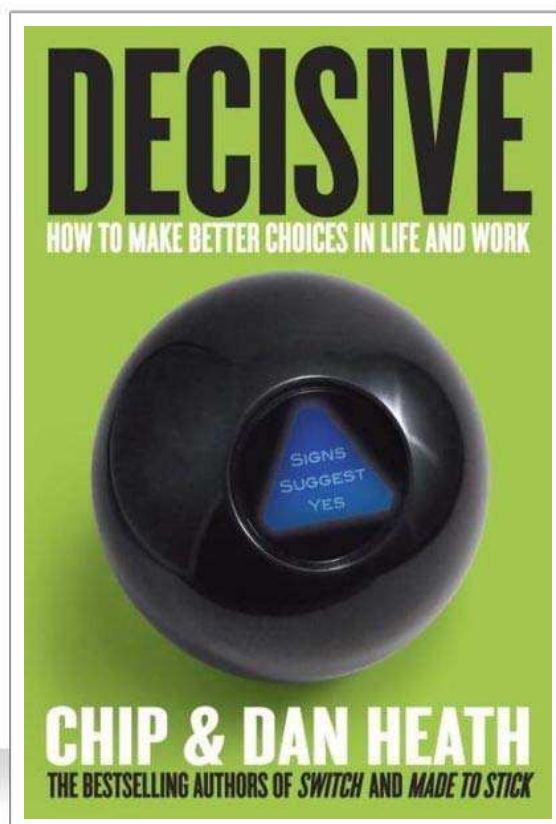


How to Make Better Choices
in Life and Work

DECISIVE



(Chip Heath-Dan heath/Crown Business/
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DECISIVE

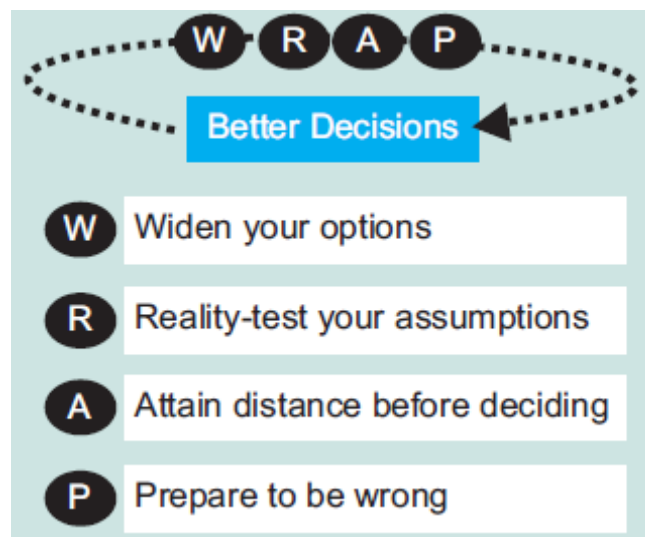
How to Make Better Choices in Life and Work

MAIN IDEA

When it comes to making decisions, you probably at one time or another have ended up making a bad decision because you've fallen foul of one or more of the four most common biases:

1. You narrow your options and miss better choices.
2. You only gather information which is favorable.
3. You let your emotions get in the way.
4. You're overconfident about how it will turn out.

The way to overcome these biases and become more decisive is to use the WRAP Process. Whenever you're faced with a decision:



"At its core, the WRAP model urges you to switch from “auto spotlight” to manual spotlight. Rather than make choices based on what naturally comes to your attention—visceral emotions, self-serving information, overconfident predictions, and so on— you deliberately illuminate more strategic spots. You sweep your light over a broader landscape and point it into hidden corners. We want to make you a bit better at making

good decisions, and we want to help you make your good decisions a bit more decisively (with appropriate confidence, as opposed to overconfidence). We also want to make you a better adviser to your colleagues and loved ones who are making decisions, because it's usually easier to see other people's biases than your own."

- Chip Heath and Dan Heath

About of Author

CHIP HEATH is a professor of organizational behavior in the Graduate School of Business at Stanford University. His research focuses on why some ideas survive and ultimately thrive in the broader marketplace of ideas. Dr. Heath's articles have appeared in Scientific American, the Financial Times, The Washington Post, Business Week, Psychology Today, and Vanity Fair. He is a graduate of Texas A&M University and Stanford.

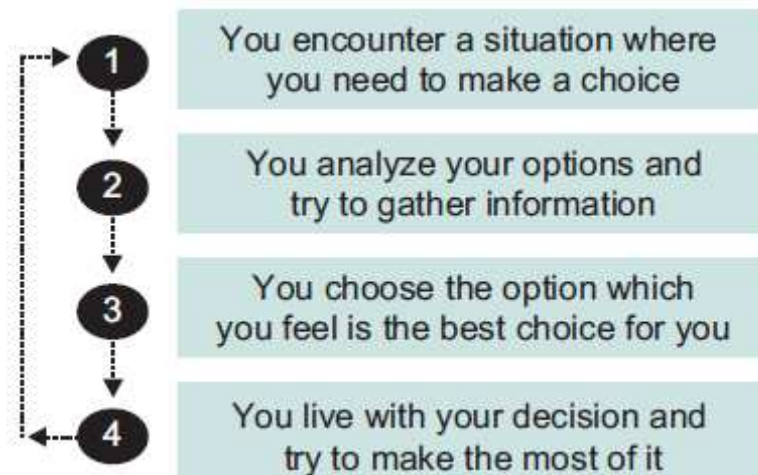
DAN HEATH is a consultant at Duke Corporate Education. He is a former researcher for Harvard Business School who now specializes in designing and delivering corporate training programs. Mr. Heath, a graduate of Harvard Business School and the University of Texas at Austin, also co-founded Thinkwell Inc., a company which develops multimedia college textbooks.

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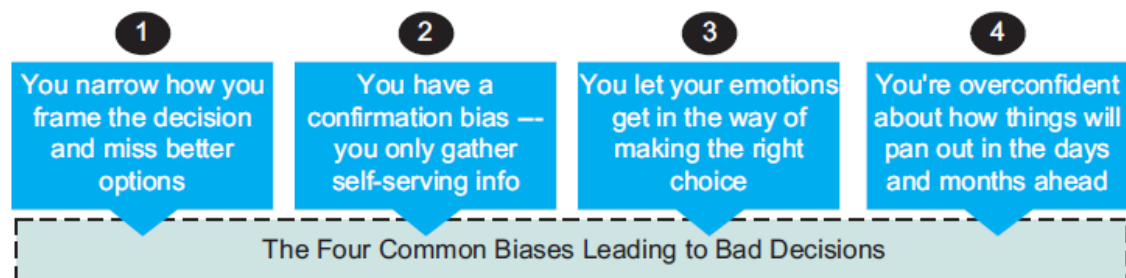
The four common biases which lead to bad decisions

If you're like most people, your decision-making process probably looks something like this:



To help in the decision, you might do a pro vs. con analysis for your various options. Inspired by Benjamin Franklin, this is where you write down all of the benefits you can see for each option and all of that options's corresponding disadvantages. You tally these up for each option and go with whichever option has the most advantages and the least disadvantages.

That overall decision-making process is OK but there are four villains which can affect each of these steps and which can distort the end decision:



1. It's all too easy to frame your choices too narrowly – to only consider those options which you assume are "realistic" and "workable."

For example, when you ask yourself "Should I buy a new car?" you're assuming using a car is the only choice you have. Therefore, it's just a matter of considering your budget, looking at what you can afford and then negotiating the best feasible price. To broaden your choices, you really should ask: "What's the best way I could spend my money which would make my family better off?" From that perspective, there may be better ways to achieve what you're trying to do than by upgrading your car. Framing your options too narrowly is unhelpful.

2. You may have a confirmation bias – where you only take notice of information which supports your beliefs or preferences and ignore everything which does not. The confirmation bias can be quite subtle. It will feel like you're gathering loads of information but the reality is you're only spotlighting the things which align with your preferences.
3. You may let your emotions get in the way – which happens all too often. When you have a difficult decision to make, you may get all worked up and end up going over the same points again and again. In fact, the more data you collect, the more cloudy the way forward may seem and the more paralyzed you may end up becoming.
4. You may be overconfident enough to think you can forecast the future with certainty – which is a very natural thing to do. The stories about record company executives who turned down highly successful groups like the Beatles are legendary. The future has an impressive and almost uncanny way of surprising the experts.

"If you review the research literature on decisions, you'll find that many decision-making models are basically glorified spreadsheets. If you are shopping for an apartment, for instance, you might be advised to list the eight apartments you found, rank them on a number of key factors (cost, location, size, etc.), assign a weighting that reflects the importance of each factor (cost is more important than size, for instance), and then do the math to find the answer (um, move back in with Mom and Dad). There's one critical ingredient missing from this kind of analysis: emotion."

– Chip Heath and Dan Heath

"The pros-and-cons approach is familiar. It is commonsensical. And it is also profoundly flawed. Research in psychology over the last 40 years has identified a set of biases in our thinking that doom the pros-and-cons model of decision making. If we aspire to make better choices, then we must learn how these biases work and how to fight them (with something more potent than a list of pros and cons)."

– Chip Heath and Dan Heath

"The odds of a meltdown are one in 10,000 years."

– Vitali Sklyarov, minister of power and electrification
in the Ukraine, two months before Chernobyl

"Who the hell wants to hear actors talk?"

– Harry Warner, Warner Bros. Studios, 1927

"What use could this company make of an electrical toy?"

– William Orton, president of the Western Union, in
1876, rejecting an opportunity to purchase
Alexander Graham Bell's patent on the telephone

"We don't like your boys' sound. Groups are out; four-piece groups with guitars are finished."

– Dick Rowe, Dekka Records talent scout in 1962
after listening to the Beatles' audition

"In life, we spend most of our days on autopilot, going through our usual routines. We may make only a handful of conscious, considered choices every day. But while these decisions don't occupy much of our time, they have a disproportionate

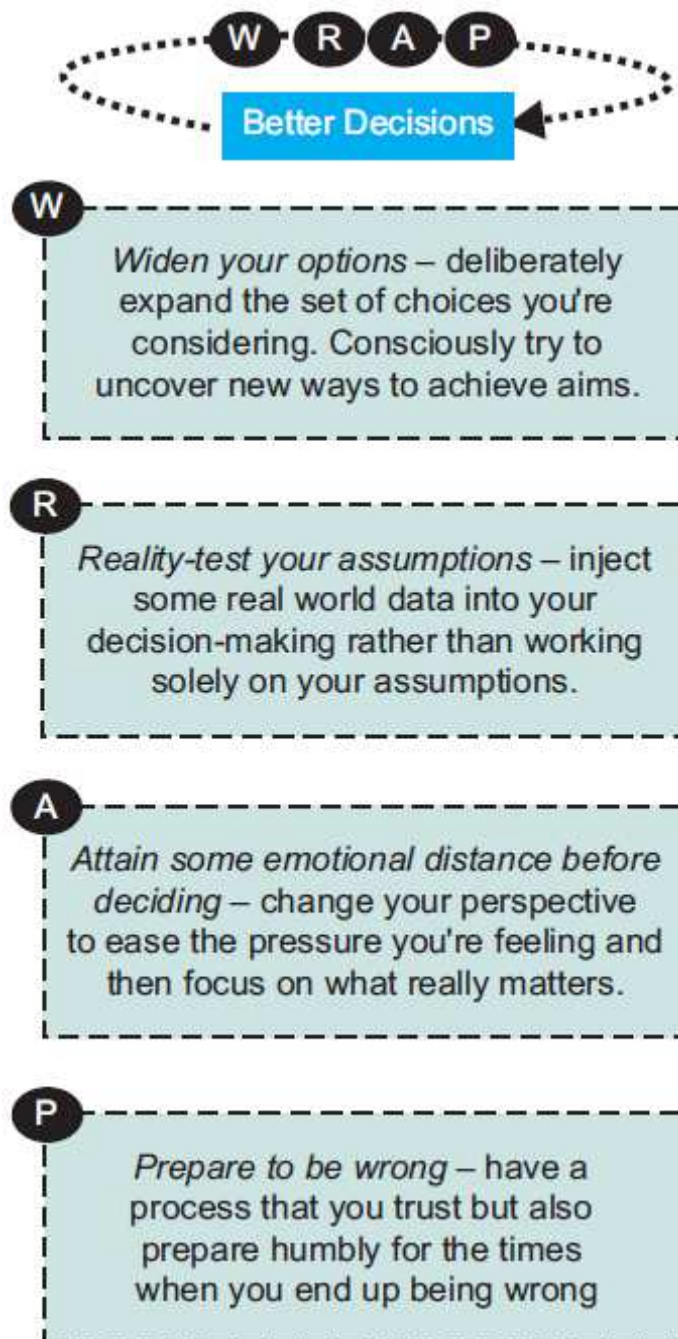
influence on our lives. The psychologist Roy Baumeister draws an analogy to driving—in our cars, we may spend 95% of our time going straight, but it's the turns that determine where we end up. The WRAP Process is about those turns."

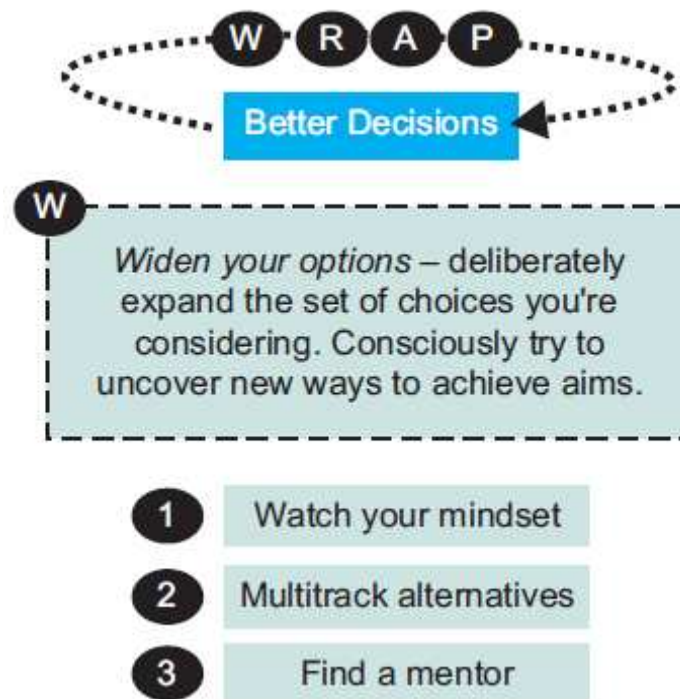
– Chip Heath and Dan Heath

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The WRAP Process for making better decisions

It's not really feasible to disconnect or deactivate your biases but you can counteract them by having the right kind of discipline and approach. To make better decisions, apply the WRAP Process:





The first step in making better decisions is to think more expansively about the options you have available. The three ways to do that are:

1 Watch your mindset

Many people when faced with a decision think they are in an either/or situation – whether to do something or not. In a 1999 study put together by Paul Nutt of Ohio State University's business school, it was shown that for 168 decisions which were made by corporations, only 29% considered more than one alternative. For the majority of these organizations, they approached decision making as "whether or not" rather than "is there a better way to achieve our aims?"

Based on this study, one suggestion for making better decisions is to invest some effort in coming up with more viable alternatives first. More often than not, the options are far more plentiful than you might think at first glance. You just have to instill the mindset that there's always more than one way to do things.

To get people aware of and thinking about alternatives, you can:

- Look at opportunity cost – how you could use the money for something else? Try and come up with a yardstick that works for you – "Would I rather spend this money on doing or would it be better spent on doing instead?"
- Use the vanishing options test – ask if you cannot choose any of the options currently on the table, what else could you do? For example, if you're trying to decide whether to fire your receptionist or not, you might first remind yourself going through the formal termination process is long-winded and distracting. Therefore, a better alternative might be to move the current receptionist to a support position and have others cover

the receptionist desk in short shifts. By making what appeared to be an either/or decision vanish, you open up your thinking about what other alternatives are lurking beneath the surface waiting to be explored.

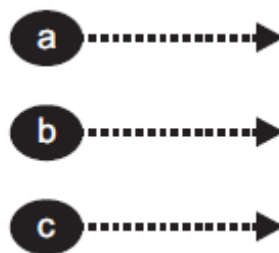
Being stuck in a narrow mindset can be hard to recognize from the inside. You might assume you're faced with a "whether-or-not" decision and a limited set of choices but that is rarely, if ever, the case. If you get everyone thinking about opportunity costs or using the vanishing options test, you'll always find there are more options available than you first realized. You just have to think creatively and expansively to get more viable options on the table where they can be considered and discussed.

The fact that so many corporations are prepared to make multi-million-dollar decisions without fully considering their options is quite staggering. A perfect example is Quaker. In 1983, Quaker bought Gatorade for \$220 million and ten years later had grown the value of the brand to \$3 billion. Enamored by that success, Quaker then purchased Snapple for \$1.8 billion in 1994. The Snapple acquisition proved to be problematic, especially in light of the fact it had been financed by debt. Three years later, Snapple was sold to Triarc for \$300 million, about one-sixth the original price. Quaker's CEO William Smithburg stepped down as a result of the debacle and later commented: "There was so much excitement about bringing in a new brand, a brand with legs. We should have had a couple of people arguing the 'no' side of the evaluation." In other words, Quaker analyzed the largest acquisition in its history without anyone arguing against the acquisition and forcing the management to justify their decision. It was a mindset which ultimately degenerated into a fiasco which cost Quaker \$1.5 billion in three years. The key takeaway is mindsets matter and they should be watched carefully and deliberately.

2

Multitrack alternatives

Another great way to widen your options so you make a better decision is to consider several options simultaneously and see which one develops the best. By following multiple paths at once, you let people explore different angles simultaneously and gather more data. This may sound inefficient but side-by-side comparisons can be invaluable.



The advantages of multitracking several alternatives are numerous and worthwhile:

- You learn the true "shape" of the problem – because you get to view it from several different perspectives.
- You avoid getting your ego tied up in the solution – because there is a constant reminder there's more than one way to do everything.

- You get away from evaluation paralysis – you get everyone focused on executing and making good things happen rather than endlessly analyzing the options.
- You have a great fallback position and options if everything goes hatwire.

You'll usually make better decisions if you're choosing between two or at three distinctly different alternatives. You really don't want to have 20 different options on the table as that gets too messy and confusing. Choosing between two or three also opens up the idea of combining the best features of each in a hybrid.

In practical terms, a good way to make this happen is to think "AND" rather than "OR". Actively follow several options and see which works best for yourself. For example, if you're contemplating a career shift, keep your current job but volunteer to work somewhere else during your vacation or for a few hours. Embrace one path but sample the other.

When trying to multitrack, keep in mind:

- You need to have two or more legitimate and viable options – sham alternatives won't work. You need to have people on your team who disagree before you have real options to choose from.
- As you multitrack, it's often useful to toggle between a prevention focus (where you're trying to stop some negative outcome) and a promotion focus (where you're acting to generate a positive outcome.) If you use both mindsets when multittracking alternatives, you'll also come up with better results.

3

Find a mentor

If you can find someone who's already solved your problem and team up with them or learn from their experiences, great things can happen. So how can you pick up great ideas from mentors? Three suggestions:

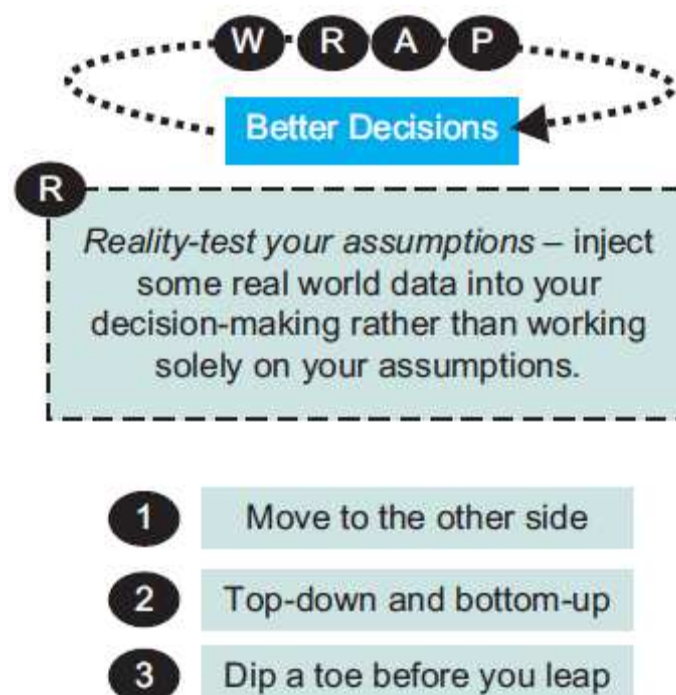


1. Look inside – find your organization's bright spots and figure out what it would take to scale these ideas up and apply them more widely. Look at what's already working for you and see if that idea can be applied more widely. As you work to try and replicate your own successes, it's often helpful to come with a checklist (of the things you don't want to get wrong) or a playlist (of the possibilities which come into view). Both checklists and playlists are helpful and can spark lots of creative ideas. For example, if you take a playlist approach to budget cuts, you may come up with an approach where you cut a little deeper in one area in order to have some extra funding to be able to apply to the development of a fresh idea in another part of the enterprise. To be proactive, encode what's going right in your bright spots into your playlist and use

that to seed fresh ideas.

2. Look outside – go see what your competitors are doing, benchmark them and absorb your industry's best practices. Capitalism and competitive markets are based on the ideal of "see what your competitor is doing and figure out how to gazump them." For example, when Sam Walton was first starting out in 1954, he took a 12-hour bus ride to see what another Ben Franklin store was doing with centralized checkout lines rather than a checkout counter in each department. He saw the advantages of the centralized model and implemented the idea in his own store which eventually expanded to Walmart. He later commented: "Most everything I've done I've copied from somewhere else. I'll bet I've been in more Kmart's than anybody."
3. Look in the distance – more than likely using the Internet, the world's extraordinary buffet of options and ideas. If you search online, chances are pretty good you'll find someone who has already solved your problem creatively and impressively. Look for analogies you can pick up on and adapt. A great example of this idea in action was Fiona Fairhurst, a designer hired by Speedo in 1997 to come up with a design for a swimsuit which would make swimmers go faster. Rather than studying what competitors were doing, Fairhurst went to the Natural History Museum in London where she was able to touch a shark. She was surprised to learn a shark's skin is rough – which was a Eureka moment. For years, Speedo had been trying to make swimsuits out of smooth fabric which theoretically would glide through the water. Fairhurst suddenly realized that's not what sharks do and therefore she came up with a rough-material swimsuit which covered much of the swimmer's body (to compress lumps and bumps). Speedo's new Fastskins swimsuit debuted at the 2000 Sydney Olympics where 83% of swimming medals were won by athletes who wore them. The international governing body of swimming responded by banning Fastskins in order to keep the sport competitive for those whodidn't have access to the Speedo swimsuits.

"Why generate your own ideas when you can sample the world's buffet of options?"
– Chip Heath and Dan Heath



All of us have a confirmation bias – we look only for facts which confirm our initial assumptions. To make better choices, you need to fight that. To do that:

1

Move to the other side

The first way to reality-test your assumptions is to assume the opposite is true and consider the facts. If you make a deliberate choice to move to the other side of the table and act as devil's advocate, you just may be able to spark enough constructive disagreement for some more trustworthy information to come out.

Note moving to the other side doesn't need to be showy or flashy to be effective. All you really need do is start asking some probing and uncomfortable questions others will have glossed over or ignored:

- "Who were the last three people to leave this firm? What are they doing now? How can I contact them to ask about their experiences in working for you?"
- "What problems does this new technology have?"
- "How can we assume positive intent on the part of the other party in this situation?"
- "What's the biggest potential obstacle you can see in this proposal?"
- "If we were to fail at this, why do you think that would be?"

It's helpful if these questions can be as open-ended as feasible. In the heat of the moment – especially when enthusiasm for a new idea is running rampant – it's hard to ask these kinds of questions. That's why this is such a valuable exercise. If you have the discipline to consider the opposite of what you believe is true, you will be able to avoid some serious mistakes.

2

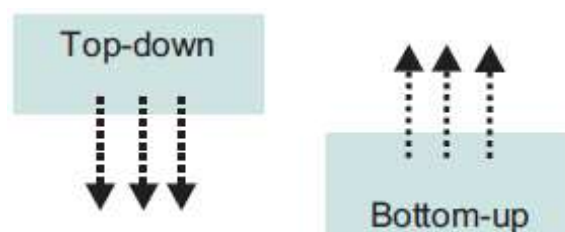
Top-down and bottom-up

When you're trying to make a major decision, it's natural to seek out the opinions of others and to factor these in. The problem is all too often, you probably trust your own instincts rather than expecting the average to hold sway. In other words, you like to assume you're unique, your situation is different and therefore the average doesn't really apply. This is usually a mistake.

"When our predictions and opinions clash with the universe's averages, the universe usually wins."

– Chip Heath and Dan Heath

A good way to offset this potential problem is to zoom in and zoom out – or to think both top-down and bottom-up. When you're faced with a decision:



1. Start by taking a top-down perspective – find out what the average rate of success of your new idea is and make that your baseline. The top-down perspective is to get the big picture firmly in mind. Take an outside view from 50,000 feet in the air and get some cold, hard facts about how things generally unfold in situations like this. If you can't find enough data on your own, talk to an expert in the field and get their overall read. Be careful not to ask them what will happen in the future – experts are usually horribly wrong at doing that. The only thing you need to find out by talking to the experts is what a reasonable base rate would be for your decision.
2. Once you have that big picture perspective established, you then take a bottom-up perspective – where you get up-close and personal with what's being proposed. You gather detailed data about specific cases which may or may not be typical of everybody but which will add data points which are missing from the big picture. This may be a case of identifying someone somewhere in your network who's faced a comparable decision and asking them for their experiences.

Franklin D. Roosevelt's administration averaged 5,000 to 8,000 pieces of mail per day. FDR had the mail sorted and analyzed scientifically by category and by stance so the president could see the larger trends. He also had his staffers select a sample of those letters which the president then read. By combining an understanding of the prevailing mood plus close-up details of how decisions would impact on individuals, FDR was able to make better political decisions.

3**Dip a toe before you leap**

If you really want to upgrade the quality of your decisions, find practical ways to run small tests of your theories. Or put another way, find a way to dip a toe in before you take a headlong leap of faith. You'll be amazed at how many mistakes this simple strategy will prevent you making.

If you ask an expert to predict the future, what they usually do is taking the current base rate and extrapolate from there. This almost always ends up being completely wrong. Rather than trying to create business forecasts, find ways you can try things quickly and inexpensively for yourself. For example:

- Bill Gross of idealab! loved the idea of selling cars over the Internet but didn't know if people would buy big ticket items that way. He hired a CEO for 90 days and told him to try and sell one car through a Web site. The new CEO got his developers to put up a two-page Web site which looked like it had an order form but in reality the site sent an e-mail to a clerk who looked up prices in the Kelley Blue Book and sent it back. Within 24 hours, three cars were sold and the green light was given to forming what would ultimately become CarsDirect.com – the largest auto dealer in the United States.
- Scott Cook, the founder of Intuit, is a great advocate of "leadership by experiment." When his Indian subsidiary's management approached him with the idea for a new mobile phone service in India, Cook's immediate reaction was to squash the idea. They suggested letting farmers pay a small subscription fee to receive information about market rates for various crops via their cell phones so they could take their harvest to the market offering the highest price. Although he thought the idea was harebrained, Cook agreed to let the team in India test a prototype of their idea. He

was stunned when the pilot turned out to be hugely popular. A few iterations later (13 to be exact), Intuit offers a highly sophisticated service which is now used by more than 325,000 farmers.

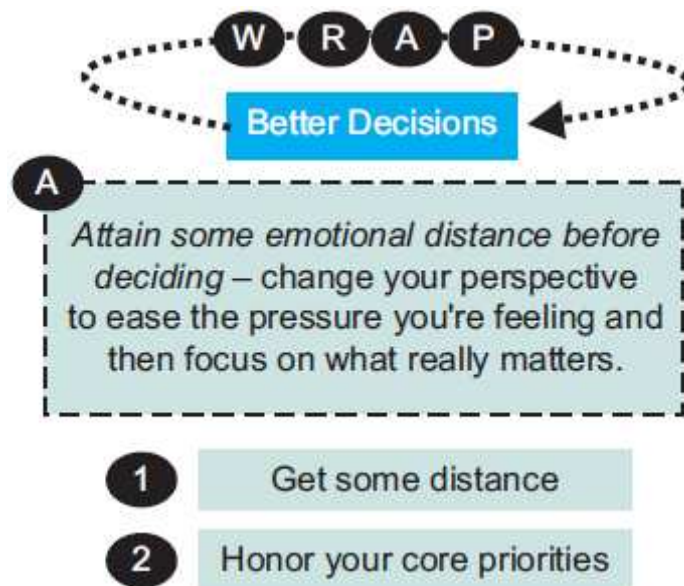
The whole point is expert's predictions have a great track record of being wrong. If you want to make better decisions, get out and test your assumptions first before you make major commitments of time and resources. Don't assume you know – make the facts stand up for themselves. Take your options for a genuine road test before you commit and you'll always end up making better decisions.

"The basic problem we face, in analyzing our options, is this: We will usually have an inkling of the one that we want to be the winner, and even the faintest inkling will propel us to gather supportive information— and sometimes nothing but supportive information. We cook the books to support our gut instincts. To avoid that trap, we've got to Reality-Test Our Assumptions."

– Chip Heath and Dan Heath

"Imagine if the U.S. Olympic track coach used two tests in selecting the men who'd run on the 4 × 100 relay team. Test 1: Get the man on the track to see how fast he runs. And test 2: Meet him in a conference room and see if he answers questions like a fast runner would. Note that in most of Corporate America, our hiring process looks more like test 2 than test 1. Let's all slap our foreheads in unison. Research has found that interviews are less predictive of job performance than work samples, job-knowledge tests, and peer ratings of past job performance. Even a simple intelligence test is substantially more predictive than an interview."

– Chip Heath and Dan Heath



It's all too easy to let short-term emotions tempt you into making choices which are bad over the long haul. To avoid that, there are a couple of things you can do:

- 1 Get some distance

Emotions, both subtle and more obvious, can get the best of you and stop you making a decision which is in your best long-term interests. Fortunately, avoiding this situation is surprisingly simple. Try this:

- Ask: "What would our successors do?" – that is, what would someone with a fresh mandate to act do? They would be clear-eyed and would feel no link to your legacy decisions. If you think about what they would do and then go out and do likewise, you'll often make a better decision.
- Ask: "What would I tell my best friend to do in this situation?" – which again will help you apply an outside perspective free from the immediate emotions and pressures you feel.
- Do a 10/10/10 analysis – which means to ask yourself
 - How will I feel about this 10 minutes from now?
 - How will I view this 10 months from now?
 - How will this look 10 years from now?

The 10/10/10 analysis forces some distance into your decision and levels the emotional playing field. It enables other factors to come into your decision-making analysis rather than short-term emotion being the only voice at the table.

- Clarify whether it's loss aversion or familiarity which is at play here – because both are quite subtle short-term emotions. From a practical perspective, loss aversion and exposure to the familiar mean we have a bias to maintain the status quo rather than trying to do something different and better. We often look back on a good decision as being a no-brainer but they never feel that way at the time.

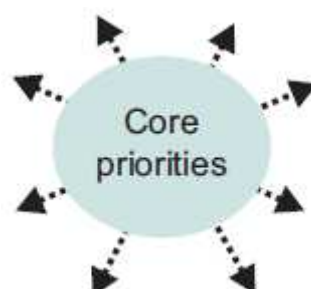
"The bias to overweight short-term emotions can have paradoxical effects. Sometimes it makes us erratic and too quick to act, as when we react aggressively to a driver who cuts us off on the road. More commonly, though, short-term emotion has the opposite effect, making us slow and timid, reluctant to take action. We see too much complexity and it stymies us. We worry about what we must sacrifice to try something new. We distrust the unfamiliar. Together, these feelings make individuals and organizations biased toward the status quo. A bias isn't destiny. We can distance ourselves from these emotions by using some quick mental shifts. These shifts let us see the outlines of the situation more clearly, and they help ensure that, in times when decisions are difficult, we'll be able to make decisions that are wiser and bolder."

– Chip Heath and Dan Heath

2

Honor your core priorities

The second way to distance yourself from an emotionally-charged situation so you can make a better decision is to reconnect with your core priorities. In practice, your core priorities are the long-term emotional values, goals and aspirations which you value the most. They describe the kind of person you want to be or the kind of organization you aspire to build.



If you can identify your core priorities and commit to enshrining them in your actions, then it becomes easier to resolve any dilemmas which arise. A good example of this idea in action is Dell Computer. Around 2000, Dell was making a serious attempt to move into services. The company recruited Wayne Roberts to head up a team of 20 who were based at Dell's corporate headquarters.

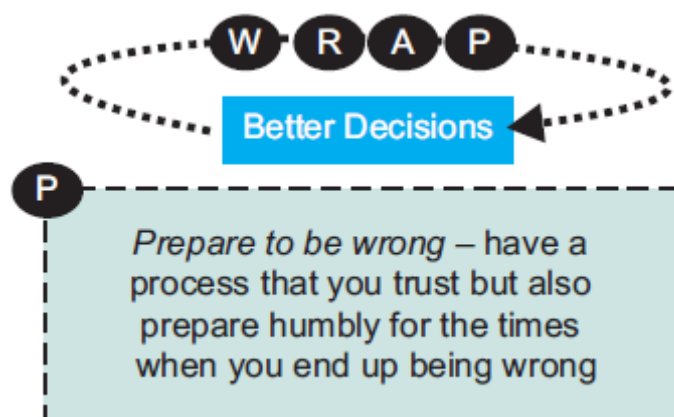
Within 18 months, Dell had more than 100 consultants out in the field and Roberts worried about how he could get everyone to use their best judgment while they were out at client sites. He came up with a set of principles (later called "Wayne's Rules") which included guiding principles like:

- Have a bias for action: Do first, apologize later.
- Be easy to do business with.
- Act on customer requests using your own initiative rather than waiting for approval from corporate headquarters.

As simple and obvious as these guidelines appear at first glance, the fact is putting them down on paper and sharing Wayne's Rules enabled everyone to make decisions quickly and correctly. The customer dilemmas which arise all the time could then be dealt with consistently and in an even-handed manner.

In addition to articulating your core priorities, it's also vital to carve out time to work on those priorities. MIT did a study which found many managers get so busy putting out all the bushfires that crop up they go from week to week without doing any activity which is directly related to their core priorities. Urgencies have a way of crowding out priorities. To carve out space for pursuing your core priorities, you can:

- Have a "stop doing" list of all the things you're going to give up in order to spend time on your priorities.
- Figure out smarter ways to do your important activities so you can spend more time on your mission critical tasks.
- Set your wristwatch so it chimes at the top of each hour and you then ask yourself: "Am I doing what I most need to be doing right now?" Every hour on the hour, remind yourself to get back to what really counts.

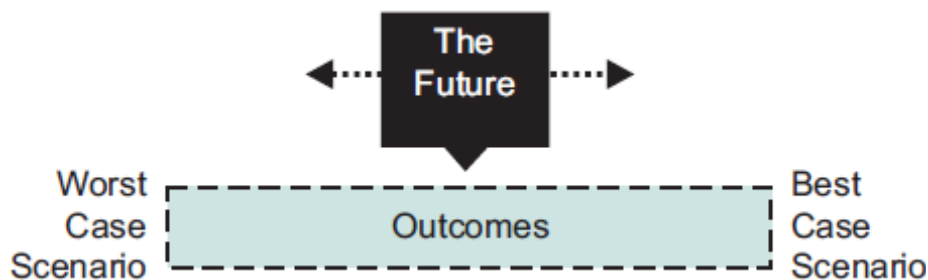


- 1 Bookend the future
- 2 Set a tripwire
- 3 Trust the process

Unfortunately, it's natural to feel overconfident about the way your decisions will unfold in the immediate future. To make better decisions, you've got to prepare to be wrong. How? Three suggestions:

- 1 Bookend the future

The first way to make a better decision is to remind yourself the future is never a single point but is instead a range of possibilities. If you figure out what that range looks like, you'll generally make better decisions.



To bookend the future is to come up with your "best guess estimate" of how the future will unfold. To bookend the future of any idea:

1. Hold a premortem – "It's a year from now. Our decision has utterly failed. What went wrong?" Figure out what your worst case scenario would look like and figure out how you would deal with that kind of devastation.
2. Then hold a prepatade – "It's a year from now. We're heroes because of the stunning success of this. Will we be ready to deal with that kind of success?" Figure out what you would do if the idea really takes off and is a blockbuster success story. Analyze how you would meet the demand.
3. Finally figure out how you can building in some safety factor – so you can prepare for the unforeseen. For example, elevator cables are made 11 times stronger than needed. Software development schedules typically build in a buffer factor. Do something equivalent in your planning.

The whole idea of bookending is by preparing for both adversity and success, you actually end up increasing the odds that you'll make a good decision. Instead of getting carried away by your enthusiasm, you'll be more realistic. You'll understand the full range of possibilities. You then have to work to end up at the right end of the spectrum.

David Lee Roth was the lead singer for the rock group Van Halen from the mid-1970s to the mid-1980s. Whenever the band went on tour, they would pull up to a venue with nine eighteen-wheelers packed with staging equipment. They had a detailed contract which set out how the venue needed to be set up for the band which contained a highly unusual clause. The contract specified the venue was to provide the band with a bowl of M&Ms backstage – with all the brown ones removed.

This clause (Clause 126 of the contract) became famous. The tales of Roth walking backstage, spotting a brown M&M and freaking out or trashing the dressing room became legendary. Most people assumed this was just another example of the egos of a rock band gone berserk, but the infamous M&M clause was written into the contract for a very specific purpose.

"When Roth would arrive at a new venue, he'd immediately walk backstage and glance at the M& M bowl. If he saw a brown M&M, he'd demand a line check of the entire production. "Guaranteed you're going to arrive at a technical error," he said. "They didn't read the contract.... Sometimes it would threaten to just destroy the whole show." In other words, David Lee Roth was no diva; he was an operations master. He needed a way to assess quickly whether the stagehands at each venue were paying attention—whether they'd read every word of the contract and taken it seriously. He needed a way, in other words, to snap out of "mental autopilot" and realize that a decision had to be made. In Van Halen's world, a brown M& M was a tripwire."

– Chip Heath and Dan Heath

Another way to make better decisions is to set tripwires which signal when change is needed. Tripwires can be especially helpful when change is gradual and people normally are running on autopilot expecting the future to be an extension of what happened in the past. Tripwires can snap you to attention and force you to make a hard choice if used appropriately.

For example, take Kodak, the company established by George Eastman in the late 1870s. When Eastman rolled out the Brownie camera which used rolls of film costing 15-cents each in 1898, Kodak had an 80%- 90% market share. In the twentieth century, Kodak released a high-quality color film which again was the market leader. Yet, when digital photography came along in the 1990s, Kodak failed to move with the times. Kodak's market capitalization went from \$31 billion in 1997 to \$2 billion in mid-2011 and bankruptcy in January 2012.

If Kodak had set tripwires for action, the story might have been different. The kind of tripwires it could have set would have been:

- We will start developing a digital camera when more than 10% of the public express satisfaction with the quality of digital images.
- We will respond with our own cameras once digital cameras attain a 5% market share.

To make better decisions, build some tripwires into your plans. Figure out the triggers which make sense for you. Tripwires can be based on market share, on deadlines, on amounts of resources to be committed, on the arrival of unexpected problems – on

pretty much any metric/date/criteria that makes sense to you. Tripwires are worthwhile because they reinforce the fact you always have choices to make.

3**Trust the process**

When you're making a group decision, it's vital that it is seen by all as being fair. Using the WRAP Process is a good way to achieve this because it gets everything out in the open. It contributes to the sense of fairness because it allows everyone to understand how a decision was arrived at and validated.

A few additional ideas worth keeping in mind when navigating group decisions:

- You'll generally be better off if you spend more time bargaining and horse-trading up-front than trying to fight the foot draggers later on – because that bargaining process yields buy-in. As long as people feel like they're being treated fairly, they will live with the trade-offs you have to make. It will take more up-front time to bargain but implementation will normally be accelerated when your bargain.
- Be sure procedural justice is perceived – that everyone feels they got a fair chance to present their ideas and be heard. You have to make sure accurate information was tabled, that everyone has the same opportunity to challenge and that any biases or self-interest are eliminated. It helps if you get a manager or mediator who can state everyone's position concisely and succinctly as well. You also want someone who is fearless in pointing out flaws and logic breakdowns.
- You want a decision-making process which is viewed as a guardrail guiding in the right direction – rather than merely a tallied list of pros and cons. Look at the WRAP Process as building confidence to head in the right direction rather than a guaranteed formula for success. If you trust the process, you're then able to take bigger risks and make bolder choices than would otherwise be the case. That's the real payoff of WRAP.

"Success emerges from the quality of the decisions we make and the quantity of luck we receive. We can't control luck. But we can control the way we make choices."

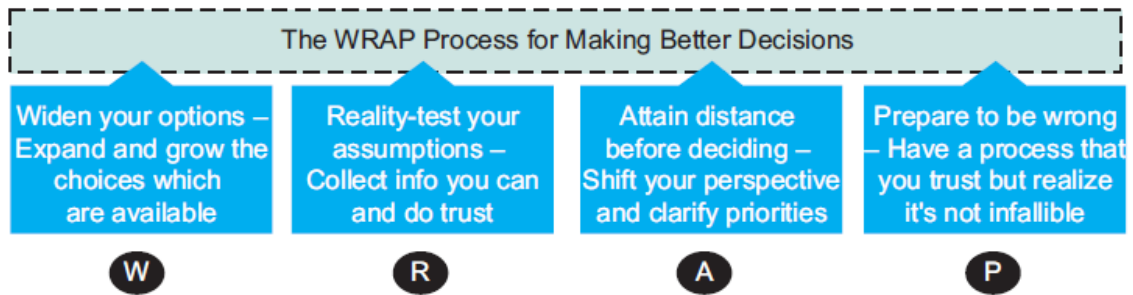
– Chip Heath and Dan Heath

"Using a process for decision making doesn't mean that your choices will always be easy, or that they will always turn out brilliantly, but it does mean you can quiet your mind. You can quit asking, 'What am I missing?' You can stop the cycle of agonizing."

– Chip Heath and Dan Heath

"Being decisive is itself a choice. Decisiveness is a way of behaving, not an inherited trait. It allows us to make brave and confident choices, not because we know we'll be right but because it's better to try and fail than to delay and regret. Our decisions will never be perfect, but they can be better. Bolder. Wiser. The right process can steer us toward the right choice. And the right choice, at the right moment, can make all the difference."

– Chip Heath and Dan Heath



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