Introduction

Imagine a labyrinth of uncertainty, each turn leading to more confusion. Emma was caught in this web of indecision. Her mind was full of conflicting thoughts and feelings. "I have a big decision, to make, but I'm so confused," she told me, her voice sounding desperate.

Her mind wrestled with solutions. Emma's anxiety grew, and she longed for clarity in the chaos. Yet her inner turmoil remained a mystery, a puzzle begging to be solved. How could she untangle this knot of emotions and find a path to resolution?

Was there a way out?

"The Power of Targeted Choices" was created to shed light on the shadow of uncertainty! The book is divided into 3 engaging parts. It deals with different aspects of the journey to a more fulfilling existence.

- In the first part of the book, called "Life Choices," we explore the deep impact our choices have on our well-being. We live in an ocean of superficial choices. But we can discover the potential of transformative choices. They align mind, body and spirit. What choices will have a lasting impact on our lives?

- In the second section, "A Path to Well-Being," we explore the maze of emotions to find ways out. They can create stress and make us feel worse. Instead of being critical and dissatisfied with our lives, can we be kind to

ourselves? How can we do that? This book also teaches us how to take better care of our bodies and emotions, unlocking the key to a more vibrant life.

- Finally, in Part 3, "Making the Right Choice," we go on a quest to make decisions that will change our lives. We learn to decide what we want and to consider what might happen afterwards. We navigate through the hurdles of old habits and expectations. We will design our lives with the precision of master architects.



Part 1—LIFE CHOICES

Topics explored:

In the first section, "Life Choices," the book explores the basic choices we make every day. It also covers the invisible choices that ultimately affect our well-being. This section addresses questions such as, "What choices can we make to harmonize our mind, body, and spirit? How do superficial choices distract us from our true path? What deep choices have a lasting effect on our lives?"

So, we analyze all these choices. Why? Because:

Healing our lives requires changing the wrong choices we make.

How can we begin? We rely on *rationality* to make many small decisions every day. But when we limit ourselves to rationality, we limit our choices. Why is that?

It is helpful to listen to intuition and instinct as well.

By doing so, we can tap into our creativity and explore new options that we may not have considered before.

Now, let's look at some basic choices that can limit our lives, our potential, and our freedom.



The Dream and the Inner Film. Acrylic painting on canvas by Aurora Mazzoldi

Step 1—Basic Choices

Topics explored:

Do we control our choices, or are we just puppets influenced by others, our emotions, or our habits? Many of us focus only on reason when making decisions. In doing so, we forget about two other valuable tools: instinct and intuition. We also forget that reason, instinct, and intuition should come together in harmony to create a deep choice.

The book tells stories of people who make decisions based on what others think. It also tells stories of people who make decisions based on how they feel. But some people are influenced by their prejudices (Gilda). Or by their fear of getting close to others (Catherine). These first choices in life are where they began to build their character. Readers can apply the book's practices to their own lives.

In the end, by seeing how our choices affect us, we can make changes. These changes give us more energy to achieve our goals.



"This battle is completely lost, but it's only two o'clock and there's still time to win another one." 1

French General Desaix may have uttered this phrase, proving that, if you lose one battle, you can still win another. The Austrians had defeated Napoleon's army at Marengo. But Desaix arrived and helped the French turn the tide. They surprised the Austrians with a sudden attack and won the battle.

As shown above, sometimes in our lives, we become discouraged and unable to win. As a result, we don't have the strength to keep trying and, like Napoleon, we give up. But just like Napoleon, we can find extra energy to help us win a battle that seems lost.

Where do we find it?

We all have some energy saved up for when we need it, like in an emergency. So, we can use that energy to help ourselves in difficult times. But we have to do more than just think about it. To use this energy, we have to:

- Be determined to achieve a goal.
- Be willing to work hard to achieve that goal.

Imagine you're hiking in the mountains. You're tired, but you still have a long way to go. It's getting late, and you want to get to the top of the mountain soon. So, you're willing to work hard to get there.

When we feel discouraged and want to give up, can we find extra energy? Will that help us overcome fatigue and stress? It's our determination and instinct that give us the energy and excitement we need. When we stop using only our mind and focus on the goal, we can *feel* the solution to the problem. Then we can use our thinking to put our ideas into action.

Thinking is powerful when we listen to our instincts and trust our gut feelings. When we're determined to accomplish something, our thinking helps us figure out how to do it. But we rarely decide that way.

We rarely think about where we want to go before we make basic decisions.

- We might get caught up in our own struggles instead of looking for solutions.
- We might feel like we're always the victim of what's happening.
- We might avoid asking for help from people who could help us.

Sometimes we make choices just because that's what we are used to doing. For example, we might:

- Do things to please or displease others.
- Making decisions based on how we feel at the moment.
- Getting caught up in our own struggles instead of looking for solutions.
- Feeling like a victim of what is happening.
- Avoid asking for help.
- Etc. ...

When we were children, we made decisions based on:

- What others told us.

- How we felt at the time.

But those choices did not make us happy in the long run. To make choices that make us feel good, we need to know what we want. Therefore, we must pay attention to our true feelings, and not just listen to what others say. To live a good life, we must:

Consider our basic choices.



Ignoring the Instinct

Instinct is something we are born with that helps us know what to do and stay safe. It is like having an inner guide. It helps us feel at home in new situations and figure out how to overcome challenges. As a result, we use our instincts to explore and understand new things until they become familiar. An inner voice guides our decisions. But is instinct alone enough to always make the right decisions?

In early humanity, instinct was the key to survival. It helped us meet basic needs and respond to the unexpected. Life could have continued this way, and humans would have still survived. But humans have become more than animals:

We have developed the ability to choose,

and have more options in life.

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Humans can choose their lives. While animals mostly rely on instinct to decide what to do, humans have evolved to the point where they can decide for themselves.

But humans have stopped following their instincts. They pay little attention to what nature offers them.

Instead, they rely too much on their brains and underestimate their instincts and feelings. The brain helps them invent and use technology. But it also leads them to do the same things every day without thinking about what they really want in life. They forget about what would make their lives meaningful.

Society encourages this choice. People put their brains ahead of their instincts and feelings.



To obey or not to obey?

When we are children, one of our challenges is to figure out how much to listen to adults.

Adults have a dominant influence on us. They teach us how to live in a world that can be confusing. But we do not always agree with everything they tell us:

a) While some of us accept their teachings and do what they say without question.
b) Others, however, rebel and don't want to follow their rules.

Both types of children act in ways that become more like habits as they grow. What are the good and bad things about these two *basic choices?*



Ada's Obedience

> A lady named Ada is used to following rules and listening to the advice of her parents and bosses. She lives a quiet life and takes care of her family. In her free time, she talks on the phone or goes on the Internet to keep in touch with the people she knows. But she doesn't want to get too close to them.
>
> Her day is busy. In the evening, after helping her children get ready for bed, she sits down with her husband to watch TV and relax. But she is so tired and not really focused, that she only talks to him a little. All the tasks she does throughout the day take a lot of her energy. But is it enough for her to be seen as an extraordinary woman who is respected and liked by many people?

Ada has chosen to always listen to others and do what they say, which is the *basic choice "a"*. Her sister Eve didn't like this and thought Ada was too accommodating and lacked character. Now, that Eve "understands things better," she still thinks her sister is wrong: "Ada *has been obedient* all her life. First to her parents, then to her husband and children. And what does Ada get in return? Their *approval*. When we were children, Ada's choice made her more loved than me. But now, why does she keep doing it?"

Ada has gotten *used to* obeying others.

It has become her habit, and she doesn't even realize it.

Basic choices are often "not conscious."

Ada has set aside her instincts and intuition to seek the approval of others. This may bring her some benefits, but how is she really

living? She lets other people or circumstances decide for her. It's up to her to decide what to do and follow certain rules. But now she's stuck in a habit that's hard to change. Why should she not dream of revolutionizing everything and starting a new life, free from obligations and duties?

But can she still find her own space in such an established situation? And how could she do it without feeling guilty?

When things are already set up in a certain way, it can be easier to just go along with it. You don't question or change anything. Ada might say:

"Isn't it important in life to learn to adapt?"

To some extent it is important to learn how to adapt. But there should be a limit. Ada, pretending to adapt, is actually giving up on her own choices and ignoring her dreams. She allows herself to be controlled by others and circumstances. But do they really understand what *she* wants? Will they help her fulfill her desires?

Who knows her problems and needs better than she does?

But how far does Ada's choice affect us? Let's talk about it.

Ada always listens to what other people tell her to do and doesn't think much about what she wants for herself. This is called her "basic choice," and it's something she's been doing for a long time *without realizing it*. But is it really the best way for her to live? Maybe not.

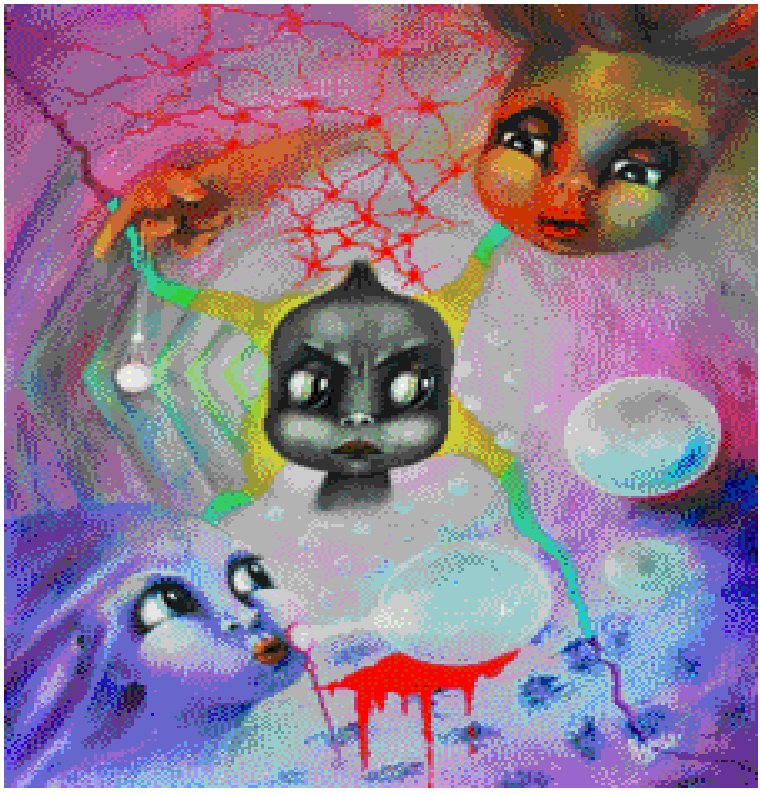
Sometimes we also do things just because other people tell us to, without thinking about what we really want. This can be easy and make us feel like we fit in, but is it really the best thing for us? This choice affects our whole life. So, should we try to change this habit and do the opposite? Let's find out what happens to Eve, who made a different choice than Ada.



Eve is a Rebel

> Eve doesn't like to follow the rules or do what other people want her to do. When someone tries to give her advice, she gets upset because she wants to make her own decisions. She is a strong, intelligent person who knows what she wants. She lives on her own, is independent, and does well at her job.

She is different from Ada, but Ada doesn't see it as a good thing. She has her own ideas about her sister: "Eve seems confident and knows what she wants. But does she really know? Is it really a free choice if she's just reacting to what others do or want? She sees herself as independent, but she is alone."



The Power of NO; acrylic painting on canvas – Aurora Mazzoldi

For Eve, rebellion means going against what others do or suggest. This is true even if it means ignoring her own goals and desires. She focuses more on resisting than on doing what is really important to her. She doesn't think much before she acts. As a result, she doesn't pay much attention to her instincts or intuition. It's like she's a child who always sticks out her tongue in defiance.

So, what does Eve think of Ada? "Ada is like a child who always puts her head down and goes along with what others say."

Which one of the two sisters is right? Does one of them think carefully before making important decisions? Or do they both just react to what others do or want?

It was also important for me to find out which one of them made the better choice. What could I learn from them?

I have a friend named Gabriel who likes to talk to me about these things. So, I told him about the lives of sisters Ada and Eve and the basic choices they made.

"Gabriel, what do you think of their life choices? Which one of them made the better choice?"

"What's the difference?" he asked. And he explained:

"Ada goes along with things, and Eve goes against them. They have different ways of living, but they are both stuck in opposite routines. Even though their decisions seem different, they are automatic and expected. Both Ada and Eve *don't act, they just react* to what others do or want. Both Ada and Eve focus only on the daily events and routines of life. They feel comfortable because they fit into these patterns. Although they appear to be happy with their lives, are they really? They have good jobs and are financially secure. But deep down, are they happy? If they are not, they could listen to their instincts. But the fear of breaking out of their routine is holding them back. There are other options in between, but the fear of change is holding them back."

"But they act differently!"

"Yes, their behavior may seem different, but the result is the same. They are both following a habit they learned as children. It's like they are acting in a play.

. The play already has a script. They are just playing the main characters according to it. So even though they look different on the outside, they are following the same pattern."

We have just seen two *basic choices*. We may think that the choices Ada and Eve make don't affect us. But isn't it more helpful to ask ourselves if we make similar choices? Similarly,

where do we set boundaries in our own lives? Do we choose to follow rules or to defy them?

These questions are good tests. They reveal whether we are taking the first step toward a life focused on our dreams and goals.



Lost in the World of Emotions

Most people live like Ada and Eve. They focus on everyday things and connect only with the physical world. It seems to be the most obvious way to live. It's the world we can experience with our senses, the one we can touch and see... But is that the only world we're living in?

Even things we can't see, touch, or hear can affect our lives. Let's take electricity, for example. We use it without realizing it's there, yet we rely on it all the time. We turn on lights. We start car engines and take elevators. We use computers, washing machines, and televisions. This energy is available to us, and we often use it without even thinking about it. But, when it's not there, we get frustrated and realize how important it is. It is the same with our emotions.

We can go through life without paying too much attention to our emotions and what they're telling us. But how long can we do that? Eventually, something interrupts our routine. That thing causes a great emotional reaction, like a storm.

That's when we realize that our emotions have been trying to tell us something all along.



Walter's Story

This is the story of a young man named Walter. He has trouble sleeping at night and feels restless during the day. He has problems at work because he can't concentrate. Even though Walter tries to ignore his feelings, they won't go away. He goes to the doctor and takes some medicine to help him relax and sleep better, but it doesn't solve his problems.

Walter realizes that he's feeling the same way he did when his baby brother was born years ago. He felt that his mother didn't pay attention to him anymore, and he was afraid of losing her. Now, he feels the same way with Helen; she's emotionally distant, and he's afraid of losing her. Even though nothing else in his life has changed, Walter feels like he's sick.

He realizes that his illness may not be physical or mental, but emotional. Now, if it is an emotional illness, then there must be an "emotional body." Walter realized that his emotional body has been sick since he was a child. Therefore, the breakup with Helen just brought those feelings back to the surface.

Something strange is happening to Walter. He has been carrying a deep emotional pain since childhood, and the situation with Helen has made him more aware of it. There is also another problem: In the real world, we only experience the present moment. But when Walter delves into his "emotional body" and connects with his feelings, it's harder for him to

separate the present from the past. Past and present become intermingled, and he feels the same fear of being left alone that he felt a long time ago. So, he can't tell if the fear is from then or now.

Walter has no control over his feelings, and he cannot understand why he continues to feel this way. He knows that his relationship with Helen may not be completely over. It could become a strong friendship. However, Walter cannot shake the feeling that he has lost her and is no longer loved. He feels that they are on different wavelengths. He feels that the invisible bond that once connected them has been broken. He thinks of their relationship as similar to the way radio waves work. "Helen and I are now tuned to different frequencies."

How did this happen? Where does he find the key to understanding and dealing with this complex system?

He takes the pills prescribed by his doctor. These pills help him stay calm, and that's true. But how much do they really help him? Are they restoring his emotional balance and alleviating his suffering? Do they do this without making him too sleepy or dulling his emotions? The pills he takes have only a partial effect on him.
Walter has realized that there is an "emotional body" that is different from the physical body. So, he thinks that the pills, which are made of matter, can only help the physical body and not the emotional body. The pills relax him physically. But this effect is short-lived and does not help his emotional problems. His doctor agrees. So, he thinks it would be good for him to see a psychotherapist who can help him deal with his emotional problems. He needs "emotional pills".

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Dealing with Our Inner Struggles

Sometimes, we don't know how to achieve the things that are important to us. We have left many of our desires and dreams unfulfilled. We feel unhappy and disappointed, and we end up fighting with our inner parts that don't help us get what we want. But this inner struggle has consequences.



Gilda Feels Unfairly Treated by Life

Gilda is not happy with her body. She is of average height and a little on the curvy side, but she wishes she could be tall and thin. In fact, she doesn't like her dark eyes and doesn't accept the first signs of wrinkles. They make her feel unattractive. Every time she looks in the mirror, she feels that life is unfair to her. She doesn't appreciate her body, rejects it, and even hates it. She can't stand it.

So, she unintentionally ignores her body and lets it deteriorate faster. Gilda wants to appear perfect, but she doesn't take any steps to improve herself. It's the same with her car. She doesn't take care of it or try to make it work better. She gets angry when it doesn't go fast enough, drives it on bumpy roads, and neglects to take care of it.

One day, Gilda's friend Rosanna got tired of listening to her complaints. She said angrily, "I am

> not as beautiful as you think I am. My body, like many others, doesn't captivate anyone, and no one turns their head to look at me on the street. But it's healthy and reasonably attractive. That's enough for me to have a good life and be liked by people I feel connected to. Are you sure your problem is just about your look? But if it is all about how you look, why not try to live a healthier life and take better care of your appearance? How can you expect others to appreciate your body if you do not like it? For example, would you buy something from a salesman who talks bad about his own products?"

I asked Gabriel:

"What makes Walter and Gilda so sad? Is there something they share?"

Gabriel said:

"Gilda sees her body as an enemy and gives it too much importance. As a result, she is caught up in the cares and worries of the material world. Walter, on the other hand, doesn't know how to let go of a false idea of happiness. He feels lost in his emotions."

"Why do they seem to live in different worlds?" I am curious about this.

"Emotions are energies that we feel within ourselves. Gilda is more interested in the things of the physical world around her. She likes its hard vibrations. In fact, the vibrations we find attractive attract our attention. They allow us to feel the emotions we want and to have the experiences we choose without us even realizing it. The right situations come together at the right time and in the right way."

"But what happens when a situation becomes too difficult to bear?"

"To deal with difficult situations, we have developed a way to shield ourselves. Even though it doesn't really work, we still use it for some reasons:

- "We don't know any other way to deal with things.
- "Fear keeps us from trying other solutions.
- "We have gotten used to reacting this way and feel stuck.

"This defense system is like a dam made of tension in our muscles. This dam stops the emotions that come from a particular vibration. As a result:

"We end up blocking ourselves. We block the vibrations and emotions that we wanted to feel."

"Why do we keep doing this if it's not working?"

"I understand why you're curious. In fact, closure can sometimes be helpful in staying safe in the physical world:

• "When the weather is bad, I can protect myself by staying in my house.

• "I use doors, windows, locks, and padlocks to keep people and animals away from me.

• "If there is a bombing, I can stay safe by hiding in a bomb shelter.

• "And when I feel cold, I wear warm and thick clothes to keep the cold away from me.

"In fact, physical bodies cannot pass through each other. [2]

"That's why sometimes it's important to shut ourselves off in certain situations.

"But this rule only applies to the physical world.

"In the emotional world, we don't need to use physical methods, such as tensing our muscles. Using physical techniques in the emotional world doesn't give us the results we want.

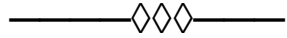
"In the emotional world, bodies can connect with each other. Collective feelings of joy, fear, etc. can affect them.

"For example, during a war or an earthquake, everyone can feel the panic spreading. The more we try to avoid it, the more energy we waste. So, we may become exhausted and stop fighting. Then the panic takes us in unexpected directions."

"But fear stops us in our tracks. We should fight it!"—I object.

"Instead of fighting fear in an unequal battle, it's more important to look for solutions. We need to stay calm and neutral to deal with the situation. But the closure we activate to keep fear away makes it hard for us to relax. We try so hard to keep fear out and prevent it from overwhelming us. We do this '*because we are afraid of being afraid.*' But the more we fight it, the more energy it drains from us.

Eventually, we're left with very little energy to deal with it, and the fear becomes even stronger."



Closure and Dissatisfaction

Sometimes people try to stop the emotions they don't like and push them away. But those emotions are already in them. If you shut them up, the emotions cannot come out and they get trapped.

Some of these closures make our daily lives more difficult and increase our fears. When we shut down our emotions, it makes it difficult for us to connect with others. We become defensive and

wall ourselves off, even when we want to be close to someone. Even when we feel a strong urge to be with someone, our automatic defense mechanism kicks in. We try to protect ourselves. We avoid getting emotionally close and end up feeling unsatisfied deep inside.



Catherine Avoids Showing Her Emotions

Catherine doesn't show her emotions. Why is that?

She was a loving child. But her father and brother often teased her by saying, "Look, the little lady! Come here, Katy, give me a kiss," and they would laugh out loud. From then on, she was ashamed to show affection. It affected her whole life.

Even when she got married, nothing changed, and having children didn't make a difference. Even though she knew how to take care of them, she couldn't respond to their requests for hugs and cuddles. She acted more like a strict caretaker than a loving mother.

But everyone thought Catherine was a wonderful wife and a loving mother. But the truth is that Catherine felt overwhelmed by her husband. He always wanted to be near her and expected intimacy. So, she did her job: she kept the house clean and took care of the family as best she could. Even though it felt boring and tedious.

> But when Catherine's husband died, she felt completely lost. The way she used to live and everything that was important to her was gone. She didn't know how to start over and get her life back on track.
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> With time, Catherine's pain faded. She felt somewhat relieved, with fewer responsibilities and more freedom. But because she was used to keeping people at a distance, she couldn't make the most of her new situation. Her emotional closure led her to isolate herself even more. She didn't go out much to avoid running into neighbors she found too nosy. Since she didn't trust anyone, she felt safe only in her apartment. She cut herself off from the rest of the world, as if she were hiding in a shell.

Catherine thinks she feels safe because of her isolation. But she still feels empty and bored. She only accepts feeling some emotions because she is afraid to feel others that are much stronger. These emotions are hidden deep within her, and she fears them.

Gabriel would explain that "Catherine's constant need to defend herself:

is a basic choice she has made because she's afraid.

Over time, it has become a habit for her and has become very fixed.

But why does she continue to act the way her family did and not let her friendly nature shine through? She has become insecure and doesn't trust any form of connection with others. She sees

everyone as an enemy and feels that the world is a threat to her. So, she feels the need to protect herself all the time.

This has become a habit. Over time, this habit has become permanent. In easier situations, she defends herself less because she does not see them as dangerous. But that remains an exception.

And so, she lives in a constant state of alert.

Catherine is not an unusual case. In a society as competitive as ours, many of us live this way. But does that mean they still have the freedom to choose?

Gabriel says, "Catherine still has some choices. But the constant fear she feels limits her decisions. It keeps her in a small space where she feels safe. In that space, she isolates herself more and more from others. So, she has fewer opportunities to make different choices."

Is it possible to change and get out of this situation? When we are unhappy and disappointed, it's important to pay attention to those feelings. Instead of pushing them away, we can ask ourselves some questions:

"What do I need that I don't have?"

"Why am I so frustrated?"

When we ask these questions, something interesting happens. We can't just push them aside; they stick with us like an annoying grain of sand that gets caught in the gears of a machine. It's like a little reminder that there might be something we need to address. The discomfort we feel pushes us to explore ourselves in new ways. It makes us look within for answers.

Instead of looking in the mirror to find what's wrong with us, we shift our focus. We don't look for flaws to fix. Instead, we pay attention to ourselves and observe what's going on inside. Let's listen to ourselves and trust our instincts. It's like opening a door to our inner wisdom and intuition.

Then we might realize that some of our decisions were based on reason alone. [3] And some of our reactions were automatic and not well thought out. They weren't as reasonable as we thought they were. But we have been reluctant to question them and seek clarity. It's hard to question reasoning when it seems unquestionable.

But appearances can be deceiving. When we reason, we often consider only the past. But the future won't be exactly like the past, because things are always changing and evolving.

"Do not be like some people. They live in a foreign country but refuse to change their habits and adapt." Gabriel advises. "How can their old habits protect them in the new environment?"

You can't predict the future, but you can make some guesses if you let go of false certainties.

When we look at our emotions, our likes and dislikes, and our weaknesses, we can understand more. We may have ignored some things before because they seemed "irrational." But they can help us see the bigger picture. We won't just rely on common sense. We'll look beyond it and come up with new solutions to test in the real world.

