

# HOW TO MAKE GREAT DECISIONS QUICKLY

by Celestine Chua

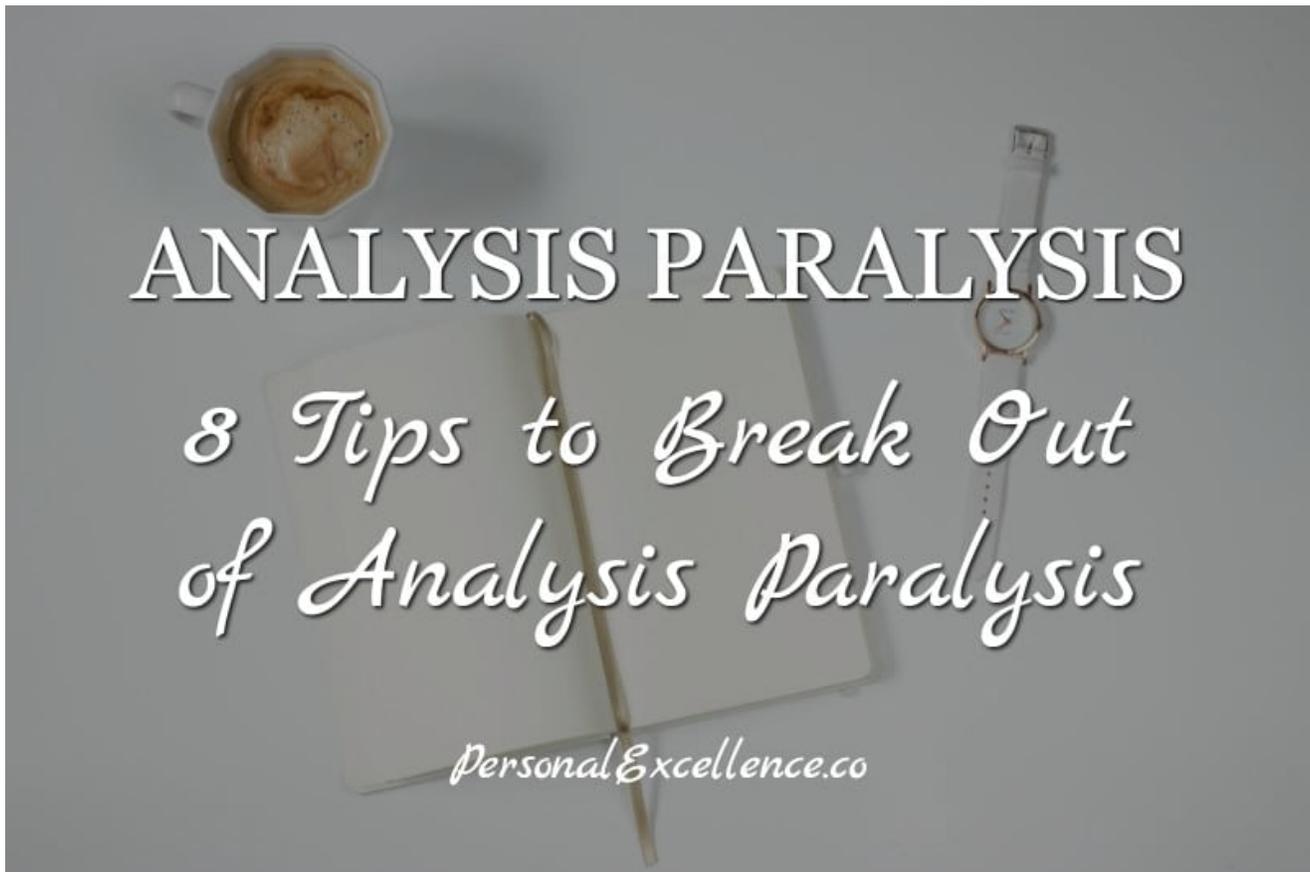
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# 8 Tips to Stop Analysis Paralysis



(Image: [Personal Excellence](#))

Have you faced analysis paralysis before? Do you tend to overthink your choices, to the point where you feel paralyzed and don't make a decision? :)

If so, you're not alone. **Analysis paralysis** is the state of

over-thinking about a decision to the point that a choice never gets made. You face analysis paralysis when you...

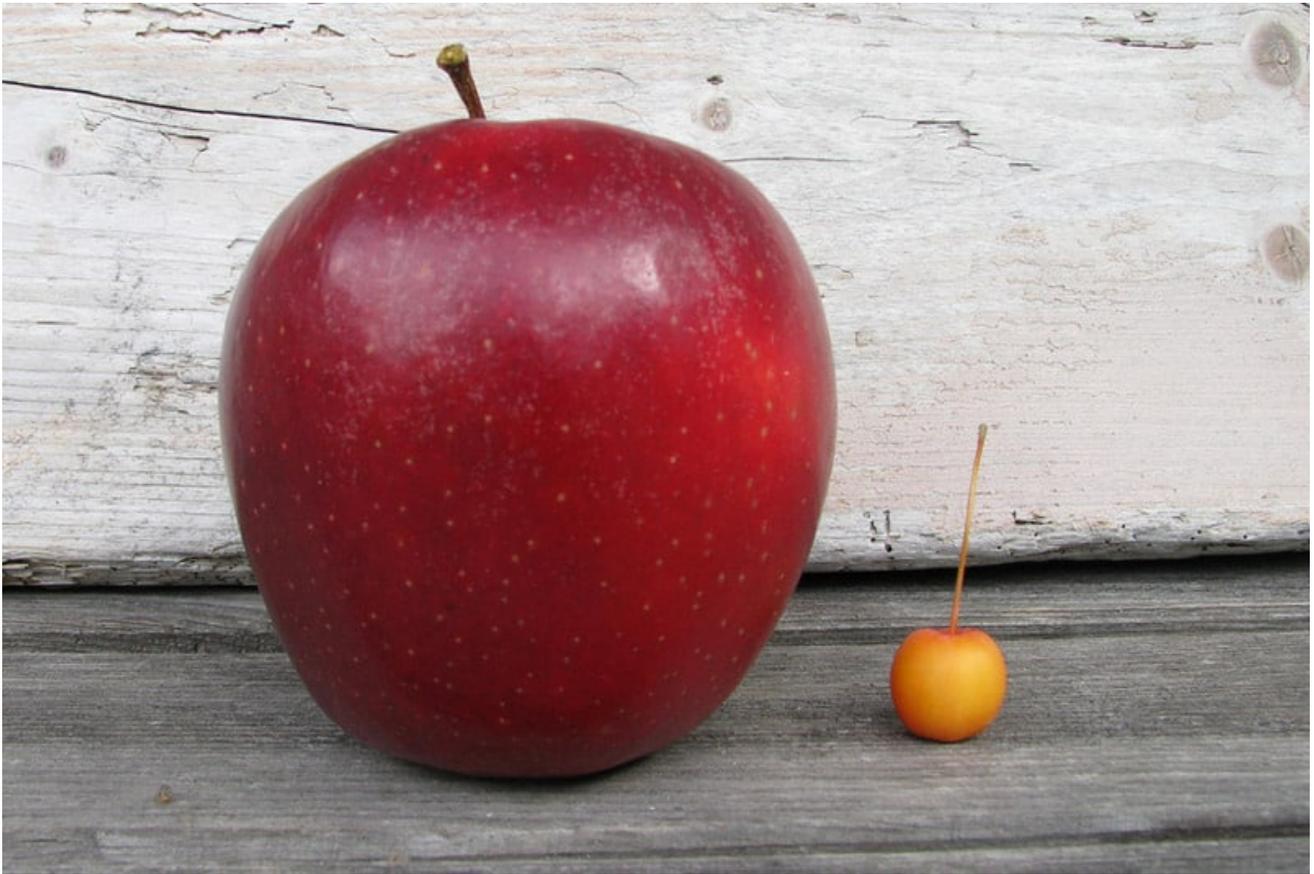
- are overwhelmed by the available options,
- over-complicate the decision when it's supposed to be quite a simple one,
- feel compelled to pick the "best" and "perfect" choice, thereby delaying any decision until you do your research, or
- feel a deep fear of making a wrong move, hence stalling yourself from making any decision, in case you make the wrong choice.

## 8 Tips to Overcome Analysis Paralysis

If you often face analysis paralysis, you are at the right place. As a perfectionist, I tended to face analysis paralysis for many of my decisions until I started changing my mindset and approach.

In this guide, I share 8 tips to break out of analysis paralysis. Note that this guide is best for short to mid-term decisions -- for tips to break out of difficult life decisions, [go here](#).

# 1) Differentiate between big and small decisions



(Image: [Hiltrud Möller-Eberth](#))

The first step to cracking decision-making paralysis is to differentiate between big and small decisions, after which you give the decision the level of attention based on its importance.

3 questions to differentiate between big and small decisions:

1. How important is this decision?
2. Will this impact me a year from now?
3. What's the worst thing that could happen?

If the decision isn't going to make a big difference a year from now and there are no serious consequences that will come out of it, then it is a small decision. Spend as little time as you need to nail this.

Then, let go.

**If the decision will create major impact after a year and there are serious implications from making the wrong choice (such as [marrying someone you don't love](#)), then it's a big decision.** Set aside time to think over it. Read my guide [How to Make Life's Hardest Decisions](#). For everything in between, give it some thought but don't let it drag on for too long.

Using these 3 questions, you'll find that few decisions are as important as you think. Most decisions have little impact on our lives. Only a small handful have the ability to affect our lives in the long run.

Examples of small decisions:

- Which hair conditioner to buy
- What color cable clips to buy
- What to eat for dinner (assuming you're already making good food choices)

Examples of mid-term decisions:

- Whether to [break off a relationship](#)
- Whether to collaborate with someone on a project
- Where to get your new home

Examples of big decisions:

- [Whether to marry someone](#)
- What career path to go for
- Deciding what is [your life purpose](#)
- Whether to have kids

## 2) Identify your objective



(Image: [Jeff Turner](#))

Last week I had a coaching call with a client who asked me for advice between two job options. The first is to remain in his current job — a well-paying job, living where he is now, in a stable work environment and country. The other is a job overseas — a bustling city, a dynamic job with great responsibilities, in an environment he has never been in before.

Both jobs have their pros and cons. The former offers security and great financial rewards with a manageable job scope. The latter offers immense personal growth with some degree of uncertainty and pressure, because everything is new to him.

So I asked my client, “What is your vision for your life for the next

few years?”

He said that he's sick of the predictability in his routine. He feels that everything is the same in his current job and he's not learning much. He feels that his goal for the coming period is to grow, learn about different things, and see other things in life. As he is in his early 30s, now is the best time to explore the world.

Then I said, “I think you just answered your own question. :)” He went into deep thought for a few seconds, then he nodded and smiled.

Every option has its pros and cons. Without knowing your end objective, you'll forever be debating the relative pros and cons of each choice without a meaningful conclusion.

1. Before you dig into the options for your decision, ask yourself: "What is my end objective? What do I want to get out of this decision?" Identify your top two objectives, maximum three.
2. Evaluate your choices based on your objective(s).
3. As you do that, you will find that some options will stand out more strongly than the rest. These are the options you want to look at.

### 3) Perfection is not the key. “Moderately okay” is.

Unless you are dealing with a life-altering decision like **who to marry** and what career path to choose, **perfection is not the key. Your goal is to pick a moderately “okay” choice in a fair amount of time, and then move on.**

This may be shocking or reckless to some people, especially perfectionists. Shouldn't perfection be our goal in everything we do?

Well, not quite.

**As a perfectionist**, I've learned the hard way that *every* option has its pros and cons. *Every* option has its own set of considerations. The perfect choice is almost never available right there and then for every decision — it's something that you have to hunt down and/or create. **Because of that, picking the perfect choice comes at a very high cost, which means that making the perfect choice is a costly process.**

**The 80/20 rule** comes into play: It takes 20% effort to achieve 80% of the gain of a decision. But to nail down the final 20% gain to achieve a 100% perfect outcome, you need to invest a huge amount of effort. This effort needs to be justified by the importance of the decision, which is why tip #1 is about differentiating between big and small decisions.

This means, either you

1. Spend 10 hours (ballpark estimate) to hunt for the perfect choice in every decision. 10 decisions will take you 100 hours. Not to mention, all of us have a limited amount of mental energy to make decisions each day. This means realistically you only have enough brain power to make X good decisions each day, after which other decisions need to be deferred to the next day. OR
2. Spend the minimal time to make a moderately okay choice. Then, move on. Work on making the best out of your choice.

In scenario #2, because you take time to make an okay decision, you avoid the pitfalls of a terrible choice. At the same time, the time you save from not hunting down the perfect choice can be used to create value in other life areas. Even if your choice turns out to be

not-so-good, (a) the act of selecting and moving on will help you achieve 10X more than being stuck in analysis paralysis, and (b) you use this experience to improve in future decisions.

Again, this applies to short- to mid-term decisions. If the decision has severe consequences, then take time to make the perfect choice. Read [this guide instead](#).

## 4) Eliminate the bad options

When you have too many options, it clutters the decision-making process. One tip I give to my clients is to list all the available options. Then, eliminate the bad ones. You should be left with 3-4 options, which makes it easier to choose. Evaluate the remaining options against your end objective (see tip #2).

## 5) Let go of your childhood stories



(Image: [charamelody](#))

I used to face severe analysis paralysis with purchase decisions. This was especially so with small ticket items that cost a few dollars or dozens of dollars, not business investments or big-ticket items costing hundreds to thousands of dollars. Funny, right?

Why is that? Since young, my dad repeatedly reminded me to be frugal. Every day, he would say to me, “钱很难赚，不要乱乱花” (in Mandarin, meaning “It’s hard to earn money. Don’t spend it carelessly”). Even though I’m already quite frugal, my dad kept criticizing me over many purchases because he felt that they were a waste of money. The items he would criticize about were physical things in his sight, like stationery, household items or clothes/shoes that I bought (but never excessively).

Such incidents built up over time — what I call [childhood stories](#) — made me very sensitive about buying anything. I would spend endless time bouncing back and forth between buying item A and item B, when there were minuscule differences between the two. If I bought the “wrong” thing, I would be filled with regret.

Here, my analysis paralysis with such purchases was due to the childhood story with my dad. It had nothing to do with what I was trying to buy, because logically, my life is not going to be destroyed by a bad \$1 purchase.

Another reason was that I grew up in an education system where there is no margin for error. In school, every little mistake we made was harshly criticized. We were taught to perceive every mistake as irreversible and life-changing. Teachers would punish us for making mistakes, such as [asking us to slap ourselves](#) or screaming at the student who made the mistake in front of everyone.

The belief that I formed from this period was “Mistakes are bad, mistakes can never be erased, and I’m a bad person if I allow mistakes to happen.”

Mentally wrapped up in these two stories, I became irrationally fearful of bad choices. *Is this the best choice? Is there a better option? What if I don’t like this later on? What if there are hidden cons? That would mean that I have made a bad decision!* I was often conflicted over small purchase decisions. I would avoid making any purchase so that I wouldn’t make a bad choice and regret later.

Eventually, I realized that I was living in the shadow of these stories. Every decision has its pros and cons, and it’s ridiculous to think that I have made a bad choice just because I don’t like some things about it. Even if I have made a bad choice, it’s silly to beat myself up over it since it’s about learning and moving along. It’s more important to learn and **focus on the positive**, not the negative — of which the latter is something that the Asian culture is obsessed about.

If you constantly freeze when making decisions, perhaps you have a childhood story driving your behavior. My question to you: Do you have a childhood story driving your analysis paralysis? Why does it affect you so? How can you let it go?

More on childhood stories and how to let go of them: **What Childhood Stories Are You Replaying Today?**

## 6) Set a time limit



(Image: [Duncan Hull](#))

Do you know the [Parkinson's Law](#)? The Parkinson's Law says, "Work expands so as to fill the time available for its completion."

What this means is that your work will take however long you allow it to take. If you set aside 15 minutes for a task, it'll take 15 minutes. If you set aside 30 minutes, it'll take 30 minutes. If you don't set a time limit, it may take forever!

This is the same in decision making. When you don't set a time limit for your decisions, each decision can expand to take up your entire consciousness as you find new details to analyze.

To solve this, **set a time limit. Your time limit should be based on**

**the importance of the decision (see tip #1).** Personally, I set aside no more than a few minutes for small decisions, and no more than a week for mid-level decisions. For big decisions, I take as long as I need, though I usually come to a conclusion in two months.

If you haven't made up your mind by then, make the best choice based on the available information. Remember that this time limit is based on the importance of the decision. Spending more time than needed means letting the decision take up more time than it is worth. Close it and move on to other things.

## 7) Get a trusted opinion

I often do this when I'm buying something or creating a graphic and can't make up my mind. Usually I narrow it down to two options, and then I ask someone for their opinion. If their recommendation makes sense, I will go with it. If not, I will pick the one I prefer. Either way, getting their opinion helps me arrive at an answer faster.

Consult someone with insight into what you're asking about. For example, if I'm buying a video camera for my YouTube channel, I'll ask someone with knowledge of video cameras, not some random guy. If I want to start an online business, I'll ask someone with proven success in online businesses, not people who have never started a business before. For this reason, I find it worthwhile to pay and get expert advice from specialists who know what they are doing. It helps me cut through the noise, get the information I need, and make the right choice.

Check out Day 16 of [Be a Better Me in 30 Days Program](#) on seeking advice.

## 8) Channel your energy into bigger goals

If you are obsessing about every little thing even though it has no big impact, perhaps you have outgrown your routine. It's time to channel your energy into bigger goals.

Whenever I obsess about little things, I see it as a sign that I have excess energy that is not being put to good use. **"What are my bigger goals that I can work on right now?"** I would ask myself. Be it creating new articles, producing new videos, or launching a new project, I would work on these right away. As I shift my focus to my bigger goals, I gain perspective and interestingly, become decisive with the little decisions.

If you often face analysis paralysis with little decisions, here is my question to you: What are your goals for the next few years? Is there any goal you are procrastinating on? Work on them instead. As you shift your focus to the higher level goals, you gain more experience and become better at making good decisions quickly.

### To You

Do you experience analysis paralysis? How can you break out of your analysis paralysis using the tips above? :)

Check out:

- [How to Make Hard Decisions: 3 Decision-Making Methods](#)
- [How to Choose Your Battles and Win the Big War](#)
- [How to Manage Uncertainty](#)

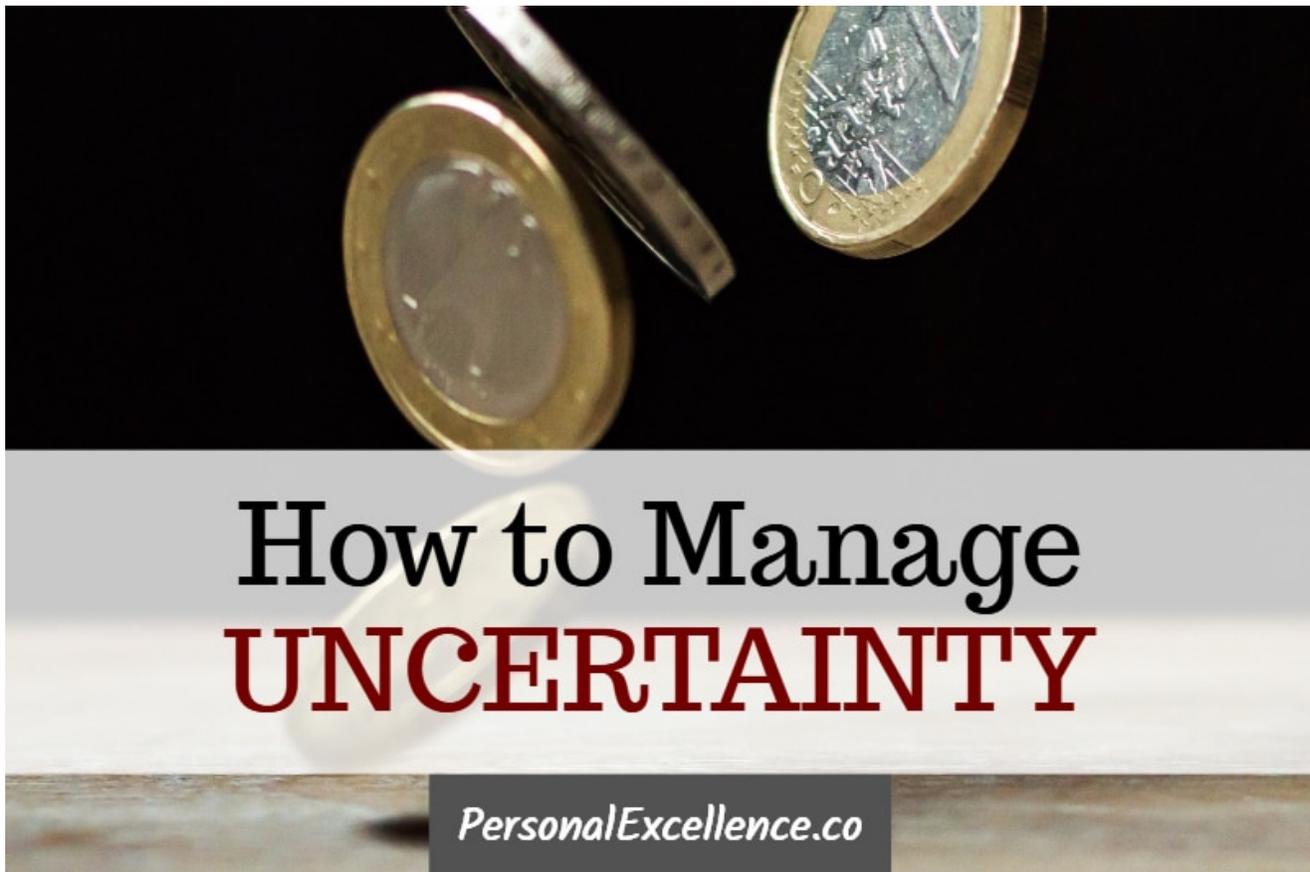
Check out:

- How to Make Life's Hardest Decisions: 3 Decision Making Methods to Solve Dilemmas
- How to Choose Your Battles and Win the Big War
- When Life Throws You Curve Balls: How to Manage Uncertainty

***This article was first published at:***

***<https://personalexcellence.co/blog/analysis-paralysis/>***

# How to Manage Uncertainty



Do you face uncertainty in your life? How do you manage them?

## Uncertainty in Life

Last Friday, I was out with a friend. During our conversation, we talked about his upcoming job, which is supposed to start at the end of the month. He shared with me some uncertainty surrounding the job.

Apparently, he and his potential employer have yet to agree on one important job item — his pay. While they had proposed a starting pay, my friend felt that it was too low and requested for a higher figure. This is highly important to him, to the extent that he will reject the job if they cannot meet his request. His potential employer said that they would revert to him in time.

While my friend waits for their reply, he feels like he's in limbo, because he can't make any plans until they revert to their decision. On one hand, they will probably agree since it is a reasonable amount. On the other hand, they may say no because they have the bargaining power.

Sharing his uneasiness, my friend asked, "Hey Celes, what do you do when you are facing uncertainty? How do you manage uncertainty?"

## How to Manage Uncertainty

Whether you like it or not, there are times in our life when we have to face uncertainty. My friend's situation is one of the many examples of uncertainty in life.

There have been times in my past when I had to deal with uncertainty. For example:

1. After I graduated from junior college, I had to select my university course, and I only had a short period to make the decision. It was a big decision that would affect my career path, so it was crucial to make the right selection. However, since I had little knowledge of the courses and little real-life experience at that point, I felt very uncertain about which course to take. It was unnerving to make such a huge decision at such a young age, in such a short time period.
2. When I was working in my previous job, there was a point when I wanted to change job assignments to gain exposure to a different business unit. The bureaucracy of a large organization meant that I had to wait for months before it would happen. I felt great uncertainty as it was unclear when the move would happen.
3. When I quit my job to start my coaching business, I faced the most uncertainty that I had ever faced up until that point. Not only was I uncertain about when my business would take off, but I didn't know when I would start earning money (my income was zero since it was a new business). I was also concerned that my business might never succeed.

In each instance, I learned to manage the uncertainty rather than let it overwhelm me. In the end, I pushed through the obstacles and turned each problem around, eventually achieving my goal.

If you are currently facing uncertainty, don't fret. Uncertainty can be managed by taking the right approach. Here are my three best methods to manage it.

## 1. Focus on the things you can control (and don't worry about the rest)

First, focus on the things you can control while ignoring those that

you can't.

In every situation you are in, there are always factors that you can control and factors that you can't. What factors can you control? Focus on them. What are the factors that you can't control? Do what you can to influence them, but don't obsess over them.

## Example: When I started Personal Excellence

Consider when I started my coaching business. The beginning phase of any startup is always filled with uncertainty, and this was no different. Questions that filled my mind included: "What if my business does not take off after six months?", "What if I have zero income even after a year?", and "What if my business *never* succeeds?"

It was very unsettling. However, I knew that it was pointless to panic. I sat down and addressed my concerns. The bulk of my concerns was rooted in cash flow problems and uncertainty over my business' success. So I asked myself:

- **"How can I** ensure my business will definitely succeed?"
- **"What should I do** if my business does not bring in money after X months?"

My goal was to focus on the things I could control, such as my business strategy, **building my skills**, creating the best content, and getting clients. For the other things that I couldn't *fully* control — such as whether **the media would interview me** and whether my articles would be #1 on Google — I would do my best but not worry about them.

PE soon gained traction and the rest was history. This was possible

because I focused on what I could do, rather than get distracted by other things. I was never worried about whether X or Y would happen. I was always busy working every day on everything within my locus of control, which in turn created quick results.

## Shift from External to Internal Locus of Control

You want to shift from an external locus of control to an internal locus of control.

An **external locus of control** means you perceive the environment to have more control than you over your life. For example, if you feel that the economy, the government, and other people have more control than you over your happiness and success in life, you have an external locus of control.

An **internal locus of control** means you perceive yourself to have more control than the environment over your life. For example, if you see that you are fully responsible for your happiness and success, you have an internal locus of control.

People with an internal locus of control tend to be happier and more proactive than people with an external locus of control. That's because they are able to deal with uncertainty and **life problems** readily. If you're facing uncertainty, bring certainty to the situation by focusing on the things you can control. Work on them. As for the other things you can't control, do what you can to influence them, but don't obsess about them. Focus on action, not worrying.

## 2. Live your life as you would, independent of the uncertainty

The second method is to live your life as you would normally, independent of the uncertainty.

Ask yourself: "What would I do if this situation/problem did not exist in my life?" Then, do that.

## Example: Apprehension surrounding job

My friend's unconfirmed job situation reminded me of a client I coached a year ago.

My client was a very successful business consultant with his own investment company. Apart from managing his company, he was consulting part time with a very famous global tech firm (let's call it Firm X), with the potential to be converted to full time after six months. The job, if offered, would be a high profile role with a big paycheck. It would be a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity.

As my client neared the end of the stint, he felt apprehensive as the founders did not indicate any interest in hiring him long term. Despite his effort to get face time with them, the meeting kept getting postponed due to their busy schedules.

Hence the dilemma: What should my client do?

1. Should he keep following up until he receives an answer on the job offer? However, he might come across too pushy, which might jeopardize his chances of being selected.
2. Should he just wait for the founders to revert to the decision? But what if they never do? Would that be the end of his relationship with this firm?

The uncertainty bothered my client a lot as he really wanted the job,

to the point where he had put his personal plans on hold, in anticipation that he would get the job. So when the job offer became uncertain, it threw his life off balance.

I recommended my client to continue living his life as he would, independent of Firm X's offer or non-offer. I asked him, "What would you do if this job opportunity with Firm X had never presented itself?"

He answered, "I would continue to build the portfolio of my investment company. I would also build my personal brand by giving investment training and business consultations."

"Go ahead and do that then!" I said. "Continue to follow up with the founders of Firm X with regards to the job offer. However, don't put your life on hold for this job since there is no confirmation that you would get it."

"Wow, thanks a lot, Celes," my client said. "You are right that I had felt so anxious about the pending job offer because I was putting so much of my life on hold in anticipation of the opportunity. I didn't realize that I was putting my personal goals on hold. I will now work on my goals as usual and not worry too much about the job offer, since it is, after all, unconfirmed."

As my client worked on his personal goals, the uncertainty with the job offer stopped bothering him. While he still did not receive any updates with regards to the pending job offer, he was at peace with the situation. After a couple of weeks, as fate would have it, he was offered a full-time job with Firm X with a great pay package.

### 3. Bring certainty to the important things (and let

# the other things go)

In every situation, there are always things that are important to you and other things that are less important. The third method is to **bring certainty to the important things** and let the other less important things go. Since the latter items are not so important, it wouldn't really matter what comes out of them.

## Example: Moving to a new country

Let's say you have just moved to a new country. You are unemployed. You have no friends here. You have no income since you are unemployed. You have no fixed accommodation and you are merely living at a hostel at the moment. Your savings can only last you for another week. Your life is in a flux and everything is up in the air.

What do you do?

In the face of such great uncertainty, you should focus on stabilizing the most important areas of your life. For most people, these would be financial security and getting a fixed accommodation.

- For financial security, you can secure your finances first by doing some quick, odd jobs. You can also borrow money from your friends back home and return it once you get a job. The objective is to tide you over for the short term while you figure out what you want to do in the long term. You can take your time to look for a job that matches your aspirations once your short-term financial issues are addressed.
- With your finances in place, you can look for an accommodation.

- Check the classifieds, search Google, or approach the hostel owners for help. Dedicate a couple of weeks for apartment hunting and don't stop until you find a place that meets your needs. During this period, don't worry about other things.

## How I Managed Uncertainty During My Travels

While not exactly similar to the example above, I once traveled for 7 months through Europe and the United States. The whole travel was filled with uncertainty at every point.

Throughout the 7 months, I was traveling without a specific agenda. I would move from one place to another when the situation called for it, such as when I was invited for a work engagement, when a reader or client offered to host me, or when I felt that I was ready to move on. I could be in Amsterdam today, with no plans on what I was doing next week, and suddenly depart for London via the next train. I could be in London, with the intention to stay there for six months, and suddenly book a flight to Philadelphia the next week because I was invited to **speak at a conference there**.

Because of that, I rarely knew which country or city I would be in the next week, much less my exact accommodation.

How did I manage such day-to-day uncertainty? I did it by focusing on the most important thing(s) at that moment, and only that. This meant that if my key concern at that moment was getting an accommodation, I would focus my energy on finding a decent accommodation that met my needs. If my key concern was getting to the next location safely, I would figure out how to do that and not worry about anything else. As for the other things, I would not concern myself with them until my immediate concerns were

addressed. Of course, I was always working along the way.

By adopting this approach, my seven-month travel was a lot of fun despite the day-to-day uncertainty. I was able to foster lots of amazing friendships, see great sites, immerse in each country's

culture, and cover many countries and cities in great depth, without feeling apprehensive about the trip itself.

## Final Words

I hope you have found my three methods of managing uncertainty useful.

At the end of the day, uncertainty isn't a bad thing. Some of you may find uncertainty unnerving and resist it. However, I've learned that uncertainty is a natural part of life. Change is the constant today. When we resist change, we stay stagnant, and when we are stagnant, we are dead. We cannot innovate, we cannot change, and we cannot create in a meaningful way.

It is through uncertainty that our character gets molded, and we learn some of our best lessons. As I've shared before, fear, uncertainty, and discomfort are your compasses toward growth.

While you manage uncertainty, know that it's not something to resist. Instead, focus on living in the present while tackling the obstacles. Work through whatever is hindering you, but don't let this affect your experience in life. You can't change the cards that life deals with you, but you can change how you react to them.

Often times, uncertainty comes hand in hand with decision making. Read my article on decision making: [How to Make Hard Decisions:](#)

## Decision-Making Methods

***This article was first published***

***at: <https://personalexcellence.co/blog/uncertainty/>***

# How to Make Life's Hardest Decisions: 3 Decision Making Methods



## How to Make Hard Decisions

[PersonalExcellence.co](http://PersonalExcellence.co)

*"Celes, after 25 years of marriage, I find myself alongside someone from whom I've grown apart. I've lost all desire*

*to be with this person and yet the thought of being without him scares me to pieces.*

*I'm a successful businesswoman who is able to make some very high-powered decisions on the spot, but the one very important decision in my own life is the one I flounder with like a fish out of water. I just cannot seem to sort through this one.*

*And so to you I ask: How do you sort through one of life's greatest decisions such as this?" — Joi*

What do you do when faced with a big decision which you don't know the answer to?

Do you opt for the middle road? Do you sacrifice your needs for others? Do you randomly pick an option, and hope for the best? Do you put off the decision and hope everything will sort itself out?

Today, I share my three best decision-making methods to break out of any dilemma.

## Method #1: Fast Forward

The first method is what I call the **Fast Forward Method**. Whenever you play a video on your media player, there is a fast-forward button which you can use to skip ahead to a later part of the video. Well, the Fast Forward Method is where you imagine yourself selecting a particular option and projecting yourself 1, 3, 5, and 10 years into the future on that path.

How does this help? Firstly, when you are right in the thick of a situation, your judgment tends to get clouded as you're caught up with short-term concerns and worries. When you adopt a future view, you can assess it more objectively, and carefully weigh the short-term gains vs. the long-term gains. What may seem important to you now may be unimportant to you in the long run. Similarly, what may seem like an unimportant thing to you now may actually be very important to you in the long run.

Secondly, when you mentally fast forward through a decision and project yourself into the future, the pros/cons of that decision get magnified. You see the realities of each path and what's going to happen next. It helps you evaluate if choosing a particular path will bring you to where you want, rather than waste years of your life to find out.

## How to Use This Method

1. Consider a decision you are facing right now. It can be a small or big decision. It can be regarding your relationship, marriage, career, business, or other life areas.
2. What options are you considering for this decision? Write them down.

Then, review the following steps:

1. Imagine if you were to take Option A. What would your life be like a year from now? How about three years? Five years? 10 years?
2. How about Option B? Fast forward yourself one, three, five, and 10 years into the future.
3. And Option C? Repeat the projection for your remaining options.
4. Which scenario do you want to be in? This is the option for you.

## Example: Quit My Job

One of my biggest decisions up till my mid-20s was whether I should **quit my job** to pursue my passion.

For me, my dilemma at that point was not whether I should stay on in my job or pursue my passion. At that point, I already knew that I wanted to **pursue my passion**. My dilemma was between (a) whether I should quit my job right away to pursue my passion, and (b) whether I should work for a few more years before quitting, to save more money. Option A would fulfill me greatly since I would get to pursue my passion right away. Option B would allow me to have more savings and pursue my passion with a larger savings buffer.

Initially, I couldn't decide because both options had their pros and cons. Each seemed like a viable path.

As I weighed between both options, I mentally fast-forwarded myself one year into the future. "Which path do I want to be on, one year from now?"

"Quit right away and pursue my passion," a voice rang inside of me. There was not even a moment of doubt. It was so clear that this was what I needed to do.

Why? Because even if I were to pursue my passion and make little progress after 1-2 years, I would still make more progress than if I were to continue on in my day job. My day job wasn't going to bring me closer to my dreams except to give me more savings. I already had savings to last me for two years. To work an extra day in my job meant delaying my passion for another day, and subsequently delaying my dreams.

In fact, the further I fast forwarded myself, the clearer my answer was.

- One year into the future? *"Yes, I should definitely quit now and pursue my passion."*
- Three years into the future? *"I can't believe I'm so conflicted about this. It's so obvious that I should quit!"*
- Five years? *"What's there to consider?? This job has no role in my long-term vision. Hurry up and quit now!!"*
- 10 years? The same answer as before!

By fast-forwarding myself 1/3/5/10 years into the future, I could evaluate the situation with objectivity. While I was worried about short-term money issues, this fear was irrelevant as (a) I already had savings to last me for a while, and (b) if I ran out of money, I **could easily return to work**. I couldn't see this until I visualized myself 1/3/5/10 years into the future.

## Method #2: Ideal Vision

“No problem can be solved from the same level of consciousness that created it.” — Albert Einstein. To break out of your current problem, you need to adopt a different frame of mind — the mind of someone who has achieved your ideal goal. This brings us to the **Ideal Vision Method**.

# How to Use This Method

For the dilemma you're facing,

1. What is your ideal vision for this area of your life? For example, if you're considering between two job options, what is your ideal vision for your career? If you're considering whether to marry someone, what is your ideal vision in the area of romance?
2. Which option brings you to your ideal vision?

## Example: Staying Married or Divorce

Let's say like reader Joi, you have been married to your partner for 25 years. While you have lost all desire to be with him, you are afraid to file for divorce. Maybe you are afraid to be alone. Maybe you are afraid of social stigmas. Maybe you are afraid of the unknown, of dealing with legal fees, of going through the divorce process, of facing life as a divorcee.

Here, ask yourself:

1. What is my ideal vision in the area of love?
2. Which option brings me to my ideal vision?

Perhaps your ideal vision is to be with someone who understands you, who loves you, and whom you want to spend the rest of your life with. Looking at your options, which option would bring you there?

- **Option A:** Stay with your partner but everything in the relationship remains status quo. This will not bring you to your vision as you have lost all desire to be with him.
- **Option B:** Divorce your partner. This may or may not bring you to your vision. If you divorce, you may remain single and not meet anyone suitable. On the other hand, you may meet someone new. Someone more compatible, whom you eventually remarry.
- **Option C:** Try one last time to work things out. Talk with your partner and tell him everything on your mind. Give him an ultimatum. Go for marriage counseling.

As you can see, there is no clear-cut answer. A marriage involves another person, and we can never know how other people will behave or control their behavior. However, when you know your vision, you can take steps to nudge things toward your ideal scenario. You can tell your partner about this vision and get him on board.

If your partner does not reciprocate your efforts even after 3 or 6 months of you trying, it would appear that Option B is the answer. Even if you do not know what the future will bring, at least there is a chance that you will meet someone more compatible. But if you stick with Options A and C, they are dead ends. You will never get to your ideal vision on these paths.

The Ideal Vision Method helps because it takes you out of your situation. Instead of being boxed in by your limitations, you think about what you want. This helps you focus on your desires and figure out the path to get there, rather than focusing on the confines of the situation (which will give you more of the same).

## Method #3: Pros/Cons Analysis

The last method is the **Pros/Cons Analysis Method**. This helps when you have a few options that are similar to (or very different from) each other, and you *need* to pick one. Here you assess each option and pick the one that matches your criteria the most.

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1. Identify your top few options for this dilemma.
2. Do a detailed pros/cons analysis for each option.
3. Identify your top 2-3 criteria.
4. Pick the choice that fits these criteria the most.

### Example: Migration

Let's say you are thinking of migrating or at least getting a permanent residency somewhere. You are done with your home country and you wish to move on to other places. Because you are working in a highly-sought-after field, you have options around the world. This also gives you the paradox of choice, because you are not sure which is the best place to move to.

Using this method, ask yourself:

1. What are the top few places I want to move to, where I have good career prospects?
2. What are the pros/cons of each place?
3. What are my top 2-3 objectives for my next home base?
4. Which choice fits these objectives the most?

From this process, you narrow down your considerations to a few places: US, UK, Australia, and New Zealand. Pros/cons of a country

depend on individual preferences, but some considerations include costs of living, lifestyle, quality of healthcare, quality of education (if you have children), culture, and weather.

As you do this analysis, you learn more about the criteria important to you. You decide that (a) quality of healthcare, (b) lifestyle, and (c) culture are the most important to you. You then pick the choice that best matches these criteria.

It's important to identify your top 2-3 criteria because many life options are never perfect. If perfection is your goal, you may never reach a decision. You need to get clear on your priorities, pick the best-fit option, and make the best out of it.

The pros/cons analysis works well for evaluating job options too. If none of your choices fit your criteria, return to the drawing board and explore other options. Do this until you have a choice that matches your top 2-3 criteria.

## Reviewing Your Decision

Putting these together, any of the three methods should give you an answer to your dilemma. Sometimes it's possible that one method gives you a vague answer. If so, use the other two methods and the answer should unveil itself. If you use all three methods and get the same answer, then it's a clear sign that this is the path to take.

I haven't had a situation where my answers conflict with each other. They usually point to the same direction. I don't think it's possible to get very conflicting answers because these methods are meant to lead you to your ideal life.

Ultimately, your decision should satisfy these criteria. Ask yourself:

1. **Will this choice bring me closer to my ideal life?** It should; otherwise, why are you contemplating it?
2. **Will it make me happy?** Your choice should make you happy. If it makes you unhappy, then something is missing. Return to the drawing board to evaluate more options.
3. **If I don't do this, will I regret it next time?** A good choice shouldn't cause regret. It's better to do something to see how it turns out, rather than avoid it and wonder what could have been. At least with the first path, you know you did my best and you have no regrets.

## Rounding Up

Sometimes, you may get an answer you don't like. It's possible that the choice isn't something you want to take on right away. There are times when I get answers that I don't like. However, it doesn't change the fact that there is truth behind them.

I've found that it's when **I stop running** that I begin to solve my problems. Faulty thinking leads to faulty solutions. To solve our problems, we need to approach them from a different angle.

The final thing I want to add is that when making life decisions, don't make them based on your current circumstance. To do so would be to compromise your real wants. Rather, use the three methods to figure out what you really want, then find the way to get there. Your **WHAT should come before your HOW**, not the other way round.

I hope you've found this article useful. :) Whatever you decide is your decision to make. Decision making is never easy, but it's when we make up our minds that we move forward in life.

This article is about tackling life's biggest dilemmas. For day-to-day decisions, read [How to Stop Analysis Paralysis: 8 Important Tips](#).

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# ABOUT

Hi, I'm Celestine Chua, the founder of [PersonalExcellence.co](https://www.personalexcellence.co), one of the top personal development blogs in the world with readers from over 200 countries.

The central goal of my work is to help you achieve your highest potential and live your best life. If you like this ebook, you will love my free material at [PersonalExcellence.co](https://www.personalexcellence.co). Some articles you will find there are:

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