

ICS 392

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Assignment 3: Decision Making

In general, a person aware of the possibility of decision errors will make better decisions. This is because they will be able to avoid the pitfalls of these common mistakes, and make the correct decision. However, this isn't everything. As also stated, it's required that a good decision is based on facts, because facts can't be changed. Facts are not subjective, and they tell the story. However, your perception of these facts can be changed, which needs to be addressed. Although facts are objective, your perception of these facts, and your biases are subjective.

For instance, how you approach a fact, or your personally feelings can cloud your judgement. Although you may know that climate change is a fact, you may harbor biases against it. You may not trust the source, or you may not want to believe in it's consequences. These circumstances can thus change your view on the decision, and you must be aware of it. If you are not aware of it, you will start making decisions not based on fact, but on your view of the facts, which can distort it. Thus, the facts and your view can't be the only thing that impacts your decisions. There needs to be another implicit part that isn't dependant solely on your facts or your view on them, but on

another third party. This third party can act as a compass that can guide you in the right direction, and not only that, it can also accept more information than is available to your brain. For me, this third party is the concept of “trusting your gut”.

Furthermore, the idea of “trusting your gut” also needs to be taken into consideration. I believe that if you trust your gut, the implicit notation that your body, and not your mind, sometimes knows what is best for you. Although facts may be pointing you to make a certain decision, a gut feeling may decide to tell you make another decision. This can be for a variety of factors, such as your senses being aware of facts that your conscious mind does not. Such as walking down a street late at night and you get a bad feeling in your stomach, that something is wrong. Your mind may not be able to pinpoint exactly what it is, but you trust it. And so you get off the street, and you end up finding out later that there was a mugger waiting on the street for their next victim. Your body was able to sense things that were wrong, and even tho your mind may not have been aware of the facts, your gut still told you the wrong thing.

In my own life, I made a very big decision about 2 years ago. When I was in my 4th year of college, I decided not to pursue accounting, my major which I had been studying for the entirety of my college career. I decided to start studying computer science, which added two more years of studying. However, I needed to join the ROTC program at DePaul in order to pay for it. When I was making this decision, I had to gather facts. The likelihood of getting a scholarship through ROTC to pay for the 2 extra years, the military obligation I will incur with the scholarship, what I would be giving up. I had a full time job offer after college that I declined in order to pursue this new path. The

facts of this decision made it logical to instead graduate and take the job offer, and not pursue ROTC or the computer science degree. However, even tho it was the safe logical choice, my gut told me I would not be happy with the decision.

In the end, I decided to trust my gut. For me, not only is making the right decision important, but also being able to live with my decision. If my gut was telling me to switch majors and that it would make me happy, then I needed to trust it. Because if I didn't trust it, I would always be filled with self-doubt that I chose the wrong decision. And even if it turns out that the decision I made was right, I wouldn't be able to live with my decision because I didn't trust my gut. And if I didn't trust my gut in this decision, then I wouldn't be able to trust it in the future. My gut feeling is a combination of all the previous experiences in my life, which means that it has a lot of knowledge that can be tapped. Thus trusting my gut also means tapping into this knowledge.

When I was making this decision, I like to think that I was aware of errors in decision making. For instance, my father was very in favor of the ROTC route, and would talk up the army when I was a kid. However, his implicit biases also framed how he presented facts, only talking about the positives and not the negatives. He would also unintentionally use anchoring by talking about all the benefits before I asked questions about the negatives so my questions wouldn't be as extreme. But in the end, I am happy with the decision I made and can live with it. Because I believe the decision I made was the right one, and most importantly, I can own it. It was mine.