HOW TO MAKE A GOOD DECISION

☀️COMPARE OPTIONS, pros cons, goals

[1] PROBLEM. Explore Feelings, concerns

- Define the problem: (What is bothering me?) Feelings because of Situation and Thoughts.
- Use "because" to show root cause or root problem (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. also +maybe pro. -maybe con.
  +pros = something good / avoid something bad. (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 → R.Review Results → New PS123-G. (Continuous Improvement)

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

EXAMPLE #1

IF unsure, say "I don't know. Let me think about it." 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, status quo → (easy) → +comfortable. -still lonely→bored,unhappy

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

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)
B1. T/F It is OK to stay with status quo. BB1. It is comfortable but leaves my need for friends unmet.

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)
(?) 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 a deadline at work because too busy. (I think my job is in jeopardy.)
WANT/GOAL: I want to finish the project on time (so that +help company. +help my career. +do my duty.)
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. Spiritually. Socially. 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 in the order listed, for each option)
+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 or PBS (define Problem, test Belief, compare Solutions)

P. Problem: Feeling: Stressed, anxious, worried, frustrated BECAUSE...
Situation: Missed deadline on an important work project. Thought: I might lose my job.
B. Thought (T/F): "I'm a failure. I'm not responsible enough." → S1. Give up.
BB. Truth: Everyone makes mistakes. I can take steps to make it better. → S2. Ask for help.
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,Priorities:

specific GOAL,NEED,WANT:

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

👉 S+ Solution: (best option)

Reason:

Step1: Step2: Step3:

specific GOAL,NEED,WANT:

ABCDF or 54321, +/- criteria/needs. options:	S1.	S2.	S3.	S4.	S5.	S6.
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 → +pro. -con→result. or -con=result

S3. option3 → R1. Result 1 (.5) +pro -con or R2. Result 2 (.3) +pro -con or R3. Result 3 (.2) +pro -con

R1. IF this result → do this. or R2. IF that result → do that. (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,Priorities: see The Purpose Driven Life, Values

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: .

BB. God says... see gotquestions.org for Biblical answers

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.

BAD DECISION METHODS. DECISION TRAPS.

These are bad reasons to choose an option.

F. Authority: "He said it, so it must be true." "He said it, so I should do it." Do what he says or suggests.
F. Majority: "The majority knows best." Do what everyone else says or does or wants.
F. Fear of disapproval: "I must avoid criticism, rejection, anger or looking bad." They must like me.
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." "Don't make them angry."
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, rejection."
F. Hasty decision: "I must decide quickly so I don't look stupid." Don't stop to compare options. Rush.
F. Jump to Conclusions without having all the facts.
F. Emotion: "Base my decision on emotions: anger, pride, excitement, romance, impatience, lazy."
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. Half-Truths:** Looking at just the pros or just the cons.
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." "Thinking short-term, not long-term."
F. Repetition feels like 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."
F. Framing Bias: It sounds good or bad because of how it is presented.
F. Status Quo Bias: You prefer to keep the current situation and to resist change generally.
F. Anchoring Bias: Giving too much weight to the first information, thought or idea encountered.
F. Recency Bias: Giving too much weight to recent information, thoughts or experiences.
F. Sunk Cost: "I've already spent so much time, money, or effort on this, so I must continue."

click for More Fallacies and Biases. click for Decision Method questions page 6

S1. S2. S3. S4.
F. Fallacy/Faulty Thinking

B. T/F Thought/Statement
F. Fallacy/Faulty Thinking/False Belief/Falsehood
BB. Truth

GOOD DECISION METHOD:

Compare Options, pros cons. Choose best option with best outcome, that meets my goals or needs.
Is this wise, beneficial, Godpleasing? Is this agape love?
Test the Thought/Statement.

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



RED
STOP

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

YELLOW
CAUTION

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

GREEN
GO

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

🟨 Not sure

↓

Compare options and outcomes

P → S1,S2,S3 → Goal

S1 → 🟥 No

S2 → 🟩 Go

S3 → 🟥 No

S4 → 🟥 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.

Optional well-being check

Is this good for me? Is this helpful or harmful? Does this encourage or discourage me?
Does this build me up, recharge/energize me or drain me/drag me down? Is this a good MESSAGE?
MESSAGE=helps me Mentally, Emotionally, Spiritually, Socially, Attitude, Goals, Exercise.
Mental=good thoughts. exercise brain: read/write/talk/games.
Emotional=Happy, Content, Assertive, Fun.
Spiritual=Gospel, God's Word. Pray, Praise. Trust, Obey. Serve. Help someone.
Social=Friends, Conversation, Love.
Attitude=Good Attitude, Thankful.
Goal=Good Goals, Good Habits.
Exercise=exercise, eat well, sleep. safety, health

Makes me happy vs makes me stressed, unhappy, annoyed. Consider short-term and long-term.
Is this wise, beneficial, Godpleasing, agape love? What does God say/want?
Does this bring me closer to God or away from God?
Make someone happy. What is good for him/her MESSAGE?
What is your mission statement, vision, purpose, goal?

Compare Results

R1, R2, R3 can compare results from several situations/decisions/actions at different times.
Label each so it's clear what you're reviewing:

R1. [Situation/action,date] → +What worked? −What didn't work?
R2. [Situation/action,date] → +pros / −cons
R3. [Situation/action,date] → +pros / −cons
BB. I learned … BB. an observation …

Then ask: **What patterns do I notice, and what should I keep or change? What can I learn?**
R1, R2, R3: "When I did this, these were the results."
S1, S2, S3: "If I do this, I predict these results."
Past results help predict future outcomes.
Consider what is similar or different in the current situation.

Useful pages from Decision Making 101 Book.

print page as needed.

Test Advice. p13
Red Flags! p112
Setting criteria. p158
Goals and values. p35
Bad/Good attitudes. p33
Mark and avoid lies. p161
Character/Values. p150
=B. Explore meanings and motives of behavior. p14. P. =B1. BB1.
Use BECAUSE for root problem/need or root cause. p14
BB. What does God say about these behaviors. p159

More Resources with Helpful Insights.
Book Summaries and articles.

Biblical Answers
gotquestions.org

The Purpose Driven Life

Values

Telling Yourself the Truth by William Backus and Marie Chapian

Decision Making by Andy Eklund

The Courage to be Disliked

Being Assertive

Atomic Habits

The Power of Habit

Fast and Slow Thinking

Problem Solving

Define the Problem

Brainstorm ideas and options