

## Personal risk Orientation

### Self-Assessment Exercise 1: How Do You Make Risky Decisions?<sup>1</sup>

Although people rarely are completely consistent in their decision-making styles, most of us can detect some regularity in the way we make *important* decisions. Think of the important life decisions you have made (e.g., College, relationships, jobs, moving, marriage), and then answer the following questions. You may not be able to answer some of these questions with complete confidence, but select the answers that come closest to **what you believe**.

This is *not* a test; it is just a device to help you understand your own decision-making behavior. For each dimension, choose the one response out of the three that best describes how you usually respond in making a big decision.

When you have answered all the questions, refer to the Personal Risk – Self-Assessment Interpretation Sheet under Assignments to interpret which risk styles you feel you use most often.

Dimension	Items
I. Attitude toward change	<input type="radio"/> (1) I prefer security to novelty. <input checked="" type="radio"/> (2) I value security and novelty about equally. <input type="radio"/> (3) I prefer novelty to security.
II. Search strategy	<input type="radio"/> (1) I make a quick overall survey of possibilities, hoping that something will hit me. <input checked="" type="radio"/> (2) I keep producing and then going over my possible choices. <input type="radio"/> (3) I think of a number of alternatives but stop after a reasonable search.
III. Attention to feelings	<input checked="" type="radio"/> (1) I decide among alternatives not only by reasoning but by taking my feelings into account.

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<sup>1</sup> Adapted from Ellen Y., Siegelman (1983) Personal Risk: Mastering Change in Love and Work. Harper and Row.

	<p><input checked="" type="radio"/> (2) I make major decisions almost exclusively on the basis of my feelings.</p> <p><input type="radio"/> (3) I mistrust my feelings as a basis for a major decision; I try to use reason almost entirely.</p>
IV. Decision Rule	<p><input type="radio"/> (1) I believe there is one right decision, and it's my job to dig it out.</p> <p><input type="radio"/> (2) I believe there is no one right decision; I just need to find one that is good enough.</p> <p><input checked="" type="radio"/> (3) I believe in choosing the first decision that really grabs me.</p>
V. Sense of Consequence	<p><input checked="" type="radio"/> (1) I don't try to predict consequences of my decision because I just expect things will work out ok.</p> <p><input type="radio"/> (2) I do think about consequences, tending to focus on the bad things that might happen.</p> <p><input type="radio"/> (3) I try to think of both the good and bad consequences of my decision.</p>
VI. Pre-decision emotions	<p><input type="radio"/> (1) In thinking about taking a risky step I feel mostly anxiety.</p> <p><input type="radio"/> (2) In thinking about taking a risky step, I feel a mixture of anxiety and excitement.</p> <p><input checked="" type="radio"/> (3) In thinking about taking a risky step, I feel mostly excitement.</p>
VII. Time expended in decision-making process	<p><input checked="" type="radio"/> (1) I usually make decisions – even big ones – quickly.</p> <p><input type="radio"/> (2) I usually take a fairly long time to make big decisions.</p> <p><input type="radio"/> (3) I usually take a very long time to make big decisions.</p>
VIII. Attitude toward new information	<p><input type="radio"/> (1) I will consider new information even after I've arrived at a probable decision.</p> <p><input checked="" type="radio"/> (2) I'm not interested in getting new information after I've made a probable decision.</p> <p><input type="radio"/> (3) I feel compelled either to seek out new information or to shut it out after I've made a probable decision.</p>
IX. Post-decision strategy	<p><input checked="" type="radio"/> (1) Once I've made a decision, I usually don't think about it before launching into action.</p> <p><input type="radio"/> (2) Once I've made a decision, I often experience serious doubts and may change my mind.</p> <p><input type="radio"/> (3) Once I've made a decision, I usually rally behind it after rechecking.</p>
X. Evaluating the outcome of a risky decision	<p><input type="radio"/> (1) After I have acted on the decision, I tend to worry or regret that I didn't do something else.</p> <p><input checked="" type="radio"/> (2) After I have acted on the decision, I tend to put it out of my mind.</p> <p><input type="radio"/> (3) After I have acted on the decision, I tend to think about what I have learned from it.</p>