Decisive: How to Make Better Choices in Life and Work
by Chip Heath & Dan Heath

Review by Gary Tomlinson

Stephen Covey's quote; *"I am not a product of my circumstances; I am a product of my decisions"* sets the stage for this week's book review. Covey's quote says we are a product of our decisions. That statement is hard to argue with. Doesn't it make sense then, to learn how to make better decisions?

"Research in psychology has revealed that our decisions are disrupted by an array of biases and irrationalities: We're overconfident. We seek out information that supports us and downplay information that doesn't. We get distracted by short-term emotions. When it comes to making choices, it seems, our brains are flawed instruments. Unfortunately, merely being aware of these shortcomings doesn't fix the problem; any more than knowing that we are nearsighted helps us to see. The real question is: How can we be better?"

"When researchers compared whether process or analysis was more important in producing good decisions – those that increased revenues, profits and market share – they found that 'process mattered more than analysis – by a factor of six.' Often a good process led to better analysis – for instance, by ferreting out faulty logic. But the reverse was not true: 'Superb analysis is useless unless the decision process gives it a fair hearing.' A better decision process substantially improves the results of the decisions as well as the financial returns associated with them. A solid process isn't just good for business; it's good for our lives."

Chip and Dan Heath have developed a simple, useful and memorable four-step process they call WRAP, for making better decisions. The four steps in the WRAP process are:

1. **<u>W</u>iden Your Options.** The Heath brothers show us how we can expand our set of choices to give us more options in our decision-making process.
2. **<u>R</u>eality-Test Your Assumptions.** Their book teaches us how to get outside our heads and collect information that we can trust to make better and more informed decisions.
3. **<u>A</u>ttain Distance Before Deciding.** Chip and Dan Heath clearly communicate how we can overcome short-term emotion and conflicted feelings to make the best choice available.
4. **<u>P</u>repare to Be Wrong.** Their book teaches us how we can plan for an uncertain future so that we give our decisions the best chance to succeed.

Chip and Dan Heath write that "our decisions will never be perfect, but they can be better. Bolder. Wiser. The right process can steer us toward the right choice." As Covey stated; we're

not a product of our circumstances, we're a product of the decisions we make. Doesn't it make sense to learn how to make better decisions? Reading *Decisive* will help you do so!

Reviewer's Note: Throughout my career I've been a reader of quality business books. I've had the wonderful opportunity to read more than 300 of them just in the last 20 years. If I could only recommend one book to others it would be *Decisive – How to Make Better Choices in Life and Work.* I tell my friends that this should be their very next book and to read it cover-to-cover because what it more important to the quality of our lives than the decisions we make?

Enjoy this education and feel free to share it with others!

Gary Tomlinson is a business consultant and motivational speaker. As a business consultant he specializes in strategy execution management. He works with senior executives to help them clarify, deploy and achieve their organizational initiatives down to an individual level. Gary uses a unique and dynamic methodology called KeyneLink that is part process, part software and part roadmap that enables his clients to close the gap between planning and implementation. As a motivational speaker, Gary's favorite topics are the "Art of Telling," "Making Change when Change is Hard" and "Top Ten Messages from Ten Top Books." You can engage Gary at gary@gary-tomlinson.com. To see his other book reviews, book reports and educational videos visit his website at www.gary-tomlinson.com.