

Application

Asking tools for helping people look at decisions from multiple angles.

Decision Making

Developing the ability to make great decisions is a key part of living a purposeful life. Here are some questions for exploring the client's process for making decisions.

- *"How will you make that decision?"*
- *"What factors will make the most difference to you?"*
- *"What do you need to know to make a great decision?"*
- *"What would a great decision look like?"*
- *"How do you usually make decisions?"*
- *"What other decision strategies could you use? Which methods do you want to try?"*

Thirteen Decision-Making Strategies

Sometimes people are unaware of the decision-making process they are using, or of what other strategies are available. This list contains 13 common decision-making styles. Use it to help the client identify the strategies that are most comfortable and familiar, and what new strategies could be explored. Running a major decision through several strategies can be very revealing.

1. **Rational:** *"What are the pros and cons of pursuing each option? Which is most advantageous?"*
2. **Intuitive:** *"What is your gut saying? What feels right to you?"*
3. **Relational:** *"How will this course of action affect the people around you? Who will benefit, who will be hurt?"*
4. **Principled:** *"How do the key principles and priorities you live by apply here?"*
5. **Alignment:** *"How well does this decision align with your passions, your values, and your calling?"*
6. **Decisive:** *"What approach would most quickly lead you to a decision here?"*
7. **Adaptive:** *"What decisions could be left open to allow for new information or options? What things must be decided now that cannot be put off for later?"*
8. **Counsel:** *"What does your spouse think? How about some key friends or advisors?"*
9. **Team:** *"What do your team members think? What would happen if you decided as a team?"*
10. **Spiritual:** *"What decision would best align with your faith? What is God saying to you on this?"*
11. **Negative Drives:** *"What fears or inner drives are influencing your response? How could you remove those things from the equation so you can make a better decision?"*
12. **Cost:** *"What would it cost in terms of time and resources to do this? What would it cost you if you **don't** do this? What's the cost if you don't decide or let circumstances overtake you?"*
13. **Risk/Reward:** *"What is the payoff for each option? The risk? Can you live with the worst-case outcome? What steps could minimize the risk if you went with this?"*

Exercise: Decision Making Strategies

Get together with a peer coach or friend who faces a major decision. First, explore how they've thought through things to this point. Can you help them identify their preferred decision-making strategy?

Then walk the person through at least three more of the strategies at right. What did you both learn by trying some new approaches and looking at the decision from different angles?

Perspectives

One of the strengths of team decision-making is that you hear different perspectives on the problem from people with different personalities or positions. Decisions taken alone tend to see things from only one point of view. One very effective coaching technique is to walk the individual through several different viewpoints as they approach the decision:

- *You are a high 'I' on the DiSC inventory. What would a high 'D' do here? How about an 'S'?"*
- *"Take two people you know well, and talk me through how they would make this decision. What factors would be important to them? What would they prioritize? What can you learn from how they would approach this decision?"*
- *"Take a few minutes and walk me through the perspectives of the people this decision will affect. How does this change their lives? What is important to them here? How would they feel about each option?"*
- *Create scenarios that illustrate the impact of the decision. For instance: "Imagine you are a customer that's been doing business with your firm for many years. One day you get a notice that the policy we've been discussing is changing. What do you think of the change? How does it affect your business? Your future?"*
- *"Imagine you are at the end of your life looking back on this decision. From that perspective, what will seem most important? What will seem less important than it does now?"*
- *"You've invested a lot in this project so far. Step back for a minute and imagine that you had invested nothing up to this point—that it wouldn't cost you a dime or a minute of your time to walk away. How would that affect your decision?"*

Taking on a New Commitment

Leaders are people who can see opportunities and want to pursue new things to make life richer. So when you coach leaders, you are almost always coaching busy people. That means that when new opportunities come along, the key challenge is keeping life in balance. These questions are focused around exploring whether to say "Yes!" to a new opportunity:

- *"What's exciting about this new opportunity? What makes this worth pursuing?"*
- *"What concerns do you have about this? What will it cost?"*
- *"How does this align with your purpose and mission in life?"*
- *"Take a look at this new commitment from a resource perspective. Sketch out a plan for where the time and energy will come from to do this well."*
- *"I get the impression your schedule is pretty full already—it is for most leaders. So what will you stop doing to make room for this new commitment?"*
- *"Do you feel any external pressure to go a certain way? What is your heart saying?"*
- *"Can this wait? What are the implications of putting the decision on hold for a bit?"*
- *"If you say 'Yes' now, how likely is it that in a month you'll wish you'd said, 'No?'"*

Being vs. Doing

Helping the client tune in to how s/he is being shaped by the decision itself and the process of making the decision can be a powerful conversation.

- *"Who are you **becoming** through this decision? How is it shaping your identity?"*
- *"What can you learn from this process about becoming a great decision-maker?"*
- *"What do your emotions in this decision reveal about the inner you? How do you want to respond to those insights?"*
- *"What does being faced with this decision now say about where you're at in life?"*



Quotes...

"One does not discover new lands without consenting to lose sight of the shore."

Andre Gide



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