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# SmartBusiness

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## Taking control of your life

Are your choices consistent with your vision?

**D**esert nomads have an ancient teaching: Trust Allah, but tie your camel. They know that crossing the desert requires real faith, for there will be violent wind storms, long days filled with the burning rays of the sun and those mystical visions of oases that vanish when you reach them. Each successful desert journey is a small miracle, and the traveler who survives must rely on faith to see it through.

The desert people also know that camels have minds of their own. Unlike dogs that can be trained to stay, camels wander wherever they please. Unless they are tied, a surprised traveler can awaken to the reality of completing the journey on foot, and even the strongest faith will not sustain one who is dying of thirst in an ocean of sand.

The business of life is often like a desert crossing. There are many circumstances beyond our control: economies rise or fall, jobs are offered or taken away, promises are kept or broken. In the face of these uncontrollable possibilities, it is only our faith that sustains us and enables us to go on.

But, like the desert traveler, faith alone is not enough for a successful journey. We must also do those things that represent our part of the process. In business, we must plan and execute with excellence. In relationships, we must invest our time, energy and passion in those we care about. We must remember to tie our camels.

When our journey to success goes off

### Jim Huling The Business of Life

track, it's easy to blame other people and all the forces beyond our control for not having obtained what we most wanted. Too often, we waste our energy recounting how we became victims of the challenges we faced. But if we look closely and honestly, we can usually see the small choices, the seemingly insignificant responsibilities we neglected along the way.

Have you been denied a promotion or some recognition that you feel you deserve? Did you miss the deadline or the sale that you were certain you would make? Did you depend on the constancy of a relationship that proved unfaithful?

Instead of focusing on the outcome, look back across the steps that led to it. Can you remember the moment when you first veered from the result you wanted? When you said something that wasn't completely true or decided to avoid a problem rather than confront it? When you lost your passion and began faking so no one would know?

If you look deeply, you can not only remember the moment, you can also remember that it felt wrong, that you had a chance, right then and there, to retrace your steps and get back on track. But the moment passed, and if you didn't act, the awareness of your shift in direction was lost.

Often, it's only when we arrive at a

painful outcome that we look back and see how that first choice, and each successive choice, brought us to where we are now. Even if our journey included a significant event or action by another person that truly was out of our control, we still had a choice in how we responded and even how we felt.

Ultimately, it is our choices that determine virtually every aspect of our life. Choices that are consistent with our vision create the life we want. Choices that are aligned with our beliefs create a strong and visible character. And when unfortunate events occur, choosing patience and forgiveness makes our faith a reality.

Far more than the influence of any external force, our choices create the life we experience. Accepting this is the first step in taking control of the direction of our lives. When we combine faith and faithfulness, balancing our vision with the choices that are ours alone to make, we can create the life we were born to live.

Be a person of great faith, but be sure to tie your camel.



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