

A Decision and a Plan

Liudmila Nevarez

BEFORE YOU READ: Share a time you made a decision and then a plan to bring your decision into reality. What worked? What didn't? What would have helped?

Thinking Differently about My Mom

One of the first obstacles I had was conflicts with my mother. I felt like I did not have her support. Misunderstandings between us continued for many years. The situation changed when I began to read psychology books. I learned that it helps to understand people's motives. When I learned this, I saw my mother differently. Now, when she criticizes me, I know she is proud of me, but she is also afraid for me. She wants me to continue to move forward so that I will have true financial security. When she interferes in my small business, I know she wants to feel needed and important in my life, but she is showing it in a way that is hard for me. Realizing she has these feelings helps me avoid many arguments and conflicts. If I had figured this out sooner, I would have avoided a lot of fights with her.

Being a Leader for My Son

I cannot change or improve my past, but I can take what I learned and use it with my son. I often ask him what he feels. We have a very close relationship based on trust and respect. My son made me into a leader. After I divorced his father, I did everything to ensure that my son had what he needed.

This was especially challenging during the many months he spent in the hospital when he was fighting leukemia. I helped him understand his disease by explaining that he had good and bad cells inside him. They were fighting amongst themselves. If he took treatment, ate right, and did everything that the doctor said, then the good ones could become stronger, and the bad ones



could get weaker. After almost a year of hard work, the good cells won. To celebrate, I took him to a hotel in the forest for two weeks. He loved it, and today he is a happy, strong, and confident guy.

Choosing a New Life

Another obstacle was my spouse. He's a good person but a horrible husband. I lived with him for seven years, but I always felt lonely. When our marriage became unbearable, I had to choose.

Should I accept the coldness in my life or give myself a chance for happiness and get a divorce? I chose a new life.

A Victim No More

There have been various obstacles in my life, but one thing remained the same: I hung onto the role of victim.

One day I asked myself: “Do you want to feel sorry for yourself or enjoy success?” Obstacles exist until you make a plan. You might need to take practical steps or change your attitude to the situation. Everyone remembers the pandemic. Most of us had fear and anxiety. I was no exception. But at one moment, I felt really tired of the news and panic. I thought, “Okay. What do I have? Restrictions, limits, anxiety, and a lot of free time. What of these can be useful to me? Oh, free time!” So, I sorted out email, organized pictures on my phone, read a lot, watched cool movies, exercised, meditated, and focused on the beauty around me.

A New Discipline

But this is easier said than done. Have you noticed that sometimes we create problems for ourselves? For example, I constantly check notifications on social media, read the news, and get distracted by texts. I put off the things that seem unpleasant. I wait until the last minute to pay my taxes; I don’t pay attention to complicated emails; I put off cleaning. I think when our brains do this, they are in self-preservation mode. We subconsciously want to avoid discomfort, pain, and difficulties. It’s interesting how our brains have learned to do this so well. Maybe right now you are avoiding something you don’t like thinking about. Test yourself: Stop for a minute. What thoughts are you currently avoiding?

In my case, I put important things off until the last moment, and then I work in a state of stress. I have done this with finances, relationships, proper nutrition, and exercise.

But I found a way to solve this problem: schedule and discipline. I know that sounds

simplistic but it works! You have to override the part of your brain that is in self-preservation mode. You have to make a decision and then just enjoy the result!

Seatbelt Fastened!

Overcoming obstacles has given me a chance to grow. And sometimes I have to fasten my seatbelt to be ready for all the big changes.

AFTER YOU READ:

1. How did Liudmila use critical and creative thinking to navigate each of the obstacles she discusses in this article – conflicts with her mom, her son’s illness, and her unhappy marriage? Be specific. Cite evidence from the text.
2. *To procrastinate* means to delay doing things, or as the author says “to put important things off until the last minute.” Do you procrastinate about certain tasks? Discuss.
3. Is there something you would like to be more disciplined about? Would having a schedule help you? Talk to your classmates about how they schedule their time. Share your best strategy for managing your time.

Liudmila Nevarez is a student at Ysleta Community Learning Center in El Paso, Texas. She is 44, in a new country, with a new language, new projects, and a new life. She would never have reached success if it wasn’t for the difficult moments of her life. Each of her undertakings turned into a successful project. A quote that changed her life is: “The monks of one monastery pray harder if they have no trials, believing that God has forgotten about them.”

