

# When It's All Too Much

By Barry Schwartz, in *Parade Magazine*

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## Vocabulary

**stunned** – very surprised

**sputtered** – say with a stutter

**scrutinized** – looked at carefully

**turned out** – ended up

**trivial** – minor, unimportant

**unbearable** – awful, intolerable

**autonomy** – independence

**escalate** – increase

**overloaded** – too full, overwhelmed

**tyrannize** – oppress, terrorize

**array** – variety

**retirement pension plan** – savings program for when you

retire (stop working)

**cosmetic surgery** – operation to make you look better

(more handsome/beautiful)

**affluence** – wealth, riches

**prosperity** = affluence

**clinically depressed** – very sad

**accumulating evidence** – more and more data, proof

**masters of our fates** – in control of our lives

**remunerative** – well-paying

**settle for** – accept (something that is less than the best)

**paralysis** – an inability to move, make a decision

**agonize about** – worry greatly about

**in the driver's seat** – in control

**unattainable** – impossible to reach

**lethal** – deadly

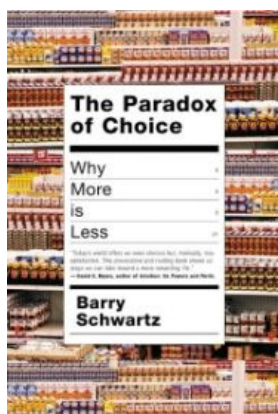
**paradox** – contradiction, conflict

**pinnacle** – top

**awash in** – surrounded by, covered by

**material abundance** = prosperity, affluence, having many possessions

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Read the article by psychologist Barry Schwartz and answer these questions. Tell where in the article you found the answer and explain it.

1. **T F** The author was unable to find a pair of jeans he really liked at the Gap.
2. **T F** Having no choice at all is preferable to having too much.
3. What are some examples of choices Americans now have to make that they did not in the past.
4. **T F** If a person has more choices, that will usually make him/her happier.
5. **T F** Americans are less happy now than 30 years ago.
6. Why do our expectations cause us to be less happy?
7. What are maximizers? Why are they less happy than others? (Are you one?)
8. **T F** People who actually have cancer want to be in charge of their treatment decisions.
9. What is the effect of believing that if we fail it is entirely our fault?
10. What is the “paradox” of modern life, according to Schwartz?
11. In your opinion, is this a uniquely American problem, or does it affect your country as well?