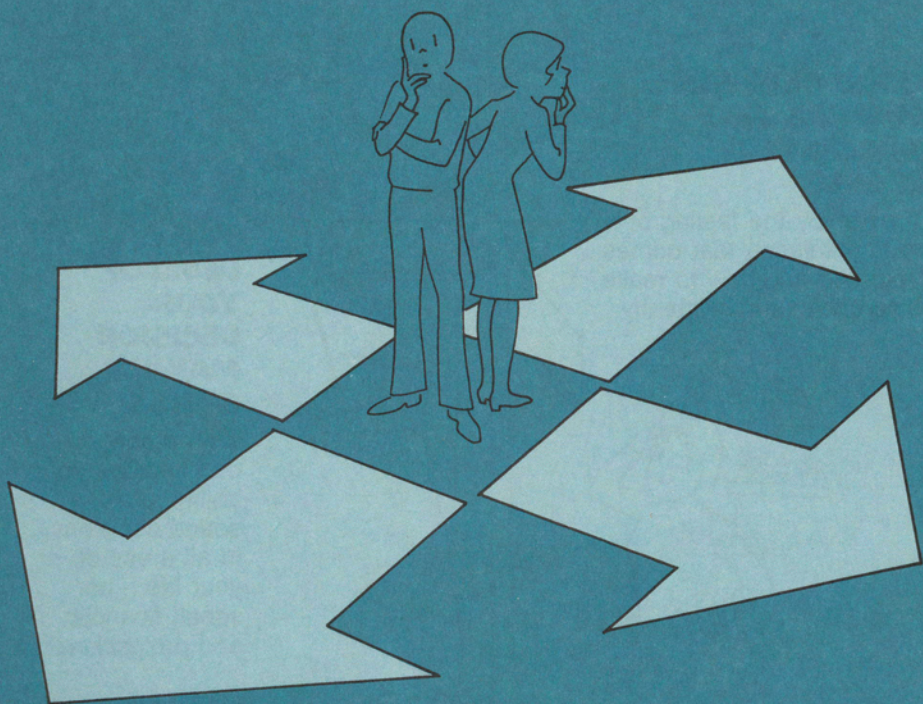


HOW TO DEVELOP YOUR DECISION-MAKING SKILLS



**Benevolent and
Protective Order of
Elks of the U.S.A.**

What are
**DECISION-
MAKING
SKILLS**
?

They're tools you can use to solve problems and make choices in your life.

**GOOD DECISION
MAKERS ARE
SUCCESSFUL
PEOPLE**

They enjoy the feeling of self-confidence that comes from knowing how to make wise choices consistently.



**YOU CAN
DEVELOP
YOUR
DECISION-
MAKING
SKILLS**

With practice, you can improve your ability to make sound decisions in all areas of your life – personal, financial and professional.

WHY
should I
LEARN ABOUT
decision-making
skills
?

Because life involves many decisions -- and making the best choices consistently is the key to success.

Your ability to make sound decisions can help you:

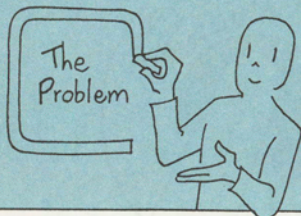
- **ACHIEVE YOUR GOALS**, at work and in your personal life
- **AVOID MISTAKES** that can cost you or your organization time and money!

No one makes the right decision every time. But by developing your decision-making skills, you can increase your success rate! Learn more...

ANATOMY OF A DECISION

Making a good decision requires patience and careful thought. Following a step-by-step approach can help.

STEP 1: DEFINE THE PROBLEM



SIZE UP THE SITUATION

- Examine the problem thoroughly – look at it from all angles.
- Keep thinking – don't be satisfied with quick, easy answers.
- Avoid mistaking the problem's symptoms (for example, a shortage of money) for the problem itself (poor spending habits, too much debt, etc.).

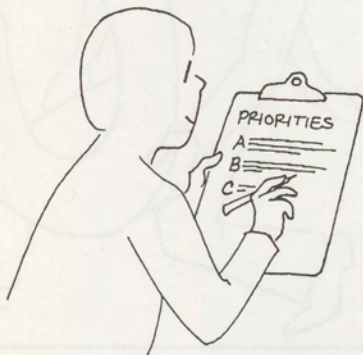


SET GOALS AND PRIORITIES

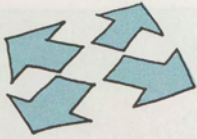
Ask yourself:

- "What do I want to achieve by making this decision – what are my goals?"
- "Which of these goals must I meet in order to solve this problem – what are my priorities?"

Write down your goals and priorities; review them often.

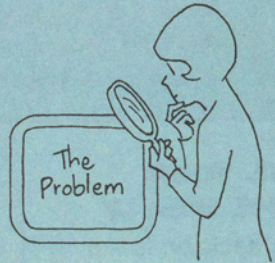


Try to put your goals in measurable terms (time, money, etc.) so you can measure your success later on.



STEP 2: REEVALUATE THE SITUATION

(Step 1 may have changed your view of the problem!)



CONSIDER YOUR OPTIONS

Once you've identified the problem, ask yourself:

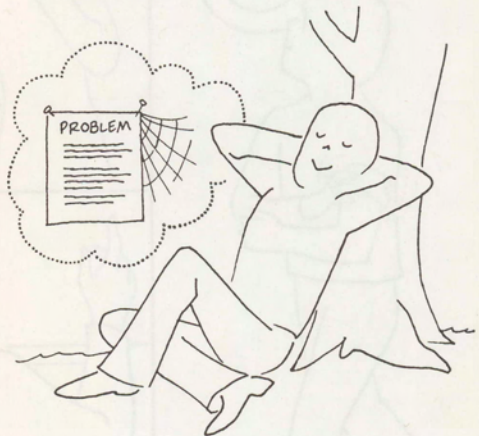
- "Do I need to take action in order to achieve my goals and priorities?"
- "Will this problem solve itself with time?"



DON'T MAKE UNNECESSARY DECISIONS

Be aware that the best decision may be to do nothing for the time being.

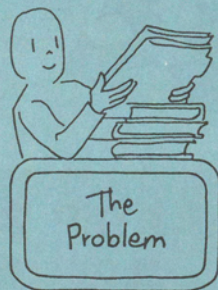
But, don't delay just to avoid making a tough or unpleasant decision.



Be honest with yourself! If you decide that action is needed, proceed to step 3.

STEP 3: GATHER INFORMATION

In order to solve a problem, you should make yourself an "expert" on the subject.



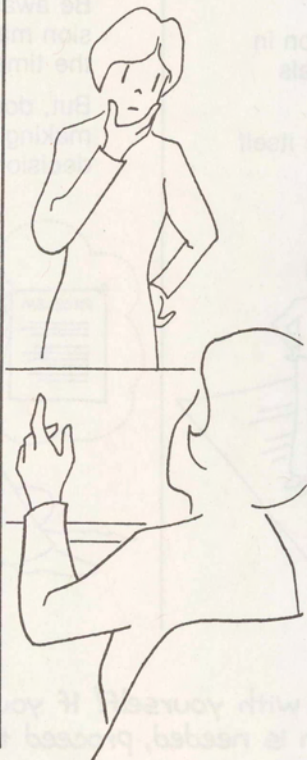
USE YOUR TIME WISELY

If a decision is not immediately necessary, use your time to gather information. (Be sure you leave enough time to act on your decision, though.)



SEEK ADVICE

Get help from people who know more about the details of the problem. Don't be afraid to admit that you don't know something.



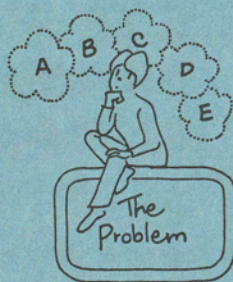
USE ALL RESOURCES

Use the library, employee records — any source of facts on the problem.



STEP 4: THINK OF ALTERNATIVES

At this stage of the decision-making process, any idea is a good idea.



BE OPEN

Don't limit yourself to ideas that sound "reasonable." Try "brainstorming" (listing anything and everything that comes to mind).



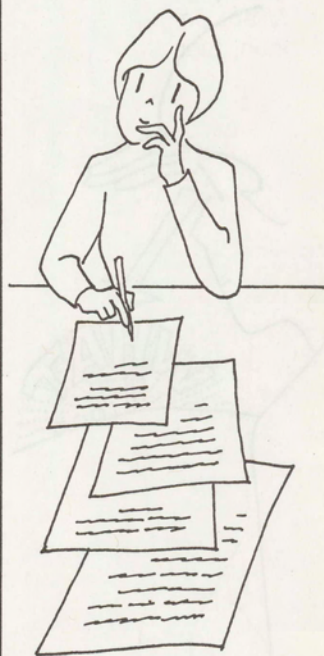
DON'T JUDGE

Avoid jumping to conclusions. Gather all your ideas before considering your alternatives.



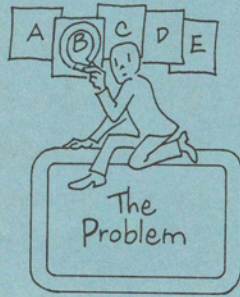
RECORD YOUR IDEAS

Put all your thoughts on paper, so you can evaluate them later.



STEP 5: CHOOSE AN ALTERNATIVE

Test each alternative carefully, to see how it measures up against the others.



THINK AHEAD

Try to imagine the consequences of each alternative. Ask yourself, "What will happen if...?" Be thorough, and give each plan a chance.



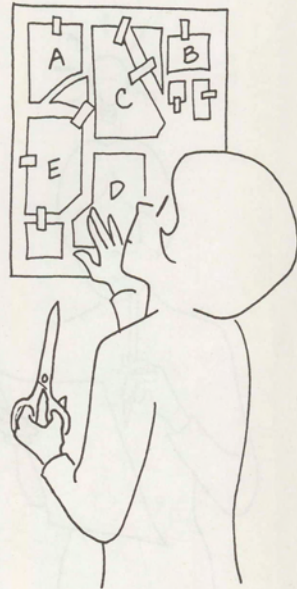
BE PRACTICAL

Make sure your plans can be carried out. For example, does your organization have the equipment to make the changes you have in mind? Is the solution more expensive than the problem?



BE CREATIVE

If necessary, combine the best features of several different ideas. Make a new alternative -- one that works!



Choose the alternative that will best achieve the goals and priorities you identified in step 1.

STEP 6: PUT YOUR DECISION TO WORK



TAKE ACTION

Don't satisfy yourself with simply having made a tough decision. A good decision means nothing until it's put into effect.



INFORM OTHERS

Make sure everyone affected by your decision knows what will change, and why. Explain what improvements they can expect as a result of your decision. Ask for feedback.



FOLLOW UP ON YOUR PLAN

Check from time to time to see that any changes you made are still in effect – or to see if adjustments are needed. Also, make sure the problem you solved has not returned or taken another form.



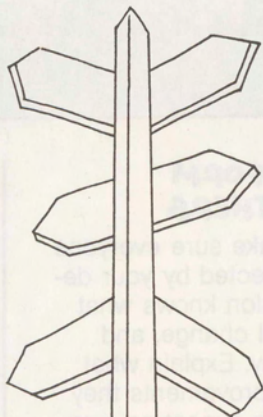
THE "ART" AND "SCIENCE" OF MAKING A DECISION

Your intuition and your analytical skills can both be helpful -- if you know how to put them to work for you.

INTUITION

is the ability to know or feel something without using logic or reason. Your intuition can help you:

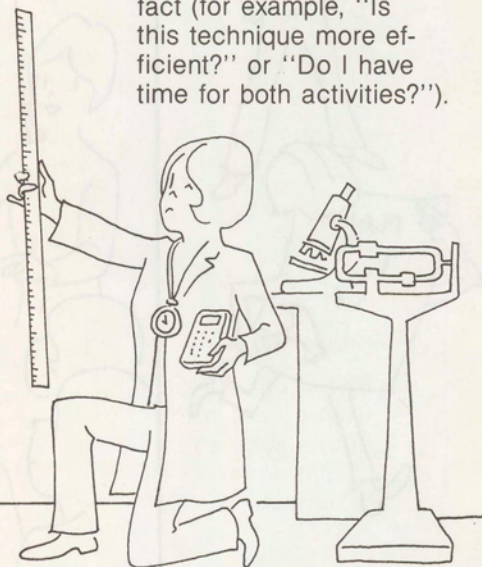
- **CREATE IDEAS**, providing a starting point for further thought
- **SOLVE "WHY?" OR "SHOULD I?" PROBLEMS** – when the answer may be based on feelings, values or opinions
- **BREAK A DEAD-LOCK** in your mind between different solutions.



ANALYTICAL SKILL

is the ability to use logic to examine and measure a problem. Your analytical skills can help you:

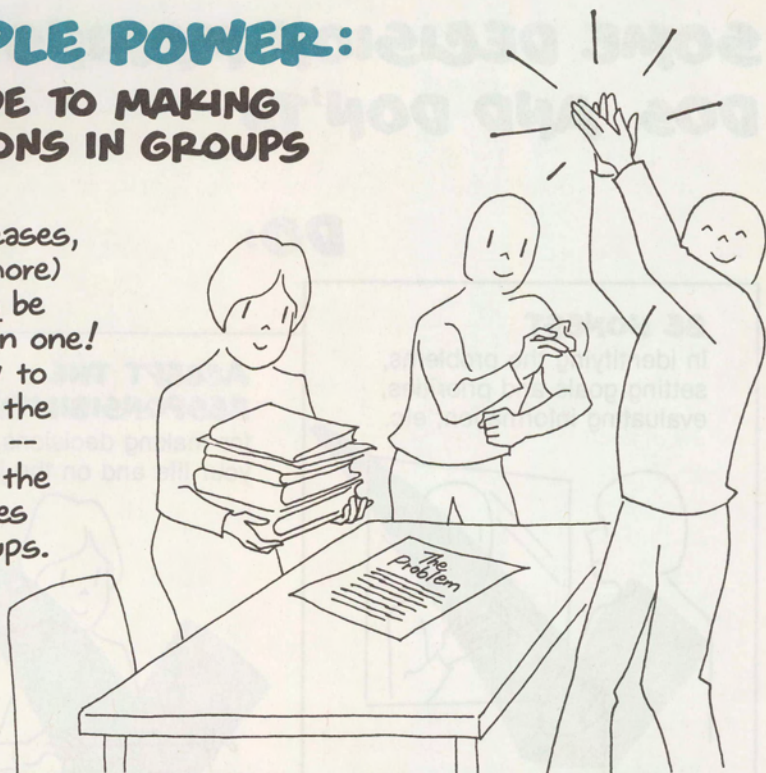
- **EXAMINE THE IDEAS** generated by your intuition, to separate the workable ideas from the worthless
- **SOLVE "HOW TO" OR "HOW MANY" PROBLEMS** – when the choices can be tested in terms of cold, hard fact (for example, "Is this technique more efficient?" or "Do I have time for both activities?").



PEOPLE POWER:

A GUIDE TO MAKING DECISIONS IN GROUPS

In some cases, two (or more) heads can be better than one! Learn how to recognize the strengths -- and avoid the weaknesses -- of groups.



GROUPS OFFER IMPORTANT ADVANTAGES

For example:

- A WIDER RANGE of knowledge and experience
- MORE ENERGY and resources to attack a problem
- EXTRA MOTIVATION from others in the group (people may work harder when others are depending on them).

BUT --

GROUPS CAN HAVE DRAWBACKS, TOO

Members may:

- FEEL PRESSURE to fit in with the group and be unwilling to offer new or controversial ideas
- FEEL THEY CAN'T BE HONEST, or critical of others' ideas
- SOCIALIZE, and substitute talk for action
- RELY ON OTHERS to do the work.

SOME DECISION-MAKING DOS AND DON'TS

DO:

BE HONEST

in identifying the problems, setting goals and priorities, evaluating information, etc.



ACCEPT THE RESPONSIBILITY

for making decisions, in your life and on the job.



USE TIME WISELY

when you make decisions. Take as much time as possible without creating more problems.



HAVE CONFIDENCE

in your ability to make good decisions – and to learn from mistakes.

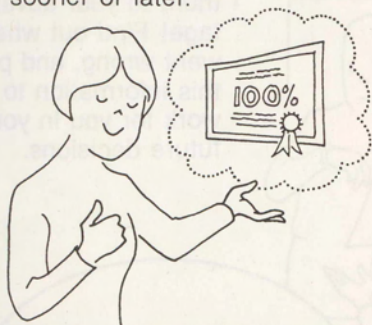


Making a decision is easy -- but making the right one requires skill and knowledge.

DON'T:

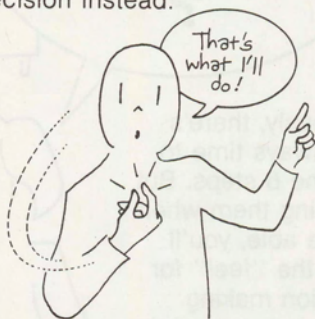
HAVE UNREALISTIC EXPECTATIONS

for yourself -- you're bound to make a wrong decision sooner or later.



MAKE "SNAP" DECISIONS

unless absolutely necessary. Follow the 6 steps to a good decision instead.



TAKE UNNECESSARY ACTION

when the best course of action is to do nothing.



FOOL YOURSELF

by choosing solutions that are easy and comfortable -- but fail to address the problem.



SOME QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

What if I make a **WRONG DECISION**?

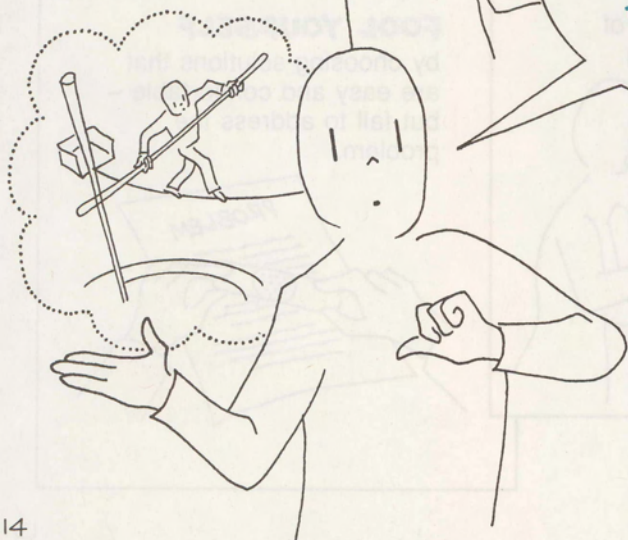
What if I must make a **SNAP DECISION**?

Mistakes can be the best teachers – use them to your advantage! Find out what went wrong, and put this information to work for you in your future decisions.

Obviously, there's not always time to use the 6 steps. But by using them when you're able, you'll build the "feel" for decision making that'll help you make better snap decisions, too.

WHY TAKE THE RISK of making a tough decision?

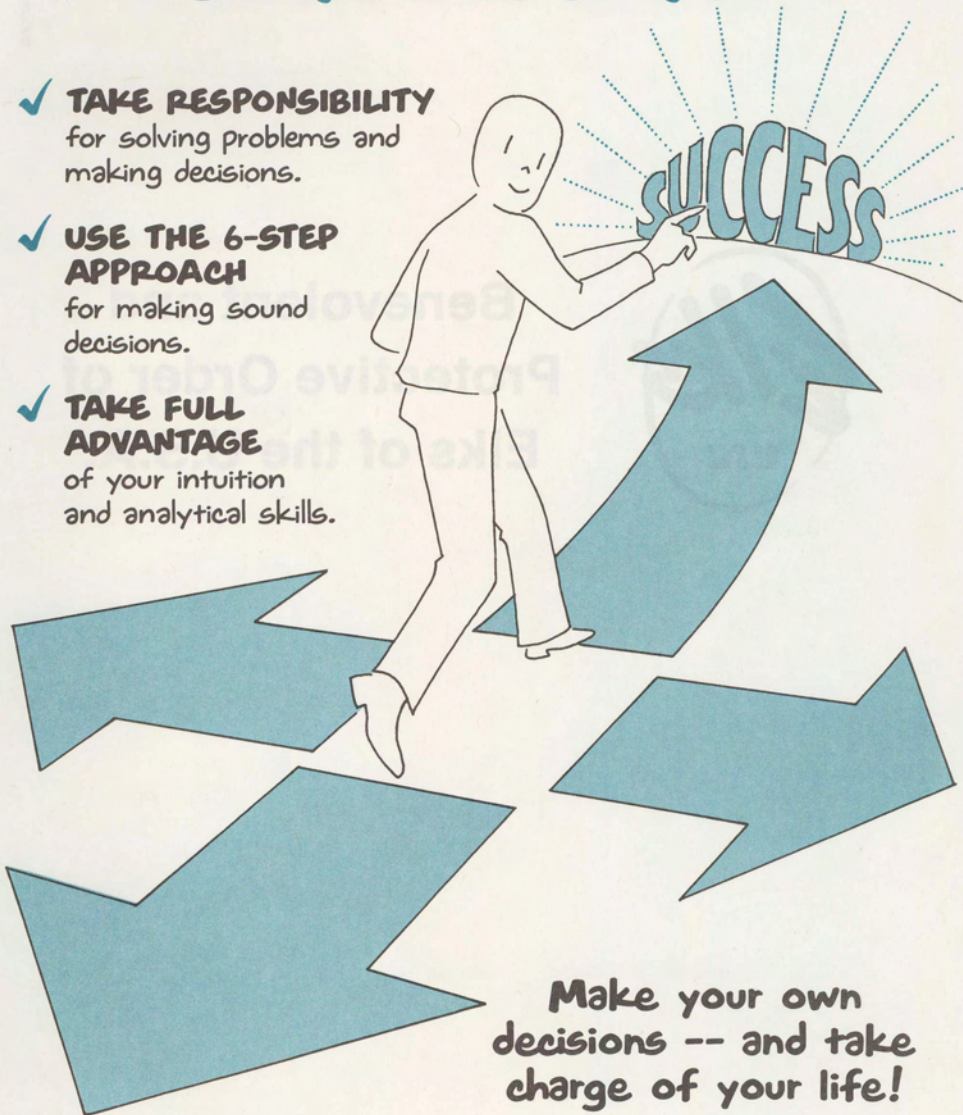
Avoiding decisions may seem easier at times. But making your own decisions is the only way to take charge of your life – and your success.



So--

YOU CAN LEARN TO MAKE SOUND DECISIONS

- ✓ **TAKE RESPONSIBILITY**
for solving problems and
making decisions.
- ✓ **USE THE 6-STEP
APPROACH**
for making sound
decisions.
- ✓ **TAKE FULL
ADVANTAGE**
of your intuition
and analytical skills.



**Make your own
decisions -- and take
charge of your life!**



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