

Chapter 2

Navigating Through Moral Dilemmas and Roadblocks to Decision Making

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ABSTRACT

When faced with a difficult decision, one often wades through the quagmire of indecision first. The purpose of this chapter is to analyze steps to take to explore concrete variables that contribute to positive and conclusive solutions to the decision process. Various contributors to making a decision, explored in the chapter include but are not limited to 1) one's values, 2) one's core beliefs, 3) events in one's life experiences, 4) one's cultural lens, and 5) position in the family. But indecision can be worse than not making difficult decision. What causes procrastination in some individuals when making a decision? The chapter also explores roadblocks to decision making: the action required to move in one direction or the other. Feeling the fear and moving forward anyway can paralyze persons so the chapter presents ways to ameliorate the fear of making a "bad" decision.

INTRODUCTION

This chapter takes the perspective of how difficult decisions can present a roadblock to living a productive and fulfilling life! What procedures does one often take when needing to make a difficult decision? Certainly, pulling the covers over one's head and grabbing a plush furry stuffed animal is not the answer. When faced with difficult decisions, what considerations are taken into account? Does one decide based on past experience? Does one decide based on advice from one's family or friends? Is there a method that best fits an individual's personality?

Many of these questions have been toyed with by the average individual. The "not so average" individual may have resorted (in decades past) to witch doctors, soothsayers, fortune tellers and/or tea leaves! However, with the twenty-first century, technology has played a role in decision making. One has only to turn on the iPhone and find a U-tube video giving an opinion that either is accepting or disregarded

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by the individual. “In the digital world, there is no shortage of information” (Bull, 2016, p. 314). But how does one trust what emerges on the internet. Surely assessment technology has its benefits in that it is supported by data. But is that data supported by moral conviction? Was the data analyzed using an approved metric? Were the participants solely voluntary or were some coerced into participating?

Decision making is shrouded in morality. The lay person may overlook the decision-making process based on Kohlberg’s Theory of Moral Development (Kohlberg, 1963) reviewing the basic six stages: Obedience Orientation, Rewards/Exchange Orientation, Being Nice/Relationship Orientation, Law and Order Orientation, Social Contract Orientation, Universal Ethical Principles Orientation (Woolfolk, 2013, p.100-101).

Not only is decision making shrouded in morality, but the process can be confronted with personal roadblocks that inhibit the individual from moving forward with what he/she considers an “appropriate” decision. Often there is the fear whether it will be the “right” or “wrong” decision! Or, how will one’s decision affect others in the family or close circle of friends? Indecision can plague the human psyche to the point of paralyzation!

The objectives of this chapter will be to show various factors contribute to one making a decision: 1) one’s values; 2) one’s core beliefs; 3) events in one’s life experiences; 4) one’s cultural lens, and; 5) position in the family (Minuchin, 1974). Additionally, roadblocks to decision making will be explored and what can be done to either overcome or prevent roadblocks to making the “right” decision. Further, what happens when one feels he/she has made the “wrong” decision!

BACKGROUND

What does one do when faced with a moral dilemma and must make a difficult decision? Dr. Seuss (1989) alluded to the “waiting room” in his classic, “Oh the Places You’ll Go”. When the individual is faced with indecision “the waiting” room could possibly be the answer: “If I wait long enough, the problem will go away!”. However, “waiting for the fish to bite, or the phone to ring” (Seuss, 1989) is hardly a solution when one is expected to lead a country, manage a Board Room, or function as the CEO of a company!

It is the tenant of this chapter the decision will be based on factors of the individual’s psyche, meaning the four elements mentioned as objectives of this chapter (see above) plus propensities of the personality.

LITERATURE REVIEW

To review, elements contributing to making difficult decisions are:

1. One’s values;
2. One’s core beliefs;
3. Events in one’s life experiences;
4. Position in the family

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