

Be Decisive!

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Decisions, decisions, decisions. Our lives are full of them. Every day, we are faced with decisions that we have to make in all areas of our lives, from simple tasks to relationships to our careers. All of those choices can be overwhelming. Sometimes, we go in circles just thinking about what to do, instead of actually doing something that leads to making a decision.

We've all had those moments, just after we make an important decision, when we begin to question if we did the right thing. Doubting your own judgment can make you feel stressed and anxious, and it can lower your self-esteem. When you trust your judgment, you tend to be less hesitant and less dependent on others. This will help you accomplish more and boost your self-confidence. Making well-informed decisions and taking smart action steps will help us take better control in living our lives, instead of always wondering, "What if..." This three-step plan will help you determine what you really want and help you make a decision that's right for you.

Step 1: Do your research. Good choices are made when all of the facts are known. Facts can be found by reading up on the subject, surfing the Web or asking other people who have had similar experiences. Remember to stick to the specific circumstances related to your situation. Sometimes, too many opinions can be misleading and result in confusion. Weighing all of the options by writing down the pros and cons of each choice will help make a positive effect on your decision.

Example: Lucy has been a CA with Dr. Davis for five years. Dr. Davis has just offered Lucy an additional position to do part-time marketing for their chiropractic office. Lucy has a very important decision to make. The decision: Whether or not to accept the marketing position at her chiropractic office. A good-decision making process begins with listing the pros and cons of each option: in this case, whether or not to accept the new position.

If Lucy chooses to accept the position:

Pros

1. Salary would increase
2. Improving communication skills
3. Getting out into the community
4. Having more fun
5. Helping to build practice
6. Playing a bigger role in the practice

Cons

1. More hours
2. Less time with family
3. Additional workload
4. Having to participate in events outside of office

If Lucy chooses not to accept the position:

Pros

1. Responsibilities would stay the same
2. No pressure of balancing both positions
3. Work the same hours

Cons

1. Disappoint Dr. Davis
2. Salary will not increase
3. No exciting new experiences
4. Not challenging self

After you have made your list, the next step in a good decision-making process is to weigh your pros and cons. Assign each item a number from 1-5 according to its importance to you. Let "1" represent low importance and "5" represent high importance. Then add up the numbers to see how your columns really compare. By creating this list and rating how important the pros and cons of each option are, Lucy is able to make a better, more informed decision.

Step 2: Trust your gut. After you've done your research about your possible choices, you need to pinpoint how you feel about them. The wrong decision is usually made when we go against our gut. Here are some simple exercises that will help you figure out what your gut is telling you:

- Spend a few minutes visualizing each of your choices, with no distractions. In the previous step, Lucy is contemplating whether to accept an additional marketing position. Lucy needs to see what signals her body is sending her by imagining herself calling schools and businesses and setting up speaking engagements for her doctor. Does Lucy feel discomfort or stress? Or is Lucy feeling excited and relaxed about this new venture? Can Lucy see herself growing both personally and professionally for the practice in the future?
- Try the "pick one and sleep on it overnight" method. Lucy thinks she would rather stay with her current position as a chiropractic assistant, and decides to sleep on it. However, when she awakens the next morning, she has a change of heart. She thinks that helping the doctor to grow his practice would be fun and challenging, and she decides to accept the additional marketing position that she was offered.

Step 3: Envision the future. Some sort of risk is involved in making decisions. If one has nothing to lose, the decision would be easy. You've already weighed the pros and cons of each option, and evaluated yourself in each situation by following your instinct. Now, the next step to take is to predict where you will be in the future. Foreseeing yourself in the best and worst possible scenarios will help you to make final decisions.

Scenario # 1 - If Lucy decides to take the marketing position: best-case scenario. Over the next few months, Lucy becomes enthusiastic and the doctor has created a bonus or incentive program for marketing, thus increasing her salary. She is challenged and therefore becomes excited. Her energy level is high and contagious among her co-workers. Lucy has become a true team player and the morale in the office is high.

Scenario # 2 - If Lucy decides to take the marketing position: worst-case scenario. Over the next few months, Lucy begins to feel overwhelmed. Her hours have increased and she is spending less time with her family. She is feeling the stress of not having enough hours in each day, and she is feeling the burden of having to go with the doctor to participate in events outside of the office. Due to the extra workload, she is becoming physically tired and stressed. Even when she is not at work, she has work on her mind.

Scenario #3 - If Lucy decides not to take the marketing position: best-case scenario. Over the next few months, Lucy feels more and more confident about her decision. Dr. Davis commends her for being honest and not accepting a challenge that she did not feel she could handle. Dr. Davis hires an outside marketing team and Lucy is enthusiastic about working with all of the new patients.

Scenario #4 - If Lucy decides not to take the marketing position: worst-case scenario. Over the next few months, Lucy's relationship with Dr. Davis becomes strained. She feels the pressure of her decision in not taking on the new challenge and feels guilty about not helping the practice. She also fears her job may be on the line because the practice is not bringing in enough money to keep all the CAs on staff.

Now that Lucy has completed the three steps, she is ready to make her decision. After being a CA for Dr. Davis for five years, Lucy already has a strong background in the practice and knows how to meet the doctor's expectations. After attending seminars, reading material, and speaking to other practices that have a marketing plan, Lucy is well-aware of the benefits and disadvantages that can come from her decision of taking the marketing position (step 1). Lucy has thought about each option thoroughly and realistically. She can actually picture herself calling schools, businesses and organizations and setting up speaking engagements for her doctor, and is excited about the new challenges awaiting her (step 2). Lucy has been able to assess the best and worst-case scenarios for each option, and has been able to reframe potential risks so that they are no longer as much of an obstacle (step 3). She is aware that she will give up some things of importance; however, they will be replaced with valuable opportunities that will enable her to grow both personally and professionally.

Making a decision doesn't have to be a daunting task. By doing your research, trusting your gut, and envisioning your future, you can be confident and self-assured that the decisions you make are the right ones for you.

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