

# Making a Commitment

by Gerard McGinnity

Sylvia Plath, the American poet, describing a person unable to risk commitment, in “The Bell Jar” captures the sensation very precisely:

"I saw my life branching out before me like the green fig tree in the story. From the tip of the branch, like a fat purple fig, a wonderful future beckoned and winked. One fig was a husband and a happy home and children, and another fig was a famous poet and another fig was a brilliant professor, and another fig was Ee Gee the amazing editor and another fig was Europe and Africa and South America, and another fig was an Olympic lady crew champion, and beyond and above all these figs were many more figs I could not quite make out.

I saw myself sitting in this fig free, starving to death, just because I couldn't make up my mind which of the figs I would choose. I wanted each and every one of them, but choosing one meant losing all the rest, and as I sat there, unable to decide the figs began to wrinkle and go black, and one by one, they plopped to the ground at my feet."

The fearful person, the passive person, the indecisive person, the wavering person ends up an unhappy person, and unfulfilled person, a fragmented person. Trying to keep all options open, we realize none of them.

We forge our future by commitment. Otherwise, if we face it passively we are letting it be determined by everyone and everything except ourselves.

A commitment enables us to take control of our lives. We shape them by the goals we set ourselves. A goal which we really want gives a focal point to our lives because as our lives unfold, we evaluate all the opportunities that come our way in the light of our goal: we accept some and reject others, depending on how they help us achieve that goal.