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As entrepreneurs, as leaders, and team members, our decisions matter. Whether they are about our plans to balance work and family time during the upcoming holidays, or our plans for the future of our business, we must take as much worry and debate out of the decision-making process as possible. We must ask ourselves an important question. "Will this decision take me closer to my goals, or further away from my goals?" Read more in the "Light Switch to Making Decisions" blog to help guide some of your choices in the next few weeks.

Kristin

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#### THE LIGHT SWITCH TO MAKING GREAT DECISIONS

We make decisions each and every day. Some are little, some are big and a few are life-changing. Regardless of the relative importance of the decision, I like to use this one simple question that I call "the light switch question."

**Will the outcome of your decision take you closer to your goal(s) or away from your goal(s)?**

The answer is either a yes or no. No rheostat here. It's a binary light switch that you turn off or on. (Of course, this means you have already identified your goals so you can make that comparison.) Theoretically, everything you do should take you closer to your goal(s).

Now, you may be wondering, "What if it doesn't take me toward nor away from my [goal\(s\)](#)? It doesn't really impact me one way or another? Can I still do it?" I suppose you can if you really want to....not sure if you should, though. Why? Because there are plenty of things to occupy your time. Why fill up your day with things that don't contribute to your definition of success? Think of the opportunity cost of doing something that has absolutely no value to you versus something that does have value!

**If you *still* want to do it, one of two things might be going on:**

1. There is a slight connection to a current goal that you need to reinforce and strengthen. For example, you want to go to Starbucks for a pumpkin latte (after all, we are approaching the autumn season). Why? Because you love just about

- anything pumpkin and you enjoy meeting new people. The "line of sight" to a relationship goal would be to meet one new person that would be a good person for you or your network to meet. Ahhhh.... so *that's* why you want to go to Starbucks!
2. You haven't identified the goal, but it IS important to you - you just don't know it yet! So let's continue with the Starbucks example: Why are you jonesing for a cuppa coffee? Is it something about the coffee? The atmosphere? The people? Hmmm....only you can know for sure!

When you tie your actions to a goal, the decision is fairly easy to make and even easier to execute!

### **THE MAKING OF AN ENTREPRENEUR by Joe Sherren**

Being an entrepreneur is not the glamorous life some people believe it is. Many people only see the end result of someone who has paid the price and made it. They are not aware of the stress, the risk, the uncertainty and the sacrifices that were made throughout the journey.

Even after doing all that, sometimes it comes down to luck and timing. But that luck is created by having the determination and the discipline to stick with it. It's about not giving up even when friends and family are saying, "Are you nuts?"

The entrepreneurial mind has an independent spirit and an unrelenting drive. Entrepreneurs have a greater capacity for uncertainty than most. They stay up later, work longer, are more focused, and make greater sacrifices to their personal and family lives than most people are willing to do.

As [Laura Murphy](#), Executive National Vice President at Arbonne, says: "Even if there is only a one percent chance of success, I am going for it." Think of it folks, that is a 99 percent possibility of failure, but still she perseveres. That is how a true entrepreneur's mind works.

She realizes that success means having the foresight to see what others don't, the fortitude to motivate yourself, the savvy to build and grow a business and the courage to make decisions in the absence of complete information. Laura could have easily worked at one of her father's (Danny Murphy) businesses, yet she turned that down. How many people with an easy opportunity like that would risk everything to go out on their own?

She did not take the easy road. She started her own entrepreneurial venture and found a passion with Arbonne, a well-known MLM (Multi-Level Marketing) organization. Arbonne was started in the United States in 1980 and now includes 10 countries. They are also planning to expand globally.

"Anyone willing to make the sacrifices, pay the price and work hard will succeed. But so many who initially join expect to see immediate success," Laura says.

She compares this thinking to a fitness program. Often people sign up, but when they do not see the desired changes in their body right away, they quit. Two things drove her to stick with the business and continue to pay the price:

1. It gave her the opportunity to help others succeed along the journey, rather than just achieving her success on the backs of others.
2. It put her future in her own hands, not anyone else's, including her dad's.

After myriad interviews, I have discovered that most entrepreneurs share these following attributes:

- Leadership - Being able to set goals, stay the course and motivate others.
- Dedication - Working 12 hours a day, seven days a week, especially in the beginning.

- Determination - When things don't go right, they don't give up.
- Creativity - Thinking differently, continually learning, and always asking questions.
- Flexibility - The ability to change quickly when the unexpected happens.

Laura mentioned that people say her success is due in part because she is such a good public speaker. But she will admit that in the beginning, she was so scared when she had to speak to a group, her skin would blotch so badly she would need to wear a turtleneck, to hide the redness. "I took the risk and learned", and says, "I am still learning." She now faces every audience with a natural confidence.

## TEN WAYS A PANELIST CAN LIVEN UP A PANEL DISCUSSION

You had a sneaking suspicion this was going happen. A good friend asked you to be on a panel, and it's not going so well. Even though you did your homework (collected your talking points and examples, checked out the other panelists and participated in the pre-panel conference call), the energy in the room is flat. Even YOU are semi-bored!

Evidently, you can't rely on the moderator to make it lively. So step up with one or a few of these techniques you can use as a panelist to make your panel come alive:

1. Mingle. You can already tell when a panel is going to be duller than dirt when you walk into the room. Long draped table at the front, with microphone stands and a lectern to the side. Yawn! So before you take your seat, mingle with the audience. Chat with as many friendly faces as you can. Casually listen in on their conversations to get a sense for the mood in the room. Introduce yourself. Shake people's hands. Thank them for coming. Get to know their names. Ask them easy questions, such as, "What's your name and where do you hail from?" or "What brings you here today?" or "What's your biggest challenge relating to [the topic]?" You are not only establishing rapport with the audience but also gathering valuable information about them that you can incorporate into the discussion.
2. Take a Poll. The easiest way to engage the audience early on during a panel discussion is to take a quick poll - especially if you don't know the cast of characters in the room.
3. Share an Example. Examples are short statements to clarify or elaborate on your point that is usually expressed in one or two sentences. They are often prefaced with "for example" or "for instance." Try to refer to specific people in the room or the audience as a whole to make your point. An example of this would be, "You can engage your audience using myriad techniques. For example, you can interview an audience member or take a poll."
4. Tell a Story. When listeners hear a well-told story that illuminates a key point, they take a journey with you, correlating their own experiences with yours. The story becomes much more applicable and memorable...especially if you can do this as clearly and concisely as possible.
5. Spark Conversation. It's tempting to keep answering the moderator's questions, especially if you know the answers! But it's even more important to share the airtime and stimulate the conversation on the stage and with the audience. You can ask a provocative question to another panelist, shout out to a Subject Matter Expert (SME) who you know is in the room, or talk directly to the audience. For example, if the topic is about "disruption," ask the audience to shout out their definition of "disruption."
6. Nudge Your Neighbor. Ask a provocative question to the audience and ask them to talk about it for a minute with their neighbor(s). People will automatically gravitate

- to groups of two or three (doesn't matter how many!). Watch the energy rise in the room!
7. **Show & Tell.** You can use a prop to strengthen your audience's ability to visualize, understand, accept, and remember an idea, concept, or theme during the panel discussion.
  8. **Demo Your Idea.** It is one thing to talk about something in the abstract. It's quite another to show the audience what you are talking about. Demonstrate the value of your idea right in the moment! A demonstration extends beyond what your audience can see or hear; you can have them taste, smell, or touch an object, prop, or model. Whatever your topic, ask yourself these two questions: (1) Can I demonstrate "it" (or even a "bit" of "it") for the audience? and (2) Better yet, is there a way for the audience to experience it for themselves?
  9. **Create a Tweetable Sound Bite.** Share one of your key points in a "headline" form—a phrase of no more than five words that encapsulates your idea. Encourage your audience to write it down (or tweet it out!) in order to solidify the takeaways. Your well-honed one-liners fit within the 140-character-tweeting boundary and would be snappy reading for those unable to attend the panel.
  10. **Have a Call To Action.** You can have a scintillating conversation, but if you don't ask the audience to do anything with what they have heard, it's just that. Great conversation, but no real ramifications. Why not make a request?



## 10 Ways a Panelist Can Liven Up a Panel Discussion

WHEN YOU HAVE A SNEAKING SUSPICION THE PANEL IS NOT GOING TO GO WELL

- 1 Mingle with the Audience.**  
Use a prop to strengthen your audience's ability to visualize, understand, accept, and remember an idea, concept, or theme.
- 2 Take a Poll.**  
Engage the audience early on - especially if you don't know who's in the room.
- 3 Share an Example.**  
Clarify or elaborate on your point in one or two sentences.
- 4 Tell a Quick Story.**  
Make it memorable and applicable to the audience with a relevant story.
- 5 Spark Conversation.**  
Share the airtime and stimulate the conversation on the stage and with the audience.
- 6 Nudge Your Neighbor.**  
Ask a provocative question to the audience and ask them to talk about it for a minute with their neighbor(s).
- 7 Show & Tell.**  
Use a prop to strengthen your audience's ability to visualize, understand, accept, and remember an idea, concept, or theme.
- 8 Demo Your Idea.**  
Show the audience what you are talking about OR have the audience experience it for themselves.
- 9 Create a Tweetable Sound Bite.**  
Share one of your key points in a "headline" form—a phrase of no more than five words that encapsulates your idea.
- 10 Have a Call To Action.**  
Make a request to the audience as a result of what they have experienced during the panel.

Link: <http://www.PowerfulPanels.com/10-ways-panelist-can-liven-panel-discussion/>  
For more information about how to make your panel discussions more lively and informative, go to [www.PowerfulPanels.com](http://www.PowerfulPanels.com)

**FROM THE BOOKSHELF: GET SMART! HOW TO THINK AND ACT LIKE THE MOST SUCCESSFUL AND HIGHEST-PAID PEOPLE IN EVERY FIELD**

- Brian Tracy

As a professional meeting facilitator, I am always fascinated to learn how people think and make decisions. So I was delighted to read my good friend, Brian Tracy's latest book, [\*Get Smart! How to Think and Act Like the Most Successful and Highest-Paid People in Every Field.\*](#)

This book is a quick compendium of ten different thinking styles of successful

people – and what we can do to make better decisions. I would have thought this would be a “preachy” type of book exhorting us to “do this and not that” or a dull read quoting lots of academic studies.

Au contraire. It’s filled with short aspirational stories and anecdotes that inspire us to think things through, make better decisions, and achieve extraordinary results.

And I’m all about that!

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