

# Indecisive to Decided

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We make decisions over and over again. Choices can be made quickly, spontaneously, under duress or with great care and considerable planning. Many decisions may seem inconsequential such as deciding what to eat for breakfast. However, if each morning we ingest fatty foods we could create obesity, diabetes or a heart attack. Decisions repeatedly acted upon become habits. Habits form our life structure. Changing habits requires firm resolutions.

The more important the result or outcome of a decision the more thought and consideration is warranted. Years ago, after being rejected for a job facilitating women's groups I discussed the situation with my support group. With their encouragement I called the interviewers back to gather information. I asked what weaknesses I could change and what suggestion they had for improvement. Two years later I re-applied and was hired.

For major decisions consulting with others is a useful move. They can view your situation from an objective perspective. They can ask clarifying questions, brainstorm options, help identify the advantages and disadvantages of each alternative and hold you accountable to take action. However, please avoid leaning on others to make your decisions. If you ask the common, "What would you do if you were me?" ask at least three wise people. Your decision needs to be *your* responsibly.

## Ten Tips for Key Decisions

1. Define the problem or opportunity.
2. Collect pertinent information.
3. Brainstorm a list of options with your support people. Seven or more is recommended.
4. Narrow the list by choosing the options aligned with your values.
5. Narrow the list to two or three options by considering the advantages and disadvantages while avoiding over-analysis.
6. Notice your gut reaction. The gut reaction is usually the most accurate.
7. Make your decision.
8. Decide when and where to take action.
9. Take action.
10. Evaluate.

## *Up- Against-a-Deadline Decisions*

When under pressure we are more apt to make decisions resulting in unnecessary pain, time and money.

## Ten Tips for Quick Decisions

1. If you foresee a potentially damaging situation create a back-up plan.
2. Have a clear job description and know your organization's policies and guidelines.
3. Breathe. Feel your feet. Calm yourself. Go with your gut. Typically, your head will argue and your heart will want to please.
4. Imagine a very wise person. Ask yourself, "What would 'Lois' do in this situation?"
5. Believe, "It's OK to make the best choice possible with the available information."
6. Take action.
7. Accept that sometimes mistakes happen.
8. Use mistakes to learn how to make a better decision next time.
9. Take responsibility for your part.
10. Celebrate and acknowledge yourself when your decision has a successful impact.

## Delegation Decisions

Susan Scott, author of *Fierce Conversations*, was given a task delegation guideline. Ideally using the *Decision Tree* employees move up from *root* to *leaf* as their competence is demonstrated. Here is a summary to help you decide who makes what decisions.

1. *Leaf decisions* are acted upon by the employee responsible for the task. No reporting is necessary.
2. *Branch decisions* are made by the employee but require reporting to management daily, weekly or monthly.
3. *Trunk decisions* are acted upon after the employee checks with management.
4. *Root decisions* are made jointly with management and/or team. They are crucial and have potentially high impact on the organization.

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