

Here's another example. One of my friends spent three months selecting a digital camera from two nearly identical models. When he finally made his selection, I asked him how many photo opportunities had he missed, how much of his valuable time he had spent making the selection, and how much he would have paid to have digital pictures of his family and friends documenting the last three months. More than the price of the camera, he said. Has something like this ever happened to you?

What my friend (and also the donkey and Congress) failed to do when focusing on the similarities and minor differences between two things was to take into account the *consequences of not deciding*. The donkey failed to consider starving, Congress failed to consider the lives lost while it debated highway legislation, and my friend failed to consider all the great pictures he was missing, not to mention the time he was spending at Best Buy. More important, they all failed to take into consideration the relatively minor differences that would have come with either one of the decisions.

My friend would have been equally happy with either camera; the donkey could have eaten either bale of hay; and the members of Congress could have gone home crowing over their accomplishments, regardless of the slight difference in bills. In other words, they all should have considered the decision an easy one. They could have even flipped a coin (figuratively, in the case of the donkey) and gotten on with their lives. But we don't act that way, because we just can't close those doors.

ALTHOUGH CHOOSING BETWEEN two very similar options should be simple, in fact it is not. I fell victim to this very