

10 Mental Guidelines
to making

Difficult Decisions



Rodney Agan, PhD

10 Mental Guidelines to Making the Tough Decisions

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In leading organizations, teams, individuals, and families, we are often placed in very difficult situations that require us to make tough decisions. Some people are quick decision-makers and others are slow and deliberate.

Before we look at the guidelines in order to make tough decisions, let us first consider gain an understanding about what a decision means in the first place.

- **Decisions means things are changing** - By the fact that you have a decision to make, it means things are changing. You might say, "That's the problem exactly. I don't want things to change." Well that might be so, but by the fact that a decision is in play, it means that you may have no choice. By putting your head in the sand, you may be giving someone else the authority to make a decision for you. If change must happen, make sure you are in the driver's seat by making any of the decisions about your life that you possibly can make.
- **Decisions means movement** – Good decisions mean moving forward. Bad decisions mean moving backward. **Remember, indecision IS a decision.** It is a decision to allow the 'status quo' to be your decision. If you are stuck and plateaued in life it may mean that you have not made some important decisions in the past. Every movement forward or backward in your life is the result of a decision you made.
- **Decisions means action** – Again, when you feel stuck or at a standstill, you have probably overlooked or ignored a decision that needed to be made. Some people are so indecisive that I want to jump and scream, **"Make a decision, good or bad, but please just make one."** Leaders are people who will make the hard decisions even when they do not want to make it. Maturity teaches you the art of decision-making.
- **Decisions bring opportunity** – No one ever invented something or achieved something great without first making a decision. Even decisions that bring failure are actually growth opportunities in disguise. These are opportunities to know how to succeed the next time. Fear of failure will cause you to fail even more. Use good decisions to open up great opportunities.

Indecision IS a decision

WHY ARE DECISIONS SO HARD?

If decisions were easy, someone else could make them and you would miss out on the opportunity to grow through them and enjoy their benefit. Everyone approaches decision-making through their own thinking grid. It includes our personality, experiences, influences, emotions, and even the circumstances at the time.

10 Mental Guidelines to Making the Tough Decisions

1. Investigate the options

Never take anything at face value. Look at it from all angles and understand it as fully as possible before you step through it. Never assume success or failure at this point, just evaluate the facts. Take time to look at the various paths this decision could take you and remember that any one of them could happen.

2. Trust your gut feeling

First impressions are often the best impressions. Remember, it could be the wrong timing, or it could be the wrong decision. Don't over-analyze a situation until you completely miss making the correct decision in the first place. Also, be careful not to make a decision just for convenience sake. Never trade all of your tomorrows, for just one day.

3. Be sure it aligns with your core values

If you can't look at yourself in the mirror, it may be the wrong decision. Your core values are part of the DNA of your life. They can't be compromised under any circumstances. Actually, when you have them right, they will guide your decision-making. What if you could make one decision (core value) that would prevent you from being forced to make thousands of other future decisions? If something doesn't align with your values, you have no decision to make.

4. Look at the long-term effects

Some short-term decisions pay off big time in the long run. Think about how this decision will look like at the end, or when it is implemented. Think about the ROI (Return On Investment). Ask yourself questions like: "Will this be worth the effort it takes?" "Will it cost more emotional or mental capital than it's worth?" "Am I sacrificing the future for the present?"

5. Note all of the people it affects

It gives added pressure when you know your decision could affect the lives and/or livelihood of others. Selfish decisions can hurt good people. If you are leading an organization or team, your decision could negatively affect all of their families. Once added up, will there be more "casualties" than "lives saved."

6. Don't kick a door open

Remember, good doors open themselves, often without a lot of force. Sometimes we see an opportunity through rose-colored glasses. It looks better than it is because we want it so badly. When this happens we become blinded to the negative aspects. When it is the right decision, you will begin to see things develop without force and will often feel natural.

7. Give it proper time to develop

This is not the time to bypass your “due diligence” period. Unless this is a crisis type decision, you may find that patience in your process will serve you well every time. Just like in most sports, you have to give a play the time to develop. It is worth noting that the opportunity you are considering might be the “right door” but the “wrong time”. Allow the process the time to mature as much as possible.

8. See if it is “your” door

Just because it is a good opportunity does not mean it is the right opportunity for you. Never settle for less than the best in order to fully realize your potential. Be careful that you do not fall prey to the peer pressure or the fear of “missing out” on something if do not act. There is a great argument for the decision between GOOD and BEST. Remember that good is often the enemy of best. Just because something seems good to you, doesn’t mean that it is best for you.

9. Listen to the wisdom of others who have already been there

It is always a wise decision to learn from the mistakes of others. It will cost you much less if you do it that way. Remember, experience trumps opinions every single time! Be careful not to get all of your information from one source though. The Bible tells us that in the multitude of counselors there is safety.

10. Don’t ignore the first nine principles

Don’t throw caution to the wind. Logically think through a decision so you will understand why you made it when the questions begin to come later. If you have done your due diligence, you can own the decision and feel confident to live by it.

BONUS QUESTIONS TO ASK YOURSELF

- ✓ If I don’t make this decision, will I regret it later?
- ✓ What am I afraid of concerning this decision?
- ✓ What am I doing this for?
- ✓ Who am I doing this for?
- ✓ Will I like myself after this decision?
- ✓ Can I own it and cope with the fallout?
- ✓ Has the decision already been made?
- ✓ Am I looking at the “Big Picture”?

Thoughts...

Don’t make decisions when you are angry.

Don’t make promises when you are happy.

Unsuccessful people make decisions based on where they are.

Successful people make decisions based on where they want to go. ~ Unknown

“It is not hard to make decisions once you know what your core values are” ~ Roy E. Disney



Dr. Rodney Agan

DR. RODNEY AGAN is a leader of leaders, and has spent the last 34 years leading growing organizations. He is the Founder and CEO of [The Connexus Group](#) and [Simple Ministry Leadership](#).

Agan is particularly focused on helping individuals identify their own personal profile, strengths and weaknesses, and the dynamics of how those impact team development and interpersonal relationships.

Drawing from his Ph.D in Communications and Leadership, and his extensive personal experience, he delivers keynote speeches, leads training sessions, webinars, seminars, retreats, and provides personal coaching and mentoring across the USA and internationally. Dr. Agan has the ability to capture the imagination as he brings practical, straight-forward insights, ideas and solutions that help large corporations, small businesses, think tanks, non-profits, churches, and individuals move beyond plateaus to their full potential.

Dr. Agan is also the author of: Personality Imprint™, The Journey: A Personal Life Plan™, Career Shaping™, 31 Habits of Simple Leadership™, Priority Wheel™.

You can order these and other resources at [The Connexus Group](#) or [Simple Ministry Leadership](#).

