

Choices

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Happy New Year to you all and great to see you back. Christmas is a fantastic time of year. I had a great time but have to confess that as you get older the standard of presents diminishes. Being young I always had a nice long list of what I wanted, I rarely got it but at least I had the list. I am sure some of you had a list or perhaps you are already getting too old for lists. However, what has improved over the years is my ability to appear genuinely delighted with any gift I receive, "I my word Granny, this is honestly exactly what I wanted, It's perfect, just the right size and that colour is ideal. Thank you so much for the socks." However, seeing younger relatives receive their presents I am regularly amazed at the fantastic effort and choices that people make on behalf of their loved ones!

Life is full of choices. We make choices everyday, right from the moment we get up. Which tie shall I wear with this shirt (another good choice I'm sure you'll agree) or maybe your first choice is which cereal to have. Personally I go for Weetabix (3 naturally) with Crunchy Nut Cornflakes on top! However, as a young lad I never had a choice in this matter. My mother had a system called tops and bottoms. Bottoms were things like Frosties, Crunchy Nut and Cheerios- the sugary cereals and the bottoms were the healthy ones such as cornflakes, branflakes and weetabix. So my mum made this choice for us because we would obviously have chosen to have just tops all the time and that would have hampered my development into the finely toned athlete you see in front of you today. At the time I thought it was unfair and every now and again would decide to begin an argument about it. However, by restricting my choice my parents were doing what was best for me even though at the time I could not see this.

Maybe you feel like your choices are always being limited. Perhaps limited by friends, teachers and probably most often parents. When you are next told that you can't go on your Games Console or go out to town by your parents don't just think it's totally unfair, try if possible to put yourself in their shoes and think why they are doing it and I am sure you will find they are doing it because they care. Believe it or not teachers are the same, we do not want to give after schools and punishments but we often do and this is not because we enjoy spending quality time with you after school but because we hope that it will lead to change in behaviour or a more positive approach to your studies.

I believe we always want to make the right choice, take the best option. When my beautiful wife and I planned our wedding we took a great deal of time choosing who to invite. It seemed to take

eternity to come to a decision. I had only just started at the RGS at that time and I did not invite many of the staff from here. Of course DJ Mr Bennett got the nod. But I could not possibly invite Mr Stevens or Phillips as their handsome suave looks would clearly upstage me on the big day, I could not invite Mr Marshall as his entertaining and amusing anecdotes might not be suitable for fellow guests. I could not invite Mrs Whalley as we had a strict ban on Carlisle supporters and the same applied for Mr Ellis with our universal History ban.

We were happy with our choices at the time. However a few years later when I look back I can't help thinking it would be great to have swapped a few guests around. I'd love to have seen Phillips and Stevens charming the lovely bridesmaids, nothing would have amused me more than seeing the shock on the guests faces when they realised they were on Mr Marshall's table! I could imagine looking up midway through dinner to spot Mrs Whalley sneakily checking the football results. Of course we would never lift the History ban! Actually, I have made a number of decisions in my life that when I look back were not the best ones but at the time I honestly thought they were. So how do we get it right at the time.

Year 11, you have some of the more important decisions to make in the coming months. You have to choose your A-level options, you also have to choose whether you want to continue studying here next year. These are bigger decisions than what cereal to have. You need to take the time to really research your options. Read the booklet you have just received, look at the entry requirements for that subject. Speak to your subject teachers and find out what is involved at Sixth Form. Speak to current Sixth Formers, speak to parents and friends. Book an appointment to go to the Connexions office in Wycombe. You should also consider what sort of degree or profession you might be interested in. Look at the teachers who will be teaching at A-level. If you are unsure of a profession or degree (which is likely for many of you) then perhaps you want a broad mix of subjects. The main advice would be to choose subjects that you are good at and also and importantly subjects that you enjoy as you will be spending a great deal of time working on them.

So good luck with your choices, research them properly and aim to make the right choice not just in this decision but every decision you make. And when you want to go out this weekend and you parents say no, think back to tops and bottoms cereal... they're only doing it because they care! By the way on birthdays and Christmas we're allowed all tops! There can be room for compromise!