



Do or Do Not – by pastor Jerry

Star Wars' Yoda made famous the line: "Do or do not. There is no try." My nephew Jon was in EOD (Explosive Ordnance Disposal) in Iraq. Let's say they had to disarm a bomb. They're faced with a choice – cut the red or blue wire. You do or do not cut the red wire. You do or do not cut the blue wire. There is no try – "I tried to cut the blue wire."

Why is this important? If he isn't cutting a wire, he isn't doing anything useful to solve the problem. If he cuts the right wire – hooray! If he cuts the wrong wire it has the same effect as doing nothing – the bomb explodes. Let's face it, "trying" is well, trying – it's ineffective; it's wringing our hands and worrying – "what if" or "if only" – until the problem explodes.

An action-bias encourages you to think strategically, but act quickly. While at AT&T Paradyne I noticed effective decision makers balanced the need for information and the need for action. Ineffective people tended to "kick the can down the road." They had a chronic disease – analysis paralysis – that depresses people (I'm stuck), kills relationships (should we go to counseling?), nations (should we return to work?), and churches (should we restart worship?).

It's easy for people with an action bias to dismiss those who err on the side of caution. It's easy for the cautious to label "doers" as bad actors. Of course, you need more information to buy a car than a pack of gum; you need more information before a surgery than removing a splinter. In most situations the "bomb is ticking" and inaction means at least missed opportunity if not greater hardship. There is always a "cost to" and a "cost not to" and the prudent among us do a cost-benefit analysis while the fearful or foolhardy withdraw or charge.

Life is more like sailing than power boating. Both have specific purposes. I've never skied behind a sailboat but I suppose it's possible. When I'm on the water in my Inland Cat sailboat I read the wind on the water. I adjust my sail and rudder to angle towards the best opportunity, experience it, and look around for the next puff. Even in a race you tack and jibe for best advantage. You cannot power straight ahead and expect to finish much less win, but you cannot sail if you never leave the safety of the shore.

You must make your own decisions. If you let others make them for you, you will resent them if it doesn't turn out the way you hoped. In the Air Force I liked having a chain of command. It was a "blame list" – I was just following orders. Adults ask for advice, look for the wind on the water, and set sail. The Bible says it this way in Proverbs 15:22, "Plans go wrong for lack of advice; many counselors bring success." Yoda was right: "Do or do not. There is no try."