

## TECHNIQUE TO HELP DECISION MAKING

### THE TWO ROADS

Many people have difficulty in making choices – whether it is changing jobs, stopping smoking, leaving a relationship etc.

I have found the following technique to be very helpful in focusing their minds on alternative choices.

Let us take a case of a man who wants to stop smoking but is undecided and comes for help. Let's call him P for Peter. He is 30 years old, married with two children aged 7 and 5. The therapist is Brian, we'll call him B.

The following is a précis of this technique.

B: "Good P, just put your feet on the floor, rest your head on the back of the chair and close your eyes. The only direction I give you is not to try. I would like you to imagine a pleasant road in the country and when you can see this, let me know"

P: "I can see it"

B: "Good, now I would like you to see the road coming to a fork, one part of the fork goes straight ahead and the other branches to the right. When you can see this let me know".

P: Nods his head

B: "On the road straight ahead is a sign which reads 'Continue as you are, keep smoking'. When you can see this, let me know"

P: Nods his head

B: "I would like you to go down that road for five years. Continue your smoking and be aware of the journey and how it feels, and the experiences you have along the way. When you get to 35, stop and leave P there. Let me know when you are there.

(It may take a few minutes for P to do this)

P: Nods his head.

B: "Now I would like you to come back to the fork in the road"

P: Nods his head

B: "Now I would like you to see the sign on the right road which shows 'Stop smoking, be a free breather'. When you can see this, let me know.

P: Nods his head

B: "Good, now I would like you to go down **that** road for five years, realising that the first part of the journey may be difficult because you are making a change. Be aware of that journey, how it feels, and the experiences you have along the way. Take as long as you need and when you have reached 35, let me know"

After a little while, P nods his head

B: "Now, I would like you to tell me about the two journeys and the 35 year old P's at each end"

P: "The journey straight ahead was awful. It was full of smoke and ash. I looked grayer and grayer, I was coughing, I was terrified my kids would smoke because of me. My wife was fed up with me and the P at 35 looks terrible"

B: "Good, now let's look at the right road"

P: "That was very difficult at the start – all uphill with bends and detours. There were a few brambles I had to make my way through and I felt like giving up, but I continued". After a while it became greener. I felt good on this road and glad I hadn't given up. I look healthy and feel I can walk for miles. The 35 year old Peter looks good. He is playing with his children and his wife is sitting on the grass laying out a picnic. That Peter looks very healthy and happy"

B: "So, if you have to choose a road to go on, which one would you choose?"

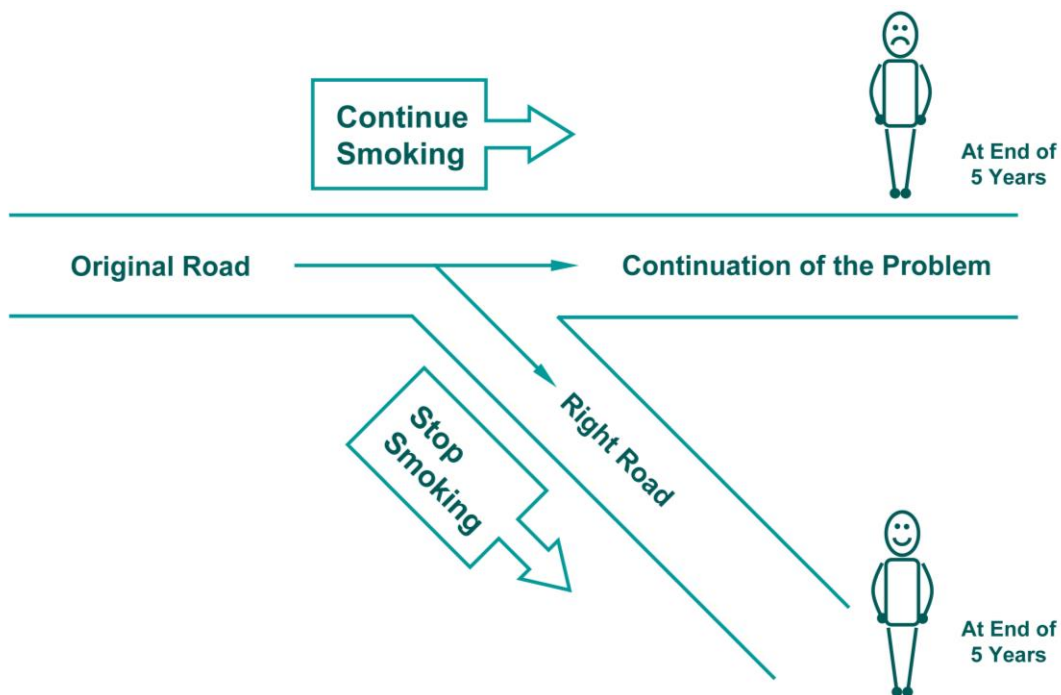
P: "The right one, definitely"

B: "If you kept a picture in your mind to help you go on the right road, would it be a negative picture of the left road to help you avoid this, or the positive picture of the right road to encourage you to go that way?"

P: "The left road. I always respond to negative things to help me avoid them"

B: "Good, Peter. I would like you to spend ten minutes every day reflecting on your journeys and what you have learned from them. Review your day and be aware of the steps you are taking along the right road. Learn from your actions, feelings and attitude. Be aware that the road gets easier day by day. If you do venture to the left road, learn from it and go back to the right one. Contact me if you have any

queries and have that future Peter on the right road communicate with you, so you will be like him.



**If you don't make a change, you will end up where you are going!**