

Decision Making Strategies

Most people have one or more favorite decision making strategies. Here are several of the most common ones. Do you recognize any as ones you use?

Planner – Rational, logical, step-by-step.

Intuitive – Decisions based on whether it “feels right.”

Impulsive – “Don’t think, just act.” Usually takes the first alternative that comes along.

Fatalistic – Gives up control and lets “fate” decide.

Compliant – Goes along with someone else’s wishes.

Paralytic – “Deer in the headlights.” Knows action is called for, but freezes.

Agonizing – “I can’t make up my mind.” May gather more data than needed.

Delaying – “I’ll think about it later.” The postponement technique.

Safety First – Choose the one with the least risk.

Live Dangerously – Choose the one that is most exciting, regardless of risk.

Traditionalist – Choose the way that everyone has always done it.

Always Correct – Do the one that’s “right.”

Make Things Simple – Choose the easiest alternative.

Some of these strategies can be used productively, some lead to disaster, depending on the circumstances.

Since most of our daily decisions are not made at the conscious, thoughtful level, but more automatically, without planning, it is useful to learn the skill of Planful Decision Making for those major decisions that will impact our lives.

Whatever strategy you use, strive for balance by using both your rational, thinking mind, and your intuition, or gut-level feeling.

Hot and Cool Decisions

Hot:

Consequences are important. Risk is involved.
Involve a great commitment of time and/or money.
Results are difficult and/or expensive to change.
Long-range consequences.
Affect other people.

Cool:

Routine
No significant consequences. Not risky.
Predictable

All hot decisions involve uncertainty; that is one reason for their importance and difficulty. It is not always enough just to know what you prefer. Hot decisions require research, knowledge and thought.