APPLICATION QUESTIONS**  
- In what ways are my choices influenced by my culture or my emotions?



**SLIDE 24 (LIFE APPLICATION QUESTIONS)**

In what ways are my choices influenced by my culture or my emotions?



**LIFE APPLICATION QUESTIONS**  
- Is it because I wish to please myself, or am I being careless?



**SLIDE 25 (LIFE APPLICATION QUESTIONS)**

Is it because I wish to please myself, or am I being careless?



**LIFE APPLICATION QUESTIONS**  
- Do I accept as evidence anything and everything I read on the Internet?



**SLIDE 26 (LIFE APPLICATION QUESTIONS)**

Do I accept as evidence anything and everything I read on the Internet?



**LIFE APPLICATION QUESTIONS**  
- Does just one anecdote convince me of the right thing to do?

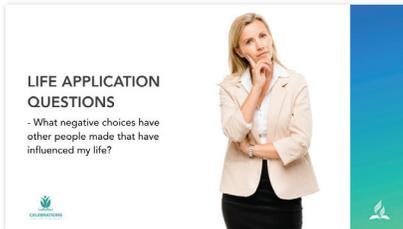


**SLIDE 27 (LIFE APPLICATION QUESTIONS)**

Does just one anecdote convince me of the right thing to do?

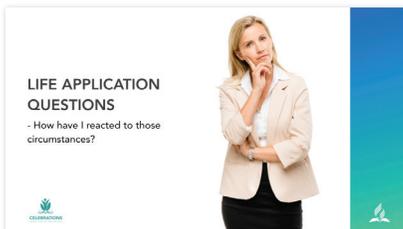


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**SLIDE 28** (LIFE APPLICATION QUESTIONS)

What negative choices have other people made that have influenced my life?



**SLIDE 29** (LIFE APPLICATION QUESTIONS)

How have I reacted to those circumstances?



**SLIDE 30** (LIFE APPLICATION QUESTIONS)

What freedoms do I enjoy that allow me to choose to change the direction in which I am heading?



**SLIDE 31** (LIFE APPLICATION QUESTIONS)

How can I choose to improve my attitude even under less-than-ideal circumstances?



**LIFE APPLICATION QUESTIONS**

How many of the seven habits that influence longevity am I practicing regularly?

Am I getting sufficient sleep, exercising regularly, avoiding tobacco and alcohol, eating a good breakfast, and not eating between meals?

Is my Body Mass Index (BMI) or waist to height ratio within recommended limits?




**SLIDE 32 (LIFE APPLICATION QUESTIONS)**

How many of the seven habits that influence longevity am I practicing regularly?

Am I getting sufficient sleep, exercising regularly, avoiding tobacco and alcohol, eating a good breakfast and not eating between meals?

Is my Body Mass Index (BMI) or waist to height ratio within recommended limits?

[www.nhlbisupport.com/bmi](http://www.nhlbisupport.com/bmi) for a handy calculator.

**LIFE APPLICATION QUESTIONS**

- Which of these health habits will I choose to introduce into my lifestyle today?

- Could I improve on any of the seven?




**SLIDE 33 (LIFE APPLICATION QUESTIONS)**

Which ones will I choose to introduce into my lifestyle today?  
Could I improve on any of the seven?

**LIFE APPLICATION QUESTIONS**

Chris went out to a business dinner after a long day at work. Before leaving he was accused of something he had not done.

He later tells a friend that after a few drinks he relaxed and decided to resign his job, move to a different city, and look for work there.




**SLIDE 34 (LIFE APPLICATION QUESTIONS)**

Chris went out to a business dinner after a long day at work. Before leaving he was accused of something he had not done.

He later tells a friend that after a few drinks he relaxed and decided to resign his job, move to a different city, and look for work there.

**LIFE APPLICATION QUESTIONS**

- What influenced his hasty decision?

- What did he forget to do?

- How would I have acted in a similar situation?




**SLIDE 35 (LIFE APPLICATION QUESTIONS)**

What influenced his hasty decision?

What did he forget to do?

How would I have acted in a similar situation?



**LIFE APPLICATION QUESTIONS**

- Remembering the most recent poor choices I've made and considering the pressures I was under at the time, do I feel that I was stressed, angry, or depressed?



**SLIDE 36 (LIFE APPLICATION QUESTIONS)**

Remembering the most recent poor choices I've made and considering the pressures I was under at the time, do I feel that I was stressed, angry, or depressed?

**LIFE APPLICATION QUESTIONS**

- Did I make the decision late at night or after a heavy meal or a long day of work?



**SLIDE 37 (LIFE APPLICATION QUESTIONS)**

Did I make the decision late at night or after a heavy meal or a long day of work?

**LIFE APPLICATION QUESTIONS**

- How can I remind myself to avoid making choices when in those type of emotional states?
- Did I remember to ask for divine guidance?



**SLIDE 38 (LIFE APPLICATION QUESTIONS)**

How can I remind myself to avoid making choices when in an emotional state?  
Did I remember to ask for divine guidance?

**LIFE APPLICATION QUESTIONS**

- What time of day suits me best for decision-making?



**SLIDE 39 (LIFE APPLICATION QUESTIONS)**

What time of day suits me best for decision-making?

**LIFE APPLICATION QUESTIONS**

- What can I do when confronted with a small choice that will help me to make a wise decision?



**SLIDE 40 (LIFE APPLICATION QUESTIONS)**

What can I do when confronted with a small choice that will help me to make a wise decision?





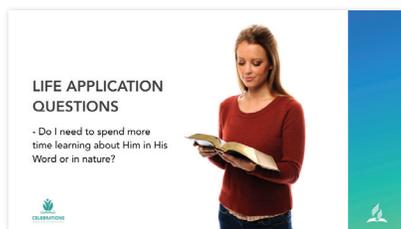
**SLIDE 43** (LIFE APPLICATION QUESTIONS)  
What things would help me when making a big decision?



**SLIDE 44** (LIFE APPLICATION QUESTIONS)  
What choices do I have to make regarding my relationship with my Creator, who graciously gives me the freedom to choose?



**SLIDE 45** (LIFE APPLICATION QUESTIONS)  
How can I increase my awareness of His love and His interest in my choices?



**SLIDE 46** (LIFE APPLICATION QUESTIONS)  
Do I need to spend more time learning about Him in His Word or in nature?



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**LIFE APPLICATION QUESTIONS**

- Do I have to cultivate my conversation with Him in prayer?



### **SLIDE 47** (LIFE APPLICATION QUESTIONS)

Do I have to cultivate my conversation with Him in prayer?

**LIFE APPLICATION QUESTIONS**

- How can I continue to build supportive evidence for my faith?



### **SLIDE 48** (LIFE APPLICATION QUESTIONS)

How can I continue to build supportive evidence for my faith?

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### **SLIDE 49** (LIFE APPLICATION QUESTIONS)

We are glad that you took the time to attend this discussion. We look forward to seeing you at the next CELEBRATIONS presentation!



Allan R. Handysides, M.B., Ch.B., FRCP, FRCS, FACOG, is an obstetrician, gynecologist, and pediatrician. Before retirement, he served as director of Health Ministries Department at the General Conference.



### **SLIDE 50** (LIFE APPLICATION QUESTIONS)

Before his retirement, Dr. Allan Handysides served as director of the Health Ministries department of the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists.





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## SESSION 2 WORKSHEET

Please note: The following outline is provided as a guide for personal note taking.

All parts of our lives are determined by the choices we make. One key decision-making element is intentionality, which means:

The wisest decisions are made based on \_\_\_\_\_. Unfortunately, many decisions are based on other issues such as:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

In order to make an informed choice, we must rely on:

A classic study published in 1972 indicates seven lifestyle habits that promote longevity:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.
- 6.
- 7.



Sometimes we must make choices without the benefit of careful research.  
In these cases, it's important to consider the following:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.
- 6.
- 7.
- 8.

# CELEBRATING EXERCISE QUIZ

SHORT ANSWER: WRITE A SHORT RESPONSE THAT BEST ANSWERS THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS

## Question 1

**A.** What choices am I making, consciously or unconsciously, that are not based on evidence?

**B.** How do these choices affect my use of time; my health; my relationships at work, at home, or with God?

**C.** What are my reasons for making these choices?

**D.** In what ways are they influenced by my culture or my emotions?

**E.** Is it because I wish to please myself? Or am I being careless?



**F.** Do I accept as evidence anything and everything I read on the Internet?

**G.** Does just one anecdote convince me of the right thing to do?

## **Question 2**

**A.** What negative choices have other people made that influenced the trajectory of my life?

**B.** How have I reacted to those circumstances?

**C.** What freedoms do I enjoy that allow me to choose to change the direction in which I am heading?

**D.** How can I choose to improve my attitude even under less-than-ideal circumstances?

### Question 3

**A.** How many of the seven habits that influence longevity am I practicing regularly? Am I:

Getting sufficient sleep

Exercising regularly

Avoiding tobacco

Avoiding alcohol

Eating a good breakfast

Avoiding snacking between meals

**B.** Is my Body Mass Index (BMI) within recommended limits?  
(See [www.nhlbisupport.com/bmi](http://www.nhlbisupport.com/bmi) for a handy calculator.)

**C.** Which of the seven habits will I choose to introduce into my lifestyle today?

**D.** Could I improve on any of the seven?



# GROUP DISCUSSION

## Question 4

Chris went out to a business dinner after a long day at work. Before leaving he was accused of something he had not done. He later tells a friend that after a few drinks he relaxed and decided to resign from his job, move to a different city, and look for work there.

- A.** What influenced his hasty decision?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
- B.** What did he forget to do?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
- C.** How would I have acted in a similar situation?

## Question 5

Discuss recent poor choices group members have made, including the pressures that may have influenced those choices, such as stress, anger, and depression.

- A.** Were decisions made late at night or after a heavy meal or a long day of work?

**B.** How can we avoid making choices when in these types of emotional states?

**C.** How important is it to ask for divine guidance?

**D.** What time of day suits me best for decision-making?

**E.** In what ways does making wise small choices help with making big decisions?

**F.** What other things help when making a big decision?



# CELEBRATING CHOICES QUIZ/**KEY**

**Facilitators:** please note that answers to the preceding quiz questions will vary due to the personal nature of the responses. Therefore, the answers are not listed here.