

HOW TO MAKE A GOOD DECISION



COMPARE OPTIONS, pros cons, goals

[1] PROBLEM

- Define the problem: (What is bothering me?) Feelings because of Situation and Thoughts.
 - Use "because" to show root causes (if helpful)
 - What do I want or need?
 - Example: Stressed because I have too much to do because I took on too many responsibilities.
I think I can't keep up. I want to reduce my stress and get the important things done.

[2] QUESTION

- Ask the right question to guide your focus.
 - Examples:
 - How can I solve this problem?
 - How can I achieve this goal?

[3] SOLUTIONS/OPTIONS

- List all possible options (S1, S2, S3...). Brainstorm.
- List all +pros. -cons. (c) concerns for each option.
 - +pros = something good / avoid something bad. also +maybe pro. -maybe con. (benefit, advantage, upside)
 - cons = something bad / lose or miss something good. (cost, disadvantage, downside)
- (?) = Important Question / Unknown → Research. (check credible sources for more information.)

[4] GOALS/NEEDS

- Decide what are your main goals, needs, values and purpose. What is important to you?
- Decide what is your specific goal or need for this specific problem. What outcome do you want?
- Circle major pros and cons. ⊕ = major pro, ⊖ = major con. Ask "Is this helpful or harmful?"

[5] CRITERIA (if helpful)

- Use your goals, needs, values and major pros and cons to set criteria for evaluating options.
- Compare/rate each option using your criteria. (eg. S1.option1: A A B B C) or use a criteria grid.

[6] DECISION/Solution

- Pick the option with best outcome, that best meets your goals and criteria, with no major cons.
 - Reason: Explain why this is the best option by naming its main pros.
 - Steps to accomplish the chosen option

[7] REVIEW RESULTS

- After a week or a month, evaluate results. What worked (+pros). What to improve (-cons). Adjust.
- PS123-G = P → S1,S2,S3 → Goal
- PS123-G → Decision → Review Results → New PS123-G. (Continuous Improvement)



TEST THE THOUGHT/STATEMENT: B. Thought. BB. Truth

IF unsure, say "I don't know. Let me think about it."

EXAMPLE of Decision Making 101 worksheet

COMPARE OPTIONS

BENEFIT / COST.

Philippians 1:9-11

PROBLEM: I feel lonely. I don't spend much time with friends.

(want/need) Want more friendship and fun. Need companionship, conversation, acceptance.

QUESTION: How can I spend more time with friends?

SOLUTIONS: S1. option1 → (short-term result) → +pros. -cons. (c)concerns. \$cost. •irrelevant
S1. stay the same → (easy) → +comfortable. -still lonely.

S2. text friends → (effort) → +more conversations. +more friendships. (c)maybe rejected.
+motive: keep in touch

S3. set up a monthly get together → (effort) → ⊕see friends regularly. +fun. -takes time.
\$work:planning (30min/month)

S4. Join a club or group → (effort) → +new friendships. +new activities. (c)outside comfort zone.
(?)what clubs are available? (check internet). \$10/month.

S5. Volunteer → (effort) → +help others. +meet people. +purpose. -time commitment
(?)what opportunities are available? (check library) •some may think it is weird

S6. make a list of people to contact → (effort) → +organize friendships. +more opportunities.
\$work:planning (60min). +maybe more friends (.7) = (70% chance).

 main Goals,Needs,Values: Friendship. Community. Help others. (What matters to you?)

specific GOAL,NEED,WANT: want more friendships and social activities, Fun

criteria: wise, love, beneficial, Godpleasing. Is this wise? Is this loving/kind? Is this beneficial?

 S+ Solution: (best option) Set up a monthly get-together.

Reason: helps me spend more time with friends and is realistic to maintain.

Step1: Text 3 friends. Step2: Pick a date and place. Step3: Meet monthly.

extra space for more options or  B/BB thoughts. (B=Thought. BB=Truth)

B. I haven't heard from my friends in weeks. Maybe they don't like me anymore. (B. Thought)

BB. I don't know the reason. They may be busy or on vacation or sick. (BB.Truth)

BB. IF I reach out then +I'll know why they haven't called. +The friendship may grow.

B. a thought, statement, opinion, question or self-talk.

B. a question? (research a resource) until you can write the BB.Truth (answer)

BB. (blank until you found the answer)

S2. BB. A Truth about option S2. S2. BB. I will be happier if I keep in touch.

(?) What volunteer opportunities are available? (check library and church and internet)

Good Decisions: Do what is right and good in thanks and praise to God our Creator, Redeemer.

IF it is right then do it. IF it is wrong then don't do it.

IF you are unsure, then say "I don't know. Let me think about it."

 **STOP!**  **TALK to GOD.**

TEST the Thought or Statement. COMPARE options pros cons.

EXAMPLE #2

PS123-G

PROBLEM•Question / **SOLUTIONS**: S1,S2,S3•pros,cons / **GOALS**•Needs•criteria

PROBLEM: Anxious because Missed deadline at work because too busy. (I think my job is in jeopardy).

WANT/GOAL: I want to finish the project on time.

QUESTION: What's the best way to get the project done on time?

SOLUTIONS:

S1. Work extra hours → +short-term OK. -long term exhausting

S2. Ask for help → +teamwork. +reduces stress

S3. Delay project → -causes stress. -harms others.

main Goals: MESSAGE = helps me Mentally. Emotionally. Socially. Spiritually. Attitude. Goals. Exercise.

specific GOAL, NEED: Finish on time. Keep reputation. Show responsibility.

CRITERIA: Help mentally, Help emotionally, Finish on time, Keep reputation, Low stress.

S1. Work extra hours: C C B A C (rate each criterion A-F for each option, in the order listed)

+S2. Ask for help: A A A A A

-S3. Delay project: D F D D D

S+ Best Option: S2. Ask for help

Reason: Meets goals, helps others, reduces stress, aligns with MESSAGE

Step 1: Ask for help. Step 2: Prioritize tasks

P-B/BB-S123

P. Problem: Feeling: Stressed, anxious, worried, frustrated BECAUSE...

Situation: Missed deadline on an important work project. I might lose my job.

B. Thought (T/F): "I'm a failure. I'm not responsible enough." → False

BB. Truth: Everyone makes mistakes. I can take steps to fix it and make it better.

BB. God says... Do your best and seek wisdom. "Help and teamwork are good." Galatians 6:2

S+ Good Action: Ask for help from a coworker or supervisor, prioritize tasks, and create a plan to complete the project on time

ADVICE → ask WHY? → SO YOU'RE SAYING... → WHAT ABOUT...? → "Is that a good idea?"

When someone gives advice or opinion: (say "I don't know. Let me think about it.")

B. He says That statement. _____ (T/F) BB. Ask him "why?" (get his reasons)

=B. That statement means/implies This statement ... (=B. in other words...) (=B. so you're saying...)

BB. Truth: _____ (maybe he's right, maybe he's wrong)

BB. TEST consequences:

BB. IF you do This then +pros. -cons.

BB. IF you do That then +pros. -cons.

BB. IF this situation then +pros. (but) -cons. Therefore (I will/will not) do that.

BB. IF this situation then do this so that (because) these pros and avoid these cons.

COMPARE OPTIONS

PROBLEM: _____

(want/need/goal) _____

QUESTION: _____

SOLUTIONS: S1. option1 → (short-term result) → +pros. -cons. (c)concerns. \$cost. •irrelevant

S1. option1: _____

S2. option2: _____

S3. option3: _____

S4. option4: _____

S5. option5: _____

S6. option6: _____

 main Goals,Needs,Values,Purpose: see The Purpose Driven Life

specific **GOAL,NEED,WANT:** _____

criteria (if helpful): wise, love, Godpleasing, beneficial, honest

 S+ Solution: (best option) _____

Reason: _____

Step1: _____ Step2: _____ Step3: _____

specific **GOAL,NEED,WANT:** _____

ABCD or 54321, +/- S1. S2. S3. S4. S5. S6.

criteria/needs. options:

1						
2						
3						
4						
5						
6						
7						
8						
9						
10						



COMPARE OPTIONS

PROBLEM: (Feeling, Situation, Thought) _____

because _____

(want/need/goal) _____

QUESTION: _____

SOLUTIONS: S1. option1 → (short-term result) → +pros. -cons. (c)concerns. \$cost. •irrelevant
S1. option1 → +pros, -cons: _____

S2. option2: _____

S3. option3: _____

IF it works then continue. IF it doesn't then adjust or try different option. (Conditional Plan)

S4. option4: _____ ()meets this criterion? → (+) Yes or (-) No

Motive: (why do I want to do this option?) _____

S5. option5: _____

Motive: _____ -BB.God says don't do this.

S6. option6: _____

Motive: _____ +BB.God says do this.

main Goals, Needs, Values, Purpose: _____

specific **GOAL, NEED, WANT:** _____

criteria (if helpful): wise, love, Godpleasing, beneficial, honest. Does this help or hinder my goals? _____

S+ Solution: (best option) _____

Reason: _____

Step1: _____

Step2: _____

Step3: _____

extra space for more options or ☁ B/BB thoughts. _____

(B=Thought. BB=Truth)

B. Thought: T/F _____

BB. Truth: _____

F. Beware of Fallacy: people pleasing. Fear. Authority.

B. This shouldn't be happening to me. (Thought)

F. Life should go my way. Life should be easy. (Fallacy/Faulty Thinking)

BB. Life is difficult. (Truth)

B → F → BB.

B. Belief → F. False/Faulty belief → BB. Better Belief (mnemonic)

BEWARE OF FALLACIES / FAULTY THINKING / FALSEHOODS.

These are bad reasons or bad motives to choose an option or make a decision.

F. Authority: “He said it, so I should do it.” “He said it, so it must be true.”

F. Majority: “The majority knows best.”

F. Fear of disapproval: “I must avoid criticism, rejection, or looking bad.”

F. People-pleasing: “I must be nice and avoid upsetting him/her.” “I must not hurt his/her feelings.”

F. Approval-seeking: “How can I make them like me?” “I need their approval.”

F. Social Conformity: “If they think or say I should do this, then I should do it.” “Do what they expect.”

F. Avoidance: “My goal is to avoid discomfort, pain, risk.”

F. Fear: “I will decide based on my fear — my fear of risk, mistakes, failure, change.”

F. Hasty decision: “I must decide quickly so I don’t look stupid.” Don’t stop to compare options.

F. Jump to Conclusions without having all the facts.

F. Emotion: “Base my decision on emotions: anger, pride, excitement, romance, impatience.”

F. Desire: “If it feels good, do it.” “Base my decision on pleasure, covet, lust, greed, envy, self-pity.”

F. False assumptions: “I don’t need to check the facts.”

F. False dilemma: “There are only 2 choices.”

F. Go with the flow: “Do what is easiest.” “Just go with the flow.” Keep the status quo.

F. Short-term thinking: “Do what feels good right now.” “Think short-term, not long-term.”

F. Repetition becomes truth: If we hear the lie enough times then it starts to feel like the truth.

F. Perfectionism: “I must be perfect.” “If I make a mistake then they won’t like me and I’m no good.”

click for **More Fallacies and Biases**

S1. S2. S3. S4.

F. Fallacy/Faulty Thinking

B. T/F Thought/Statement

F. Fallacy/Faulty Thinking/False Belief/Falsehood

BB. Truth

Better Decision Method:

Compare Options. Choose best option with best outcome.

Test the Thought/Statement.

see “Telling Yourself the Truth” by William Backus and Marie Chapian
for more Fallacies or Misbeliefs.

Optional well-being check

MESSAGE=helps me Mentally, Emotionally, Socially, Spiritually, Attitude, Goals, Exercise.

Mental=good thoughts. read/write. Emotional=Happy, Content, Humor. Social=Friends, Conversation.

Spiritual=Gospel, Bible. Pray, Praise. Trust, Obey. Serve. Attitude=Good Attitude, Thankful.

Goal=Good Goals. Exercise=exercise, eat well.



DON'T DO IT.
It is wrong or harmful.
God says ...

NOT SURE.
Slow down. Be careful.
TEST IT.
Compare options/outcomes

LOOKS GOOD.
It is right or beneficial.
JUST DO IT.

 Not sure



Compare options and outcomes

$P \rightarrow S1, S2, S3 \rightarrow \text{Goal}$

$S1 \rightarrow$  No

$S2 \rightarrow$  Go

$S3 \rightarrow$  No

$S4 \rightarrow$  No

OTHER USEFUL TOOLS

Costs Can Include \$100. \$Time: \$Work: \$Loss: \$Duty:

 Money — What will I have to pay?

 Time — How much time will this require?

 Work — What effort will I have to put into it?

 Losses / Trade-offs — What might I lose, give up or miss? Lost opportunities?

 Duties/Responsibilities/Requirements — What ongoing obligations or requirements am I accepting?
What are the expectations?

Every option has a cost, a price to pay.

Am I willing and able to pay this price? Is the benefit worth the cost? Luke 14:28. Count the cost.

Duty: _____ (). _____ (Y). _____ (N). (Y) = I am willing and able to do this duty.
(N) = I am not willing or not able to do this duty.

EG: Evidence Given to support a BB.Truth premise. (BB.Truth Tests)

 Bible truths

 Expert books or teachings

 Examples (EG can mean “Example” or “Evidence Given”)

 Personal experience

 Observation of life/patterns

 Testimonies or stories from others

 Research from credible sources. Show Proof.

 Logical reasoning / common sense. (use CounterExamples to prove a statement is False.)

 Inner conviction or peace

 Reflection/journaling insight

 Experiment. Trial and Error. Test on small scale, see what works before jumping in.

 Facts, Reality. General Premise: IF this action then this outcome +pros. -cons.

CONSIDER RISK

How likely is the outcome? (.1) to (.9). 10% to 90% chance

How serious is the impact? (-5) to (+5). -5 = very bad. 0 = neutral. +5 = very good.

Example: S1. Option1. +pro (.7)(+4). -con (.3)(-2)

(c) a concern. BB. What is the Truth about the concern (.3)(-2) OR (c) a concern = OK.