

**Published: Monday July 27, 2015**

## The consequences of choice

T. T. SRINATH

---

I was facilitating a workshop when an elderly gentleman confronted me saying, “You say I have choice in life, but I do not think so.” Not wanting to object apparently, nor upset the gentleman, I explained that I believe that we have choice in making a decision, even though we do not have complete choice about the consequences. The elderly gentleman then asked me to explain further, and I did so with an example.

I told him that he has the choice of journeying from, say, Chennai to Pondicherry. That he will get to Pondicherry would be his intent. Whether he would reach Pondicherry or not was not completely in his hands. He might, for instance, have an accident on the way, it could rain heavily, or even a punctured tyre might delay him. He agreed.

So I continued, “We can make a choice of what we want; this is possible. However, the consequences that come with that choice may sometimes be beyond us.”

Often, I have heard people say that they are unhappy with having made a choice. I tell them that it is not the unhappiness about the choice made, but with the consequences of the choice, which, when not what they desired, upset them.

Making a choice involves taking ownership of that choice. Making a choice also means knowing that the responsibility for its consequences lies with me. A person who blames others for making them choose disowns their choice, disregarding the freedom and the power to make a choice.

Every choice is made in the face of uncertainty. We may anticipate consequences, but only with some degree of accuracy. We must therefore be willing to live with the consequences of our choice.

*(The writer is an organisational and behavioural consultant. He can be contacted at [ttsrinath@vsnl.net](mailto:ttsrinath@vsnl.net))*