I want each and every one of you to think of a choice that you have to make and assign it to the faces of this coin. Say for example, one can think, I will buy a car if it is heads. I will save the money for posterity if it is tails. *look around* Done? *Flip the coin and ignore it*

(Toastmaster, my dear toastmasters)

Life...is a series of choices.

I chose to do this speech today. You chose to sit and listen to it. Right now, you might have chosen to do something more interesting than listening to me in your head. Something like riding a purple unicorn over a rainbow in the never ever land. Nevertheless, it is a choice.

Most of us make a huge deal out of the choices that we have to make. But are we looking at them in the right light?

First of all we categorize them as big and small. “Should I buy a car or a plot of land” would be a big choice while “should I wear red or blue” will be a small choice.

We take small choices without actively thinking about it much. Because we assume the outcome of the small choices to be...well...small. But not all small choices will have small effects. Some small choices will in turn make way to other big and small choices that might even affect the entire planet.

Now some of you might be thinking; “Well, I ate bread and butter this morning. But I did not hear a tear in the fabric of the universe!” Yes, that is true.

But let us rewind time to 1908 and travel to Vienna, the world’s capital of art and music. Enter the Vienna Academy of Fine Arts and stand by the desk of the professor with a pile of potential student portfolios. He would take up a portfolio and choose whether to accept or reject the student. Accepted. Rejected. Rejected. Accepted. Rejected. A complex task no doubt; but as a choice, mundane and simple. Little did he know that one of the rejected students will work harder and one day become the director of the very school.

“Impressive. But not World changing” you might say.

Then how about this? One of the other students that he rejected took upon him, a very different path. A path that would alter the lives of millions. A path that have shaped the world. A path of fire and destruction. That day...the professor rejected the art school application of young Adolf Hitler. A simple choice changed the course of history for ever.

So no point in categorizing choices on the perceived size since we really do not know what the cascading impact will be.

Sometimes we take choices after thinking about it for ages. Sometimes we weigh pros and cons and plan for perfection. But sometimes these well thought for choices go wrong. How many of you are familiar with Robert Burns’ famous poem “To a mouse”? *look around*
The story goes as this; Robert Burns was ploughing his field when suddenly a small nest of a mouse was broken by his equipment. It was obvious that the mouse, seeing that the winter is coming and that Burns’ field was unused for a while, thought it best to make a nest there. Burns muses that it must have laboured, as it can, for long days to build a nice home out of leaves and stubble even forgoing meals. Now with the nest broken and all the plans and foresight in vain, Burns tells the mouse, “The best laid schemes of mice and men Go often awry, And leave us nothing but grief and pain, For promised joy”. In simple words, it means that no matter if you are a mouse or a human, your well thought out options might still go horribly, horribly wrong. I believe everyone in the house would agree on that out of experience.

Let’s look at this in a different light and let me ask you, what IS a choice? More importantly is there such a thing as making a choice? *look around*

No. I am not losing my mind.

Guy Debord said, “Behind the masks of total choice, different forms of the same alienation confront each other.” In simpler terms, most that you perceive as choices are but the same decision with minor variances. Literary the two faces of the same coin. As such, picking one over other might not alter the outcome and thereby you might end up at the same place. More oft than not you are asked to choose the lesser of the two evils. But the truth remains that you are selecting an evil nonetheless.

So if we cannot predict how important a choice is or whether our critical thinking will always bring about the desired result, AND if we cannot always guarantee that outcomes are distinct, *pause* what are we to do? In other words what are we to do when logic is to no avail?

Let us come back to the coin that I flipped and ignored. *show new coin* When the coin was in the air, what was on your mind? Was there a small voice saying; “Let it be tails, let it be tails” or “Let it be heads, let it be heads”? *look around*

Why do you think that happens?

It happens because even though you think that you are unsure and you need to make a conscious “choice”, deep down you have already taken a decision and now you are rooting for that end!

So this is what I have to tell you. Next time you have to make a difficult choice, flip a coin *Flip the coin* and ignore it. For when the coin is in the air, in your heart, you’d know what you want to do.

(Over to you toastmaster)