

Workplace Relationships

Decision making: Suggestions for Making Informed Choices

Life involves choices. Decision-making skills are tools you can use to make informed choices in your life. Like all great skills, good decision-making takes time and practice. Here are some key steps that can help make the right decisions.

Isolate the problem

Often things aren't exactly what they seem, so look at the problem from all angles, including its opposite. Avoid looking at the symptoms and try to get to the heart of the matter.

You might find yourself redefining the problem a number of different ways before you settle on something that feels right. Once you have isolated the problem, write it down. This will help to keep you focused as you go through the decision-making process.

Decide to take action

Once you've identified the problem, ask yourself if you need to take action right now.

Recognize that you are making a decision by answering "Yes" or "No" to this first question.

Sometimes the best answer is to do nothing, but don't confuse the decision to do nothing with mere delay or avoidance of an uncomfortable situation.

Gather resources

In an ideal world, you will be able to get all the facts or be able to consult with an expert before you take action. In reality, this is sometimes not possible. Gather as many resources as you can.

Avoid delaying a decision solely because you don't have time to track down every single fact.

This comes dangerously close to procrastination!

Make a plan

Now that you have analyzed your problem and have looked at it from many different sides, decide how you will carry out your decision.

Write down your plan in bullet form.

Test the plan and take action

It's impossible to accurately anticipate the outcome of any decision, so decision-making involves a certain degree of risk.

Test your plan by visualizing the potential outcome of the decision.

Don't be afraid to count on your intuition – if your decision doesn't feel quite right to you, it probably isn't.

If your decision still feels right, take the required action to make your plan happen.

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