

MASTER YOUR DECISIONS

ACTION GUIDE

Part I. What Decisions Are and How They Shape Your Future

Look at each of the areas of your life listed below and rate yourself on a scale from 1 to 10, 1 being totally dissatisfied, 10 being satisfied.

- Career,
- Finances,
- Friendships,
- Romantic relationships,
- Mental health,
- Physical health,
- Personal development, and
- Spirituality (if relevant to you).

Now, for each of these areas, ask yourself what decisions (good or bad) led you to where you currently are.

Career

Good decisions	Bad/subpar decisions

What I would do if I could start all over again:

Finances

Good decisions	Bad/subpar decisions

What I would do if I could start all over again:

Friendships

Good decisions	Bad/subpar decisions

What I would do if I could start all over again:

Romantic relationships

Good decisions	Bad/subpar decisions

What I would do if I could start all over again:

Mental health

Good decisions	Bad/subpar decisions

What I would do if I could start all over again:

Physical health

Good decisions	Bad/subpar decisions

What I would do if I could start all over again:

Personal development

Good decisions	Bad/subpar decisions

What I would do if I could start all over again:

Spirituality

Good decisions	Bad/subpar decisions

What I would do if I could start all over again:

Deciding is committing

What have you committed to in the past that enabled you to achieve great results? Write down one example below:

What do you want to commit to moving forward in order to improve your life? Write down one example below:

II. Why you make the decisions you do

To improve your decisions, you must understand what led you to make them in the first place. In truth, there are a variety of factors that influence your decisions such as:

- Your beliefs,
- Your past experience,
- Your values,
- Your goals, and
- Your environment.

Let's review each factor and work together on having them work for you, not against you.

Factor #1. Your beliefs

Uncover your limitations

One way to identify your limitations is to assess where you currently are in various areas of your life. For each area of your life you feel dissatisfied with (those with a score of 5 or lower), ask yourself why. More specifically, consider the following questions:

1. What's stopping you?
2. What would you need to believe to move toward your goals?
3. What would it take for you to get the results you desire?

Career	
What's stopping me?	
What would I need to believe to move toward my goals?	
What would it take for me to get the results I desire?	

Finances	
What's stopping me?	
What would I need to believe to move toward my goals?	
What would it take for me to get the results I desire?	

Friendships	
What's stopping me?	
What would I need to believe to move toward my goals?	
What would it take for me to get the results I desire?	

Romantic relationships	
What's stopping me?	
What would I need to believe to move toward my goals?	
What would it take for me to get the results I desire?	

Mental health	
What's stopping me?	
What would I need to believe to move toward my goals?	
What would it take for me to get the results I desire?	

Physical health	
What's stopping me?	
What would I need to believe to move toward my goals?	
What would it take for me to get the results I desire?	

Personal development	
What's stopping me?	
What would I need to believe to move toward my goals?	
What would it take for me to get the results I desire?	

2. Update your beliefs

A. Challenge yourself

One way to change your beliefs is to take action. To do so, challenge yourself, and practice setting and achieving small goals consistently.

Then, write down one fear or limiting belief that holds you back.

My fear/limiting belief:

Write down one specific thing you could do to start challenging yourself on that front.

One thing I'll do to challenge myself is:

B. Accumulate small wins over time

Select one or two things you could do each day to improve your life.

What I could do every day:

Now, make sure you do that/those thing(s) consistently every day for 30 days (30-day challenge). Then keep going for sixty days, ninety days, or beyond.

Alternatively, select other habits and start a new 30-day challenge.

Factor #2. Your past experiences

1. Revisiting your past and updating your identity

To “change” your past, you must change the story you’re telling yourself. Rate yourself on a scale from 1 to 10 for each statement below:

I understand that I’m a work in progress and avoid beating myself up.

1 _____ 10

I see myself as an unstoppable learner.

1 _____ 10

I perceive myself as capable of changing.

1 _____ 10

I see myself as having grit, and I don’t give up easily.

1 _____ 10

I’m a problem solver, and I know I can figure things out.

1 _____ 10

In short, as you move toward a new and better future, make sure you:

- Understand you are a work in progress
- See yourself as a learner.
- Perceive yourself as being capable of changing.
- See yourself as having grit.
- Realize you’re a problem solver.

2. Extracting invaluable lessons and crafting a better story

Your past contains lessons that can change your life. Answer the following questions:

What are three invaluable lessons that I could extract from my past?

Lesson #1:

Lesson #2:

Lesson #3:

What empowering meaning could you give to your past so that it acts as fuel to accelerate your success?

Factor #3. Your values

i. Aligning your actions with your words

A. Identifying your values

If you could pick only one thing, what would you say is the one thing that matters the most to you? Try writing it down below:

The one thing that matters the most to me is:

Now, keep repeating that question until you have your top 3 priorities. Write your answer below:

The second thing that matters the most to me is:

The third thing that matters the most to me is:

Finally, look at how you're using your time. Are you using your limited resources in a way that is aligned with your top values? If not, what could you do about it?

B. Becoming the person you want to be

Answer the following questions:

What kind of person do you want to be? Write one or two sentences to describe the person you aspire to be.

Who I aspire to be:

Now, what values do you need to embody in order to be that person?

To embody that person I need to:

C. Optimizing your life for what matters

Look at your current life. If you were radically honest with yourself, what would you say you're optimizing your life for (based on your actions, not intentions or wishful thinking)?

I'm currently optimizing my life for:

What do you want to optimize your life for. Is it for adventure? Comfort? Fulfillment?

I want to optimize my life for:

What do you need to do in order to optimize your life for what matters most to you?

Factor #4. Your goals

I. How to set and achieve inspiring goals

A. Start with your vision

Use the space below to brainstorm ideas and write down your vision. Don't worry, you'll have plenty of time to refine your vision later.

As a reminder, a good vision should:

- Stretch you.
- Have no end point.
- Inspire you to act.
- Be aligned with your values.

Brainstorm ideas for your vision using the space below:

[illegible]

Write down your vision.

My vision in a few sentences is:

Select one specific long-term goal aligned with that vision.

My goal is:

B. Use pen and paper

Make sure you write down your goals in this action guide or a separate sheet of paper using the SMART methodology.

As a reminder, SMART stands for:

- **Specific:** What exactly do you want? What are you trying to achieve?
- **Measurable:** Can you assess the progress towards your goal easily? How will you know whether you've achieved it?
- **Achievable:** Is it achievable? Is the timeframe realistic? Can you put in the effort required despite your other responsibilities?
- **Relevant:** Is it in line with your values? Is it exciting for you?
- **Time-limited:** Do you have a clear deadline for your goals?

C. Break down your goals

Now, ask yourself what would need to happen for you to reach that goal? Identify the specific milestones you'll need to hit along the way.

The main milestones I must achieve to reach my vision are:

Now that you have identified the key milestones, what specific goals do you need to reach this year, this month, this week, or today to move closer to your vision? Write them down below. For the sake of this exercise, try to stick to only three main goals for each:

My yearly goals:

-
-
-

My monthly goals:

-
-
-

My weekly goals:

-
-
-

Today's goals:

-
-
-

D. Further break down your goals

Whenever necessary, consider breaking down your goals further.

E. Create routines and processes

Go back to your vision and long-term goal. Then, answer the following question in the space below:

If I were to do a very few tasks every single day (or consistently), which ones would almost guarantee that I'll reach that long-term goal?

The very few tasks I could do to almost guarantee my success are:

What could you do to turn these tasks into habits or processes to increase the odds you'll reach your long-term goals?

My habits/processes:

Factor #5. Your environment

Your environment has enormous impact on the way you think, feel and act. For better results, you must improve your mental, physical and people environment.

A. Mental environment

Write down the single action you could take that would have the greatest positive impact on your mental environment.

My one thing:

B. Physical environment

Write down the single action you could take that would have the greatest positive impact on your physical environment.

My one thing:

C. People environment

Write down the single action you could take that would have the greatest positive impact on your people environment.

My one thing:

III. Making better decisions

I. Understanding the probabilistic nature of the world

People often believe the world works as follows:

If I do X (action), then I'll get Y (desired outcome).

But this is not how reality works. Here is a more accurate description:

If I do X, there is a probability I get Y.

A. Thinking in bets / B. Creating luck

Now, come up with a few examples from your personal life (odds that you will pass an exam, land a certain job, win a tournament, etcetera). Fill in the first column “example” in the table below.

Example	Probability it occurs	Revised probability

C. Assessing your probabilities of success

Now, in the column “probability it occurs” in the table above, write down the probability that specific event happens based on what you currently know.

Then, refine your probabilities by challenging your assumptions and biases. Remember the following factors:

- Be conservative.
- Have an objective look at your assessment.

Write down the updated probability in the last column, “revised probability”.

D. Increasing your odds of success

Finally, write down below the specific actions you could take to increase your odds of success:

To go one step further, you can complete the following exercise:

- Think of one decision that turned out well.
- Write down the odds at the time you made the decision.
- Write down what you could have done to improve your odds of success.
- Repeat the process for one decision that didn't turn out as planned.

My one decision that worked out:

At the time you made that decision, what would you say the odds it turned out as planned were?

Odds it would work out as planned:

In hindsight, what could you have done differently to improve your odds?

What I could have done differently:

Repeat the process for a decision that didn't work out as planned.

My one decision that did *not* work out:

Odds it would work out as planned:

What I could have done differently to improve the odds:

2. Eliminating cognitive biases

Below are the main biases to be aware of when making decisions:

1. **Sunk cost fallacy**—believing you must keep investing resources into a failing endeavor so that the resources weren't wasted.
2. **Status quo bias**—assuming that your past history or current trajectory dictates your destiny.
3. **Present bias**—tendency to prioritize immediate rewards or benefits over long-term gains or future consequences.
4. **Detail-oriented bias**—missing the wood for the trees. Believing effectiveness is the same as efficiency.
5. **Emotional reasoning**—believing that what you feel necessarily dictates the way you act.
6. **Spotlight effect**—overestimating the extent to which others pay attention to your appearance, behavior or performance in social situations.
7. **Illusory pattern perception**—thinking that one thing causes another just because it appears that way.
8. **Confirmation bias**—looking for what you want to find instead of seeking the truth.

9. **Single solution bias**—believing there is only one way to reach your goals.
10. **Straw man fallacy**—ignoring real problems by focusing on less important ones.
11. **Illusion of knowledge**—convincing yourself that you know more than you do.
12. **Scarcity bias (fear of missing out)**—believing there isn't enough for everyone and that opportunities are limited.

For each statement below, rate yourself on a scale from 1 to 10, one being false, 10 being true.

I keep doing what I've invested a lot of time and effort in (sunk cost fallacy).

1 _____ 10

I assume my past determines my future (status quo bias).

1 _____ 10

I prioritize immediate rewards over long-term gains (present bias).

1 _____ 10

I focus on details while failing to focus on the big picture (detail-oriented bias).

1 _____ 10

I let my feelings determine my actions (emotional reasoning).

1 _____ 10

I worry a lot what people think of me (spotlight effect).

1 _____ 10

I look for causes and effects too aggressively (illusory pattern perception).

1 10

I look for confirmation rather than seeking to disprove my beliefs (confirmation bias).

1 10

There is only one way to reach my goals (single solution bias).

1 10

I think I know more than I actually do (illusion of knowledge).

1 10

I think opportunities are limited and there isn't enough for everyone (scarcity bias).

1 10

Bias #1. Sunk cost fallacy

If you were to start all over again, what would you do differently?
Consider the areas below as you reflect on your current situation.

- Career,
- Finance,
- Fitness,
- Health,
- Romantic relationships,
- Personal development,
- Social life, and
- Spirituality.

Bias #2. Status quo bias

In what ways are you letting your past dictate your future? Come up with at least one example.

What could you start doing differently to move toward the life you want?

Bias #3. Present bias

Is what you're doing today moving you closer to where you want to be in ten years? If not, why not?

What is one thing you could do each day to make progress toward your long-term goals?

Bias #4. Detail-oriented bias

In what ways are you being efficient, but not effective?

What one thing could you do to become more effective?

What one thing would you change if you perceive busyness as an illness to be cured?

Bias #5. Emotional reasoning

What are you putting off doing because you don't feel like doing it?

Bias #6. Spotlight effect

Complete the exercises below:

- Choose one acquaintance.
- Ask yourself how often you think about that person in your daily life.
- Now, put yourself in their shoes. How much do you imagine they think about you throughout the day?
- Draw your own conclusion.

Bias #7. Illusory pattern perception

Think of one of your major goals. Then, answer the following questions:

What assumptions are you making? What is your current strategy based on?

What do you think needs to happen for you to reach that goal?

Bias #8. Confirmation bias

Write down below one belief you hold dearly.

Then, write down what you consider the opposite of that belief would be.

Finally, look for information that would validate the opposite of what you're believing.

Bias #9. Single solution bias

What is one specific way you're falling for the single solution bias?

What could you do specifically to overcome it?

Bias #10. Straw man fallacy

What is one way you're falling for the straw man fallacy?

Brainstorm below what you could do to overcome this fallacy:

Bias #11. Illusion of knowledge

What is the most important thing you know intellectually but haven't applied consistently in your life?

What could you do definitely to start living it rather than merely knowing it?

Bias #12. Fear of missing out

How does the fear of missing out manifest in your life right now?

If you weren't afraid of missing out and you understood that opportunities were endless, what would you focus on right now? What would you start saying no to?

3. Redefining risks

A. Not taking risks is risky

By not taking risks, how am I exposing myself to more risks right now or in the future?

Now, what “calculated” risks could I start taking now or in the near future to minimize regrets?

B. Separate ego threat from survival threat

Many people would rather protect their ego than face discomfort and live the life they desire.

What about you? In what way are you overprotecting your ego?

What could you do to move toward the life you desire? Write one or two specific things.

1.

2.

C. Take more calculated risks

The more you're willing to take risks that threaten your ego, the more power you have to change your life.

On a scale from 1 to 10, 1 being false, 10 being true, rate yourself for each of the following statements.

I do uncomfortable things on a regular basis.

1 _____ 10

I'm willing to embrace uncertainty and move forward instead of staying stuck.

1 _____ 10

I accept being judged and act anyway.

1 _____ 10

I'm good at reframing failure as feedback.

1 _____ 10

IV. Organizing your decisions

I. Enhancing clarity

Clarity is the necessary condition to making better decisions. You can't move toward what you want unless you know what you want.

A. Spending time in silence

Create a plan to spend a little bit more time alone in silence. For instance, go for a walk, meditate or clean the house.

What will you do to spend a little bit more time in silence this week?

As you spend time alone, pay attention to the following things:

- Thoughts and beliefs that come from other people.
- External pressure and things that you don't want to do but things you should do.
- "Logical" decisions or choices that you struggle to stand behind.

B. Reducing choices

Having too many choices clutters our mind and forces us to make more complex decisions. To make better decisions, limit your choices.

a. Limiting the amount of information you're exposed to.

Ask yourself the following questions:

If I were to stop doing one activity, which one would significantly reduce the amount of information I'm exposed to?

What's one action I could take this week to reduce the amount of information I'm exposed to?

b. Being intentional with your day.

Write down your daily goals, set a clear intention for the day and/or optimize your environment to encourage good behaviors and discourage bad ones.

What specific actions will I take to be more intentional with my day?

c. Taking into account your values and preferences.

Separate unimportant decisions from important ones by looking at your core values.

Fill in the table below:

What I value most during my day	What I value least during my day

Now, ask yourself, what could you do specifically to ensure that you spend more time doing what matters the most to you while eliminating the rest?

d. Proactively narrowing down choices.

What rules could you establish to simplify your decision-making process (eating the same breakfast each day, stacking habits together, et cetera)?

Write down your answer below:

e. Prioritizing curated content.

Now, what curated content could you consume so as to reduce the amount of information you ingest daily (For instance, reading news weekly instead of daily)?

To curate content I will:

2. 80/20-ing your life

Step #1. Select one key area to focus on (i.e., the one that will likely have the biggest impact on your life).

The key area I want to focus on is:

Step #2. Identify the few things that will get you the bulk of your results

The few impact actions I could take are:

Step #3. Turn your tasks into daily habits

The daily habits I could implement to achieve tangible results in that area are:

Step #4. Stick to your habits for an entire month

I will do a 30-day challenge starting from _____ until _____.

Step #5. Refine your process by adding more tasks. Or stick to your current approach if you're happy with the results.

The additional tasks I will add (if needed) are:

Step #6. Repeat the process with another area

The second area I'll focus on next is:

Step #7. Put more effort into areas that matter most to you.

Finally, if you desire to excel in one specific area, put more effort in that area.

3. Think holistically

To think more holistically, consider the following points:

- Timing—is now the right time?
- Psychological benefits/harm—does it help you feel at peace?
- Personal values—is it aligned with your core values?
- Effectiveness—is it the best way to attain the results you want?
- Momentum building—does it create a virtuous circle that can improve your life?

Now, think of one difficult decision you made in the past.

Your difficult decision was:

Then, answer the following questions:

Was the timing right? If not, why not?

What were the psychological pros and cons that came with it?

How well was it aligned to your values and preferences? (1 is completely misaligned and 10 is perfectly aligned).

1 10

How effective was it in moving you toward the life you want? (1 is completely ineffective and 10 is extremely effective).

1 10

How much momentum did it enable you to create (if any?) Explain how.

Repeat the process for any future decision as needed.

4. Streamlining your decisions

By eliminating, delegating, automating and combining, you can dramatically improve your ability to make good decisions that will change your life for the better.

A. Eliminating

Look at your typical weekly schedule. Then, write down below the activities you could eliminate or reduce:

B. Delegating

Answer the following questions:

What are you doing that you don't enjoy doing?

What are you doing poorly?

What are you doing that is taking a lot of your time?

If you lived in an ideal world where you could focus only on what you enjoy doing, what would you spend most of your time doing?

C. Automating your decisions

Strive to automate (or delegate) any action that must be done repeatedly. You can do so by:

- Creating processes.
- Automating the tasks using technology.

Creating processes

To create processes, follow the four steps below:

1. Identify a repeated decision that can be turned into a process.
2. Create the process.
3. Do the same with another decision.
4. Rinse and repeat.

Think of one process you could create to save time and willpower. Write it down below:

Automating tasks

Write down below two or three tasks you could automate to free your time.

D. Combining

When you can stick to a few good daily habits consistently over the long term, you can transform your life beyond anything you can imagine.

Below are some examples of powerful daily habits:

- Working on your most important task first.
- Writing down your goals.
- Meditating.
- Working out.
- Practicing gratitude.

Write down below a couple of daily habits you could adopt to improve your well-being and/or boost your productivity.

5. Make decisions faster

A. Be impatient short term but patient long term

Strive to act every day with a sense of urgency. At the same time, keep in mind the big picture and understand that any meaningful goal will take years to reach.

B. Reverse your decisions

Come up with a couple of examples of reversible and irreversible decisions in your life. Write them down below:

Now, write down one decision you're currently procrastinating on.

What's the degree of reversibility of that decision?

C. Increase the reversibility of your decisions

How could you increase the reversibility of the decisions you're procrastinating on? If it's not possible, come up with another decision that has some degree of reversibility.

D. Act faster

Write down below the concrete actions you could be taking right now if you were to act immediately on all or some of the reversible decisions in your life.

E. Test the water

Come up with one or two ways you could mitigate risks in your life.
