

Askesis III - THE CHARIOTEER'S CHOICE

Make Well Thought-Out, Balanced Decisions

Background: Making decisions can be hard because there are many factors and risks involved. The most important thing though, is that you *make them*. Neuroscience tells us that *reaching decisions reduces your worry and anxiety and helps you solve problems, even if the decision you reach is only "good enough"*.

You can not foretell the future so you can never have *all* the information, meaning that you can never reach the perfect decision. It will always have a degree of uncertainty. You can however, reduce that uncertainty by using Ethos, Pathos and Logos to provide you with a structure that will make sure you have examined sufficiently all aspects of your decision making process.

The more you exercise it, the less the uncertainty you will face and the happier you will feel about your decision. So much time and energy is lost, when we are unclear, undecided or we procrastinate.

"While we wait for life, life passes" - Seneca

As mentioned already, in his presentation of the concepts of **Ethos**, **Pathos** and **Logos**, Aristotle was referring to the traits an orator must have in order to influence and persuade his audience. We also mentioned in the Logos chapter that there were two more, lesser known principles that Aristotle identified, that of

- **Telos** (end, goal, completion) and
- **Kairos** (timing, context).

For simplicity, we normally consider these to be included in the **Logos** trait, since they address logical, strategic matters, but it's helpful to examine them individually when taking decisions.

These traits represent *the most basic questions* we can ask regarding *any* situation or problem we are faced with i.e. *Who, Why, What, Where* and *When*:

- **Ethos** addresses **Who** you are.
- **Pathos** addresses **Why** you want what you want.
- **Logos** addresses **What** and **How**; your actual strategy and the realities you are facing.
- **Telos** addresses **Where** you want to go - the actual outcome you seek to achieve.
- **Kairos** addresses **When**; the best time to act/ your timing.


Together, these force you to examine the full spectrum of considerations which you must address in order to reach a balanced decision for yourself - or to persuade others that your decision is valid.

It's like calibrating the G.P.S. of your mind with a clear address, allowing you to achieve your goals in the most ideal way. A process of checks and balances and working to gain the knowledge, courage and confidence needed to set correct goals and take the most beneficial, balanced and informed decisions possible.

Name: THE CHARIOTEER'S CHOICE

Purpose: To help you to think more clearly and arrive at the best decision possible.

Instructions:

 Briefly describe the dilemma or issue that you are facing and which requires a decision to be made.

 What are the 2-3 possible solutions/options/paths according to your understanding of the situation?

You will then proceed to pass through the first filters of Ethos, Pathos, Logos.

“The Three Filters”

1. **Ethos Filter** - Be honest and truthful with yourself. Is the path or solution that you are thinking about, aligned with who you are? Is it aligned with your integrity, your character, your core values and your best interests? Does it reflect who you aspire to be; your authentic, virtuous “Best Self”? Is it aligned with your purpose in life, and the future vision you have for yourself? (See later on the askesis on creating your Personal Mission Statement)

 *Write down your thoughts...*

2. **Pathos Filter** - Consider Pathos - your emotions, hopes, desires and dreams as well as fears. How do you *feel* about it? What does your gut say? What emotions does it evoke in you? Emotions express your subconscious thinking and will usually reveal actual problems or opportunities. Pathos will compel you on the one hand, raising your hopes that your dreams can be achieved, but on the other hand, it may paralyze you with fear and self-doubt, making you waver with indecision.

Run the thoughts affecting your emotions through the 3 filters we mentioned in *Askesis I, The Socratic Test*

- Are they based on True facts?
- Are they Kind?
- Are they Useful?

Answer these questions:

*- What is your **BIG WHY***

(your deeply emotional reason for doing this) ?



-What is holding you back?

-Write about your 3 Fears/Main Concerns.

3. Logos Filter - Logos is your reality-check. Consider the hopes and fears you listed above in view of the actual realities you are facing. Looking at the facts, are your fears overblown or are your hopes too naive and optimistic?

The only way to know is *to work the numbers and list the facts*. What do they say? What does 'common sense' say? What are the logical, rational steps and strategies that must be followed? What proofs, evidence, examples or case-studies do you have? What is the 'usefulness' of this path you are choosing? Does it serve the general plan of your life?

Make sure you **understand** the situation and facts correctly, so you can more readily **accept** the reality of the situation and **adjust** in the way most beneficial to you.

Also examine the 2 additional traits:

Telos: What is your exact **goal** and is it beneficial to you in the short term as well as in the long term?

Kairos: Is this the right **time**?

*Note: It is always a good idea to discuss your thoughts with a **mentor**, coach, supervisor or consultant, to get someone else's point of view. Explaining your thought process to someone else, getting their feedback and answering their questions will open your eyes to matters you may not have considered.*

Finally, take a decision and write it down.

