

HOW TO MAKE DIFFICULT DECISIONS

212° CAREERS

Leadership and Career Coaching
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SPECIAL REPORT



This report includes **nine powerful tips** and **three actionable steps** you can take immediately.

It also includes a list of **suggested readings** for even more information.

TOP TIPS

Decisions, decisions. Sometimes it isn't easy to decide what you should do. Fortunately, you can do a few things to make tough choices easier. Here are nine proven practices for making difficult decisions less challenging.

1. Pump the Brakes

Don't rush the process. If you're struggling to make a tough decision, it's probably because the ramifications of your choices can be positively or negatively impactful in a big way. Take your time. Don't rush into a decision. You might find that slowing down the process makes it easier to choose your path.

2. Create a Reasonable Deadline

Big decisions shouldn't be rushed. You also shouldn't allow them to live in your mind forever. A deadline is a good way to keep a difficult decision-making process from taking too much time and negatively affecting other areas of your life.

3. Get Help

There's nothing wrong with letting others help you when you don't know what to do. Unless you have to go solo for some reason, getting experienced help in any decision-making process makes sense.

4. Use the Clint Eastwood List

Clint Eastwood was a popular actor who starred in a movie titled "The Good, the Bad and the Ugly." If you have a tough decision to face, steal from that title. Draw up three lists titled "The Good," "The Bad," and "The Ugly." Then explore the upside to making a decision (the good), the downside (the bad), and the worst possible outcome (the ugly). What is your emotional reaction to these lists? This practice can help you decide on a course of action when you don't know what to do.

5. Embrace the Idea of Failure

You are human. That means you're going to make mistakes, lots of them. We all do. You've failed in the past, and you've dealt with it. Making a decision is easier when you embrace the idea that you can handle a negative outcome.

6. Ask Questions ... Lots of Them

The more difficult a decision-making process is, the more questions you should be asking. The relevancy of your questions is also important. You can ask yourself, people with more information than you, and even Google. Asking smart questions gives you more information, and that can make your decision a lot easier.

7. Understand the Goal

What do you hope to accomplish? Why are you making this decision? Be specific and detailed. If you're struggling to decide, thinking about exactly why you are considering one course of action over another can help you decide.

8. Step Away

If your brain is about to explode because you can't choose what course of action to take, calm down. Step away from the process. Remove yourself from anything that makes you think about the decision you face. You have a better chance of making the right decision when you are relaxed and rested.

9. Revisit Your Past

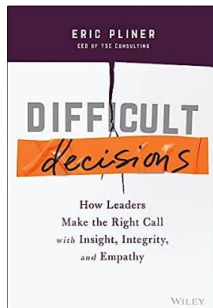
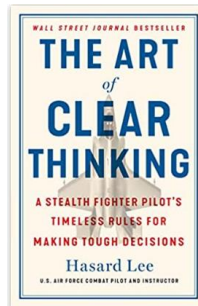
We often make mountains out of molehills. We exaggerate the potentially negative impact of a decision in our minds to the point that we are paralyzed with uncertainty. Think about some time in your past when you did this. Things probably didn't turn out anywhere near as badly as you imagined. Remembering this can remove a lot of fear and anxiety from a tough decision-making process.

FAST-ACTION STEPS

1. Draw up a list of questions that are relevant to the decision you are making. Answer them in detail. Use this input to choose what you will do.
2. Make a list of things you like to do. Store it where you always have access. When decision-making is difficult, take a break and enjoy one of the activities.
3. Are you making a difficult decision? Before you spend too much time and effort on the process, seek help. Get advice from a trusted source.

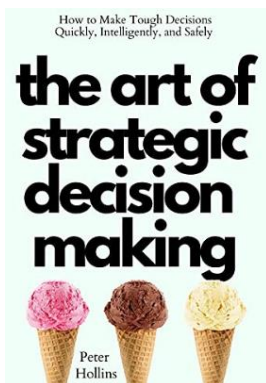
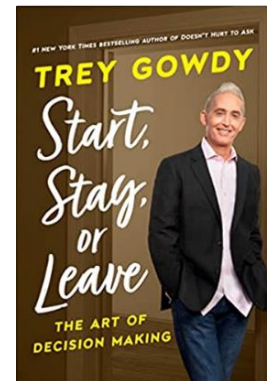
FURTHER READINGS

1. [The Art of Clear Thinking](#)



2. [Difficult Decisions: How Leaders Make the Right Call](#)

3. [Start, Stay, or Leave: The Art of Decision Making](#)



4. [The Art of Strategic Decision-Making](#)

5. [HBR's 10 Must Reads on Making Smart Decisions](#)

