



decide

work smarter,
reduce your stress,
and lead by example

Steve M^cClatchy

WILEY

Praise for *Decide*

“Steve’s approach is not only hugely engaging but has an immediate impact on motivation and productivity. His book is the next best thing to having Steve in the room. I highly recommend it!”

—Christina Harper Elgarresta
Managing Director, Accenture

“*Decide* delivers: If you’re struggling to lead, not just manage; if you’re frustrated that your very best results are just beyond reach; or if you’re simply at war with your calendar, Steve McClatchy’s new book is for you. *Decide* is a rare fresh take at some of the thorny problems that block our best work. But don’t just take my word for it. Get your own copy, and you’ll soon be ordering copies for your team as well.”

—Marshall Goldsmith
America’s preeminent executive coach
(*Fast Company* magazine)

“*Decide* puts personal power squarely where it belongs—in your hands. Follow Steve’s advice, and you’ll immediately see benefits that will change the way you plan, spend your time, and engage with others. To change your trajectory and start leading in all aspects of your life, all you have to do is *decide*.”

—Mary Davis Holt
Leadership coach, speaker, and best-selling
coauthor of *Break Your Own Rules*

“I have worked with Steve, and I can say firsthand that his approach has had a profound impact on every level of our organization. His methods are deeply insightful and tremendously impactful. I highly recommend Steve, his approach, and this book!”

—**Luc Robitaille**

President of Business Operations,
Los Angeles Kings Hockey Club

“In *Decide*, Steve McClatchy shows us that we can accomplish amazing things by aligning what we want to achieve with how we spend our time. Regardless of the industry or level of the reader, real benefits will be accomplished from Steve’s advice—an immensely practical guide!”

—**Valerie Sutton**

Director of Career Services,
Harvard Graduate School of Education

“As the late Professor Randy Pausch said, ‘It’s not how long you live, rather how well you live.’ *Decide* shows how we can all live more meaningful, productive lives simply by practicing better decision making. I invite you—and your team—to start regaining control over your time and efforts by reading this important book.”

—**Navi Radjou**

Speaker, advisor, and best-selling author,
including author of *Jugaad Innovation* and
From Smart to Wise

“World-class leadership is about making inspired and enlightened choices. With fresh stories and advice, McClatchy drills down to this idea by recommending daily habits that leaders at every level can use to their immediate benefit. *Decide* is a very worthy read on a critical subject.”

—**Douglas R. Conant**

Chairman of Avon Products, founder of Conant
Leadership, and *New York Times* best-selling
author of *TouchPoints*

“Your success as a leader is as good as your decisions. McClatchy shows you how to make the decisions every day that will keep your business and you moving forward.”

—**Elizabeth Walker**

Vice President, Global Talent Management,
Campbell Soup Company

“If your intention is to gain from your life, and not just prevent the pain that often comes with it, then *Decide* is the book for you. Steve McClatchy reminds us that to achieve something of significance, we have to focus on things that matter. His new book is full of the practical wisdom that will enable you to end burnout and bring balance to your life—and to find a path worthy of being followed. I absolutely recommend this book.”

—**Jim Kouzes**

Coauthor of *The Leadership Challenge* and
Executive Fellow of Leadership, Leavey School of Business,
Santa Clara University

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*To Lynn, Grace, Amy, Kyle, and Kelly,
for being the reason that I work hard, rush home, and smile.
Thank you for your confidence and trust,
your support, and your abundant love.
This book is for you.*

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Preface

The material in this book has been presented to high-level executives as well as high school and college students and people in every stage of life in between, over the past 12 years. It is a message of leadership that everyone can relate to in their own way because everyone has the opportunity to be a leader, whether it's for a team of professionals or in their own lives.

Decide aims to help readers lead toward improvement in their business and their life by teaching them how to make better decisions based on the real results they want to experience. *Decide* explores what drives us to do the things we do each day. It explains that the things we don't have to do at all matter the most in defining us as leaders and as individuals. It explains how to achieve balance in our lives through better decision making, rather than waiting for an employer to provide it for us. It presents readers with a perspective on the different ways we create the energy we need to get through each day—including accomplishments and procrastination—and challenges readers to make a

choice on how to get theirs. It presents an understanding of the value of time from an opportunity cost perspective and how our understanding of that value determines how we will spend our lives. It offers valuable advice on prioritizing, planning, managing interruptions, and organizing to provide real-life practical skills to apply in order to get more done in less time, reduce stress, and complete the things we have to do so we can have more time for the things that make life worth living. And last, it offers an explanation of how our decision-making habits shape our lives and relationships in the long run.

This project is the culmination of many years of content creation, idea development, live presentations, audience polling and brainstorming, research, and soul-searching on the topics of time management and personal leadership. I have spent many years in the talent development industry because I believe in its mission to help people think and reflect about their values, to take responsibility for their lives, to take a step back and recalibrate when new direction is needed, and to provide the framework within which people can evaluate their decisions, direction, and vision of the future.

I also believe in the power of this industry to help businesses form vision, missions, common culture, and meaningful purpose, as well as the road maps to fulfill them. Employee development, as part of a company's mission, has been linked to happier employees, happier customers, and longer retention of both. These metrics improve not only the general wellness of an organization but also productivity and the bottom line. After attending my leadership programs, clients have reported increased engagement, improved retention, and intensified corporate culture. Leadership is essential for companies to survive and thrive in a fast-changing world. I especially believe my definition of *leadership* as "improvement" is necessary in business and in life. Without constant improvement, organizations begin to fall behind and die out. As individuals, the same thing is true. Personal leadership, pursuing Gain and adhering to values, is what gets us out of the rut and allows us to grow and improve over time.

Leadership and progress take time, energy, and commitment. But time continues to pass, whether you use it to accomplish something worthwhile or not. If your decisions about life and how you use your time do not reflect an effort to make the future better than it is today, then it won't be. Pursuing Gain, making proactive choices, and

considering the consequences of your actions or inactions on your employees, family, colleagues, friends, and children define you as a leader, because you are improving things and determining what the future can be rather than leaving it to chance.

My passion for cultivating leadership at all levels has driven me to develop this material and present it to thousands of people every year. After hearing people around the world tell stories about their leadership experiences, I can tell you that leaders really do make a difference. So I hope you decide to be a leader and to make a difference, and I hope this book will show you how.

If, after reading this book, you decide and commit to making improvements in your life and leading toward a more passionate, engaged future, then *Decide* has accomplished its purpose.

