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Personal Growth Means Tough Decisions

When you choose to grow, what becomes of the relationships of the "old you?"

If I know one thing about *you*, it's that you are growing. Otherwise, you wouldn't be reading this. And when you choose personal growth, it will mean making tough decisions like:

Who do I hang out with?

Who do I talk to at the water cooler?

What do I talk about at the family reunion?

And the process can be very painful at times. But you will get through it. Let me tell you how.

I received an email from a friend recently that sparked this post. In fact, it initially sparked my own internal debate that raged inside of me.

Here is the digest version of his email:

My wife noticed that I no longer have anything to talk about with my friends when we all get together. She said that I have withdrawn from them, that I've changed. And it's true...I have nothing to talk about with them. We're interested in different things now. We just don't have anything to talk about.

And I immediately thought about my own life. Was I doing the same thing in my own life as I was growing? Was I isolating myself, and therefore others? Or was I consciously choosing my friends?

My tough decision

There is one person in my life who particularly came to mind. For various reasons, I've always looked up to him for some reason. But he is the most negative person I've ever known and I noticed that it was rubbing off on me in the worst way.

So I made a decision to withdraw from this person. Since childhood, I have always had the unique ability to find the cloud in every silver lining, so I knew that the last thing I needed was more negativity in my life. It's the same reason why [I don't watch or read the news](#) or read online forums. Ninety percent of the stuff on there is negative garbage.

As soon as I made the decision to no longer interact with this person, a voice said to me:

But Jesus hung out with prostitutes, cheaters, and certainly grumps.

Ouch. My own conscience just "Jesus Juked" me. (Not sure what a "Jesus Juke" is? It's [explained here](#))

But immediately another voice said:

Take care of your own household first. Your relationship with Me, your wife, and daughter come first. (paraphrase of 1 Timothy 5:8)

And so it was decided. I would choose to withdraw from this person for the sake of my relationship with God and my immediate family. The fact is that I am negative enough without a bad influence and if trying to impress this person or maintain a closer relationship with him is going to cost me my family or my closeness with God, it's not even close to worth it.

We face tough decisions like that every day as we grow. Do we continue to hang out with people who drag us down and try to be a light to them? Or do we withdraw to focus on ourselves?

There is a fine line you must walk between the two...and only you can decide which side of the line to fall on.

I am not suggesting we abandon our friends or not try to be good influences on them first. *But you have to work on yourself first before you can ever influence someone else.*

Read Part Two, [Change Yourself then...Change the World](#)

Have you ever found yourself caught between your own personal growth and the negative influences of others? How did you respond?