CONSEQUENTIAL CHOICES

IHSAN BEEZER

Most choices do not matter. What you eat for lunch. Which route you drive. Which call you answer first. They pass through your life and leave nothing behind.

A few choices are different. They commit you. They close doors you did not know were open. They decide who you become before you notice. I call these consequential choices, and I have spent my working life on them.

A consequential choice has three marks. It is hard to reverse. Its effects compound over years. And it shapes the person or the institution that has to live with it. A career. A company. A signature on something that cannot be unsigned. You get a handful of these in a life, and the quality of a life is the quality of how it meets them.

DECISIONS BEGIN BEFORE WE DECIDE

Thirty years of building and years of doctoral research taught me one lesson: by the time you sit down to decide, the decision has already begun. The room is arranged; your assumptions have already answered half the questions.

So the question is not “What should you do?” It comes earlier. What are you really deciding? What has already been decided for you? What are you assuming is fixed that is not?

WE ASK THE WRONG QUESTION

Watch how people meet a big choice. They ask: can I make this work? Almost anything can be made to work by a person willing to pay enough years for it. The better question is the one nobody asks: would I want the life it creates if it works?

You can build the company and lose the life. Success is what happens after you chose the right thing to succeed at.

The goal is to get clear on what you are actually choosing, what it costs, what it closes, what it opens, and who you will be on the other side of it. Clarity does not guarantee the outcome. It helps you see what you are committing to while the choice is still open.

THE AGE OF CHEAP ACTION

Machines have made action cheap. Anyone can build, publish, launch and scale at a speed once reserved for institutions. What machines have not made cheap is the judgment of whether the action was worth taking. Speed without examination is not progress. It is arriving faster at a place you never chose.

The people and institutions who matter will not be the ones who act fastest, but the ones who examine before they commit.

WHAT I DO

I examine what shapes consequential choices before they are made. I call those conditions Decision Environments, and the work of inspecting them decision examination. I examine the decision. I never run it.

I do not formulate strategy, and I do not implement. The moment I profit from what you do next, my examination bends toward my interest, not yours. The fee pays for the examination, never for the direction it points. My independence is not a marketing line. It is the product.

I am not a guru. I am a guide, and I am in the game myself. My career runs through banking, building, teaching, research, and counsel.

THE WORK

The same question takes different forms across my work.

IHSAN Advisory is the examination of consequential decisions before commitment.

Businessry gives owners the diagnostics and systems to make a business more profitable and less dependent on them.

Black Laptops is digital advantage for Black builders.

Fortalen is a new test of human athleticism and capacity, open to everyone.

Underneath it all is the scholarship: doctoral research at Rutgers University on how decisions are framed and acted upon, before judgment becomes strategy, action or commitment.

THE THREAD

One question runs through my books, essays, ventures and counsel, pursued across a working life: what are you really deciding?

If this speaks to you in one minute of reading, it was written for you. If it does not, let it pass. Either way, your next consequential choice is already coming. Meet it examined.