

Making Decisions

Most people are indecisive by nature, so the process of making decisions is usually a difficult one. Even people who seem as if they have their lives in order sometimes do not make smart, timely decisions. This often happens because they never learned the skills of good decision making.

Often you can avoid poor decisions if you consider all the different reactions that could happen as a result of your decision. You must consider the consequences of your decision for yourself and for others.

One example of a famously bad decision happened in 1938. Joe Shuster and Jerry Siegel sold the rights to their comic-strip character Superman, a creation later worth millions, for \$130, or \$65 each. More recently, Sergey Brin and Larry Page, the partners who developed the Google Web search engine, offered to merge with Yahoo! in 1998 for a small parcel of stock. Yahoo! turned them down, and now Google is worth \$20 billion. Whoops!

You can encounter all sorts of problems when faced with the task of making a decision. Under pressure to come up with a conclusion, you may not consider all the consequences of your choice. You may be less informed than you should be, blinded by misinformation, or led by your emotions—all situations that could impair your ability to think logically and clearly. You may choose your easiest option in haste, even if it is not the best choice. Or you may choose *not* to decide at all, allowing someone else to make your decision for you.

Directing Your Life



Sometimes people have such difficulty when they are faced with making a decision that they cannot cope well. These are the folks who let events in their lives unfold around them and react to situations after they occur rather than deciding what they should do about a problem in advance. These people cannot take charge of their lives. They cannot seem to make decisions needed to promote positive change. In order to avoid falling into this trap, it's important to learn how to fully think about and consider all of your choices and options. Consider your desires and immediate needs, but also consider how your decision will affect those around you now and over time. In addition to your own needs and desires, consider how your decision will affect others. One way to do this is to ask other people for their advice. However, you must be able to see for yourself what is good for you and

what is not. This is difficult for people who cannot choose one option over another. Instead of standing up for themselves, they try to say yes to everyone. An important part of decision making is learning how to say no.

The ability to evaluate situations clearly will help you throughout your life. Often you can avoid poor decisions if you consider all the different reactions that could happen as a result of your decision. You must consider the consequences of your decision for yourself and for others.

Would you cheat on a test? Would you deal drugs? Would you physically attack someone? Would you steal? Many people who make these mistakes find themselves cornered in bad situations from which they cannot find an escape. Often their difficulties are the result of a series of poor decisions. If they had further evaluated their options, they may have not ended up in their current situation. They might not be in trouble or might not have broken the law.

You are already making many decisions for yourself, although you may not realize it. As you get older, however, your decisions become more complicated. Life can seem confusing and chaotic. To prevent yourself from becoming overwhelmed, take a little bit of time to stop and learn the skills of good decision making. You will be glad you did.

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