

MAKING DECISIONS



"People often avoid making decisions out of fear of making a mistake.

Actually the failure to make decisions is one of life's biggest mistakes."

Noah Weinberg

WHAT IS THIS SKILL?

We make decisions every single day. Some decisions are simple, others are difficult. This may be because sometimes we don't have all the facts available to us. Other times it's because we lack the confidence to make the decision on our own. However, when you start work you have to start to make decisions. This will involve considering all the facts, comparing different options, thinking on our feet, taking risks and even challenging decisions (respectfully). These are all skills we can learn even if it takes a lifetime to master.

The good news is that this Facework challenge will help you improve this important skill and taking the time to become better at making decisions could be the best decision you make!

Before you start this challenge rate your current ability to make decisions.

T **TEAM WORKING**
Rate yourself

Making Decisions



1

Not great

☐


2

Need help

☐


3

OK

☐


4

Improving

☐


5

Mastering

☐


ARE YOU UP FOR THE CHALLENGE TO IMPROVE ?





WHY IS THIS SKILL VITAL IN THE WORK PLACE?

Everyday those who run businesses have to make hundreds of decisions. Sometimes these are very simple ones, other times they are more complex. Employers need staff who understand that decisions need to be made, who will contribute to the decision making process and who are supportive once decisions are made. Indeed as you grow in your career you too will have to make decisions. So how do we improve?

Here are 5 tips:



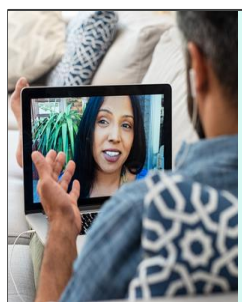
1) DISCOVER YOUR VOICE. Sometimes we struggle to make decisions because we may not have strong opinions, or if we do we don't feel anyone will listen to us. When you begin work you can develop confidence and discover your voice by expressing your views. Building confidence can take time, but these questions will help you on your journey to discover your passion and your voice. *What angers you? What gives you hope? Who inspires you? If you had one day left, how would you spend it?*



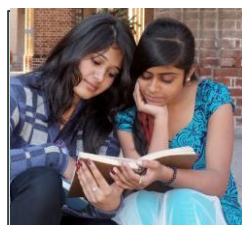
2) DECISIONS ARE MADE ON DATA. When making a decision gather all the facts and consider the situation in detail. It's important that you can support your decision with facts – especially if the decision is divisive. If you can demonstrate how you have made a decision based on facts it will give you authority and confidence. *"In making this decision I have reviewed the facts and the evidence all points to..."* A warning; we live in an age of false news and information so check your sources.



3) EXPLORE YOUR OPTIONS. Sometimes people make decisions on an emotional, or 'gut' level. Before you rush into making a decision, ask yourself what are the other choices? It can take time but it can be good to talk with other people and explore different options. Could you say *"I'm having to make a decision between two options. I think I know what is the best one, but can I ask you to play devil's advocate and critique my decision and think about the other options?"*



4) COMMUNICATE, COMMUNICATE, COMMUNICATE! Making decisions can be stressful. When we become stressed we can retreat and fail to communicate, maybe the decision seems too difficult to discuss! However, when people find out about the decision after it has been made, it can lead to tension especially if a decision affects a team. Consult and take people with you when you have to make a decision, What about, *"I am having to make a big decision, but I want all those affected by the decision to have their say."*



5) REVIEW YOUR DECISION AND LEARN FROM MISTAKES. We learn from mistakes but as someone once said, *"More people would learn from their mistakes if they weren't so busy denying them!"* So it's vital that as you grow in your career that you can recognise, accept and admit when you have made mistakes. *"I realised I made a mistake in my decision, but I can now see...."*

Which of the above tips applies to you most ?

What can you do to improve in this area?



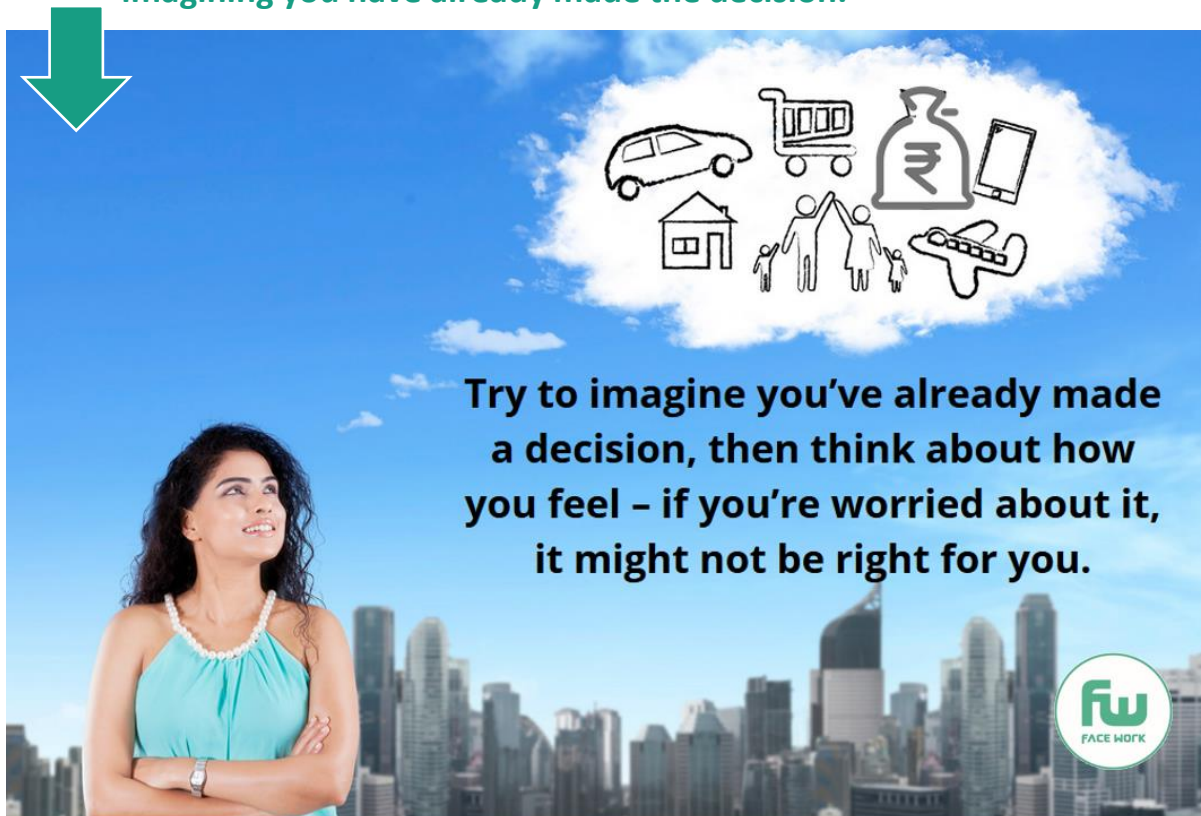
HOW IS THIS SKILL RELEVANT TO MY PERSONAL LIFE?

Improving on your decision making skills can help you in your personal life too.


Think of a time when you have had to make a big personal decision and complete the exercise below.

What was the personal decision you had to make?
What helped you make the decision?
Was it the right decision? Why?
What did you learn from this process?
What would you do differently if you had to make the same decision today?

One of the most effective ways of mastering your decision making skills is in imagining you have already made the decision.



Try to imagine you've already made a decision, then think about how you feel – if you're worried about it, it might not be right for you.



Now imagine how you would feel if you avoided making this decision. Remember making no decision is a decision.



HOW CAN I MASTER THIS SKILL?

There are lots of articles and resources online that can help you master this skill. Here are 6 practical activities you can start today.



TRY NOT TO WORRY THAT YOU WILL MAKE THE WRONG DECISION

You won't know whether you have made the wrong decision until you have made it. Worrying is the thief of progress. Yes be cautious, but don't procrastinate and don't let fear be your enemy. Remember if you don't make a decision, that is a decision.



RECOGNISE WHAT YOUR DEFAULT POSITION IS

As you develop your career you will begin to notice what your default position is. We all have one. Some people call it their comfort zone. Think about how you usually make decisions. Do you play safe, or take a risk, do you try to please other people, or say how you really feel? Once you have recognised your default position, make sure you account for it when you make decisions as it may be unduly influencing you.



TALK TO GOOD DECISIONS MAKERS

Do you have a family friend, a previous teacher, or someone you have worked for in the past who you know is a good decision maker? Why not ask them; ***What tips do you use to help you make decisions? Have you ever made a bad decision? What advice would give me as I try to get more confident in making decisions?***



TRUST YOUR INSTINCT

As you grow in confidence and experience you will start to recognise when you have made a good decision. Think about what helped you make that decision. Sometimes it is your own instinct or insight. Some people can 'read' other people well, or can identify a trend or a new opportunity. Learn to trust your instinct but remain humble and open to learning. That's a powerful combination for being a good leader.



STUDY THE PROS AND CONS BEFORE YOU MAKE A DECISION

When making a decision it's helpful to list both the good and the bad things about the options. It's important to think about the 'opportunity cost' of making one decision over another. An opportunity cost is what you lose from making a decision a certain way.



SHARE YOUR ADVICE ABOUT MAKING DECISIONS WITH OTHERS

As you build on your decisions making skills, there are many people who will benefit from your insight, experience and skills. Indeed there are lots of jobs which require helping others make decisions. For example, counsellors, financial planners, career coaches and teachers. When you get good at making decisions, a range of new opportunities can open up. Helping other people with decisions can give you great job satisfaction.



He also faces the challenge that he has to look after his younger sister on the day of the interview, and he needs to get a relative to look after her for the full day. He has a relative who offers to help, but she will need to be paid for travel to his home.

Rohan also has to tell his current employer that he needs the day off so he can travel to the interview. He isn't sure whether to tell his current employer about his new job interview, or to tell him that he has to look after his sister.



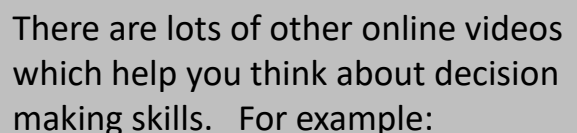
- a) Take the bus there and back and can save more of his money and thereby pay his relative. However he risks being late for the interview.
- b) Borrow some money to take the taxi there, and the bus back, and pay his relative some of her travel costs so she can look after his sister. (Promising to pay the rest later).
- c) Requesting a wage advance from his employer so he can afford everything, and tell his current employer about his potential new job?

Which option would you advise Rohan to take?

- Each of the decisions has a potential positive and negative consequence and opportunity cost.
- Can you think of other options?

Think that was challenging? Try this online one:

www.youtube.com/watch?v=RIYxBdNxi-A



www.youtube.com/watch?v=pPIhAm_WGbQ

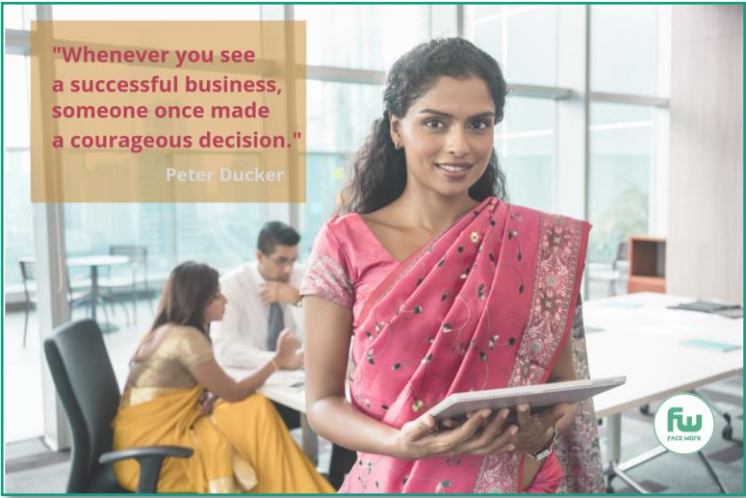
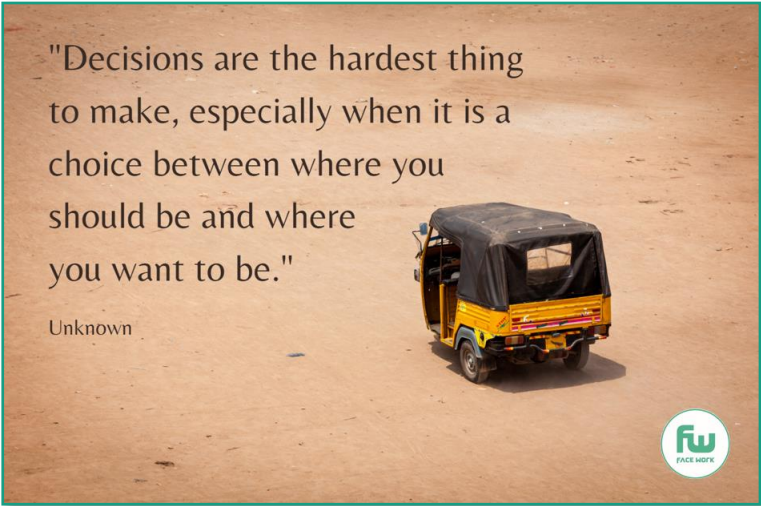
www.youtube.com/watch?v=XT0Awg-Fpxw

Finally, remember:

Making decisions can be very hard to make, especially when you are facing challenging personal circumstances. But don't give up.

Could you send this picture to a friend who you know is having to make a big decision?

(Right click on the image with your mouse, save and then send)

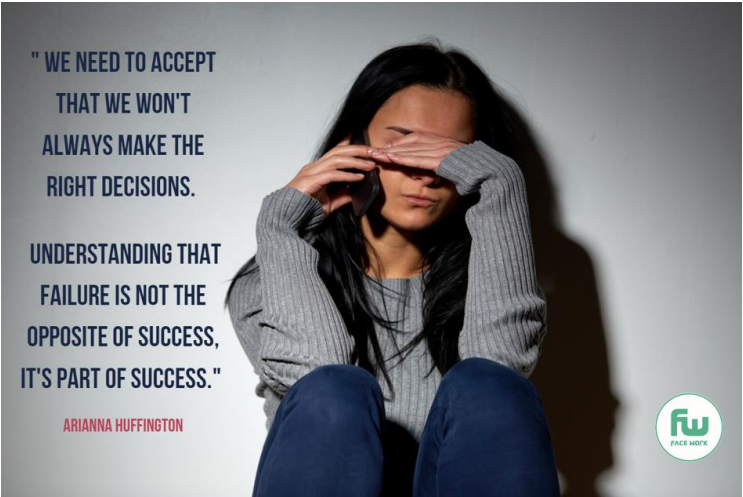


Remember too, that making bold decisions takes courage. Don't let anyone pour scorn on your courage. The easiest thing to do is to not make a decision.

Could you send this picture to a friend who you know is having to make a courageous decision?

Finally we all make mistakes. Yes these can be serious and difficult to get over, but they don't define us.

Could you send this picture to a friend who you know is feeling a failure?



Now return to the rating card you scored yourself at the start – how would you rate yourself now ?



TEAM WORKING
Rate yourself

Making Decisions



1

Not great

☐

2

Need help

☐

3

OK

☐

4

Improving

☐

5

Mastering

☐