

14 Tips on Making the Best Decision

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Life is a series of decisions. While some decisions are easy to make, such as choosing breakfast, more difficult choices can put us in a decision paralysis. The important thing to remember is that you want your decision based on solid information, not knee-jerk emotion. Here are some tips on how to reach an informed decision:

1. Listen to and trust your instincts. Don't fight what your instincts are telling you, but think deeply about what they're saying. Gut instincts can be a tool that helps you identify reasonability and sources of biased information. Keep in mind that gut instincts can only do so much and that other steps are necessary to avoid poor decisions based on oversight or impulsiveness.
2. Consider your choices. What are your alternatives? Think of every option and write them down so you can organize your thoughts.
3. Once you are aware of the possibilities, research information on each option. Looking deeper into each choice allows for your decision to be developed from an informed position. When researching, consider the sources. You want your information to be reliable and credible. A source that only tells you what you want to hear may be keeping you from the truth of the situation. Be aware if the source has a hidden agenda or bias.
4. Conduct a situation analysis. This will help you determine the reason the decision must be made and what would happen if no action was taken. Think about who and what your decision will impact.
5. Determine the costs and benefits of the options available. Do the possible benefits justify the costs that would be incurred with each option?

6. Consider the risks and rewards of each option also. What are the risks of each option? And are the rewards worth the risks? Take a moment to think about the possible consequences of each option.
7. Write down a simple pros/cons lists of each option. Some things that could be included may go beyond costs and benefits and risks and rewards. Think about how your decisions could affect other aspects and elements of your daily life.
8. Step back from the situation and allow time to help you in your decision. Distance can help your perspective and allow you to separate the raw emotion out of your decision.
9. Be honest with yourself and evaluate your emotional temperature. Consider if short-term reactionary emotions may be playing into your motivations for each decision. If you're having difficulty separating yourself from strong emotions, imagine what advice you'd give to friend in that situation, and why.
10. Sound out your ideas to peers. Consider their input, but you don't have to follow everyone's advice. This is an opportunity to hear how others see the situation and the options. Try to see the situation from different viewpoints. Encourage scrutiny from others and listen to their criticism. Criticize yourself by imagining how you would feel if you decision was on the front page of the newspaper or how you'd feel about your decision when you're 70.
11. Reflect on past decisions. History is a great indicator of the future. How have other decisions worked in the past? Keep these past outcomes in mind and determine if you need to approach this decision differently than you have previously.
12. Check with your internal compass and determine what you see as the right thing to do. That doesn't mean it will be the easiest choice, but your decision should be based on what you think is right. Even when faced with controversy, stick to your value system and don't compromise your integrity.

13. Make a decision. This may be the hardest step since it requires you to avoid being stuck in the analysis process. Be motivated to take action and stand by your decision.

14. Don't be afraid of regret or failure. If you've realized you've made a wrong decision, don't be afraid to follow a contingency plan. These aspects often lead to other decisions and opportunities to succeed.

These tips on decision making can help you determine the best option. And remember, there are always more decisions to be made, so learn from your accomplishments and mistakes.