

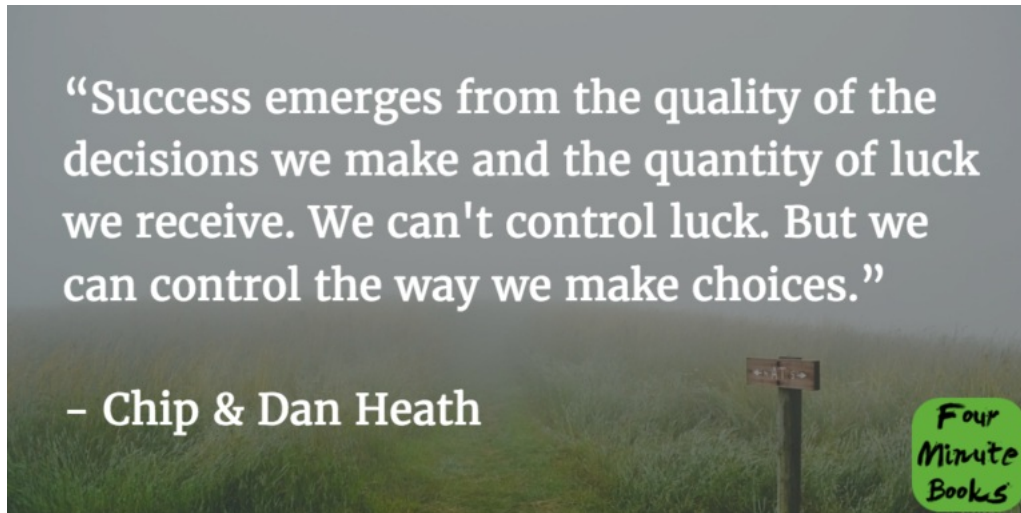
Decisive Summary

 fourminutebooks.com/decisive-summary

1-Sentence-Summary: *Decisive gives you a scientific, 4-step approach to making better decisions in your life and career, based on an extensive study of the available literature and research on the topic.*

Read in: 4 minutes

Favorite quote from the author:



I really like the books by the Heath brothers. They're well researched, fun to read and always come packed with not just one, but a multitude of great insights. After *Made To Stick* in 2007 and *Switch* in 2010, *Decisive* is their most recent book (published in 2013), and it's about making better decisions.

They've created a 4-step process called WRAP, which you can run through each time you have to make a big, important decision, to make choices easier. Its four elements are:

1. **W**iden your options.
2. **R**eality-test your assumptions.
3. **A**ttain distance before deciding.
4. **P**repare to be wrong.

Let's look at the first three in more detail, because these are the steps that coincide with what I believe to be the most important lessons from this book:

1. Never decide in binary mode. Always think of other options.
2. Don't commit to just one plan. Set up experiments and see which decisions work.
3. Switch to the perspective of a friend or future-you to be more objective about choices.

Are you decisively indecisive? Let's change that!

Lesson 1: Decisions aren't binary. Always think in opportunity costs.

How many times has this happened to you in school? On Wednesday, someone starts talking about a party on Friday and by Thursday, everyone's invited, including you. Now you have to decide what to do.

Interestingly, how we decide something like this often ends with us trying to answer some variant of this question: Should I go to Jake's party – *or not*?

The problem with making decisions like this is that it's a binary approach. You only consider two options: yes and no. To get the full picture though, you'd have to also consider opportunity costs. There are actually a lot more options, most of which start with "no, but..."

For example, if you didn't go to Jake's party, you'd have the option to just call it an early night and go to bed, of course. But you could also invite a friend over and watch a movie, go ice-skating, to a club, throw your own party, or get dinner with your family.

It's not so much about going or not going, it's about *what else* you could do in that time.

With money it's the same thing. You can buy a \$700 stereo or a \$1,000 one. The question is what you'd do with the remaining \$300, if you chose the cheaper version. Would you save it? Invest it? Book a flight? Buy 50 records?

Even just being aware of the option of doing something else with your time and money helps a lot in seeing the full picture of available choices.

For example, when people were given the choice between buying a \$14.99 video or not in a study, without any hints 25% didn't buy. But as soon as the no-option was labeled "Keep the \$14.99 for other purchases," decline rates shot up to 45% – just because people were suddenly aware they could do other things with their money.

Lesson 2: Don't make plans. Run experiments and see what sticks.

In case of Jake's party this won't work, but in quite a lot of instances, you don't even *have* to decide right away. **You can just set up various trials and see which decision works out best.**

For example, I'm really struggling with what paid product I should create first on Four Minute Books. So instead of just picking one and potentially building something that falls flat on its face, I'll just release a bunch of ideas and see which ones people really want me to make.

If you think you want to be a writer, you don't have to quit your job right away. You can just start writing a blog, for example, and see if you like it.

The Heath brothers call this testing on a small scale *ooching*, and it really makes you a lot more comfortable when making big shifts. Internships, for example, serve this very purpose. Find a way to dip your toe into the water first, then decide.

Lesson 3: Change your perspective to friend or future to be more objective.

The third step of the WRAP model is getting some distance. Why does that matter?

Well, your emotions tend to hijack a lot of your decisions, based on what you think is most important *right now*. However, what you feel matters most today isn't necessarily always what 10-years-from-now-you needs (or even 10-minutes, 10-days or 10-months-from-now-you).

That's why it helps to put some emotional distance between you and the decision, before making a choice. For example, sticking with the number ten, try the 10/10/10-perspective:

How would you feel about your decision 10 minutes, 10 months and 10 years from now?

Another cool trick is to take on the perspective of a friend, giving advice. Imagine your best friend came to you and explained the exact dilemma you face, asking you what she should do.

What would you tell them to do?

We often give much more objective advice to our friends, because we're not bugged down by the short-term emotions they struggle with in the moment. Do the same for yourself, and future-you will be a lot happier!

Decisive Review

As I said in the intro, there's not much to complain about with these guys' writing. It's rock solid. *Decisive* comes highly recommended and definitely one of the better how-to-make-better-decisions-books out there!

[Read full summary on Blinkist >>](#)

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[Learn more about the author >>](#)

What else can you learn from the blinks?

- What multitracking is and how it helped a company create much better ads
- How to avoid choice overload
- Why you should always look at similar solutions to slightly different problems
- How to kick all biases to the curb by arguing against your own choices
- The inside vs. the outside view and how the latter helps reveal bad options
- Which question to ask when your core values conflict on a decision
- What you can do to prepare for the consequences of your actions
- Why you sometimes need to force a decision and how to set up a tripwire that'll make you

do it

Who would I recommend the Decisive summary to?

The 16 year old, who can't decide whether to go to the party on Friday or not, the 34 year old shoe store clerk, who'd love to be a writer, but doesn't want to give up her job to pursue her dream full time, and anyone who thinks they give good advice to their friends.