



Decision-Making Template

Fight Emotion Using Logic...Don't Let Fears Get in the Way!

What are you putting off out of fear? We often tell ourselves timing, but usually, what we most fear doing is what we most need to do. A difficult phone call, courageous conversation, letting people know they haven't met your expectations or have disappointed you...whatever the action might be—it is fear of the unknown or imagined negative outcomes that prevents us from doing what we need to do.

There are four ways to deal with a problem:

- A. Ignore it and hope the issue won't come up again because you feel it will go away/not repeat and/or it won't make a difference if you do say something.
- B. Share your concern with this person/people so they have an opportunity to do something different.
- C. Be curious and ask questions to better understand why the problem is occurring and gain a new perspective and then share your concern.
- D. Ask for support/advice from a trustworthy source followed by 'C.'

**The exercise below will allow you to critically think and build the confidence to be an assertive and emotionally intelligent communicator.
How can you get from option 'A' above to any of the other options?**



Step #1 – Identify: What is a problem that is causing you fear, anxiety, and you are putting off dealing with? For example, it could be having a courageous conversation with your boss, a peer, a direct report, or someone in your personal life. Write your answer below:



Step #2 – The Fears: Define your nightmare, the absolute worst that could happen if you did what you are considering.

- A. What doubts, fears, and "what-ifs" pop up as you consider taking the steps you can, or need, to make?
- B. What are the fears based on and are they rational or irrational?

Imaginary or Proven: Are any of your fears relating to fear of judgment, experiencing an adverse reaction, that you would be misunderstood, rejected, or a lack of confidence that it would make a difference if you spoke up? Are they based on a previous experience taking these kinds of actions with this person? With people like this person? Or self-created/imagined results?

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C. Write the percentage of potential likelihood for each of the possibilities totaling 100%?

	Initial	Adjusted
Fear #1 _____	(____%)	(____%)
Based on _____		
Fear #2 _____	(____%)	(____%)
Based on _____		
Fear #3 _____	(____%)	(____%)
Based on _____		

D. Use the "Adjusted" % column to adjust your percentage accordingly after reflecting on the rationality of your fears.



Step #3 – Prevent: What can I do to mitigate the perceived risks from happening?

Emotionally Intelligent Conversation Planning Examples:

- A. Self-Awareness: What words and tone do I need to use so the person/people will be open to hearing it? Why haven't past efforts worked with this person/people? (If applicable)
- B. Self-Control: A plan to respond to your counterpart's defensiveness or excuses?
- C. Motivation: How do I anticipate the person/people to react and how will I manage myself if I am unprepared for the reaction?
- D. Empathy: Be mindful to listen to understand and stay open-minded?

Other (list)

E. _____ F. _____

Conversation Planning Notes

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Step #4 – Repair: If the worst-case scenario happened or something went wrong, what could you do to repair the damage to get things back on the upswing, even if temporarily? Chances are it's easier than you imagine. Write 1-3 things you could do to get things back under control?

Examples:

- Share your rationale for communicating the issue.
- Accept that you can't control other people's thoughts and actions.
- Ask someone else to intervene for alternative ways to approach the situation.
- Negotiate a compromise and alter your expectations for incremental progress.

A. _____

B. _____

C. _____

Shift Your Perspective with a Growth Mindset



Step #5 – Benefits: What are the absolute best things that could happen?

- A. How may your job be different? What might you learn? How might this relationship improve?
*Write the percentage of potential likelihood for each.

Benefit #1 _____ (____ %)

Benefit #2 _____ (____ %)

Benefit #3 _____ (____ %)

- B. Does your biggest fear from step #2 outweigh the top two potential benefits from above?

Fear _____ (____ %)

Benefit _____ (____ %)

Benefit _____ (____ %)

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- C. What would the financial, emotional, and physical consequences of inaction or keeping the status quo look like? How will this impact how people see you, how you see yourself, and how you think others see you moving forward? How will you feel having allowed adverse circumstances to impose themselves upon you? If you know with 100% certainty that it is a path of disappointment and regret, and if we define risk as “the likelihood of an irreversible negative outcome,” inaction is the greatest risk of all.

If you are still wavering, ask yourself, “If I avoid this action or decision and actions/decisions like it, what might my life look like in, say, 6 months, 12 months, 3 years in the categories below?”

Complete a risk-reward analysis and use logic to take the emotional power away from your fear(s) so you are motivated to make an assertive decision.

Confidence _____

Physical _____

Financial _____

Emotional/Mental _____

Other Consequence _____

What are you waiting for? If you cannot answer this without resorting to the previously rejected concept of good timing, the answer is simple: You’re afraid, just like the rest of the world. Measure the cost of inaction, realize the unlikelihood and reparability of most missteps, and develop the most important habit of those who excel; **Action**.

Conclusion _____

Proceed to final step and complete your S.M.A.R.T Goals plus simple Action Plan.

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Step #6 - Goals and Action Plan: Select a goal you would like to accomplish accompanied by a simple action plan to support your decision to be assertive.

Goal: Your goal needs to be S.M.A.R.T.

Specific_____ Measurable_____

Achievable_____ Relevant_____ Time-Based_____

Action Plan Steps: Each step needs to be attainable by the due date listed.

1. _____ Due date _____
2. _____ Due date _____
3. _____ Due date _____
4. _____ Due date _____
5. _____ Due date _____

*Go where you are afraid to go.
Ask what you are afraid to ask.
Do what you are afraid to do.*

-Tim Ferriss

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