

# DECIDE!

*6 Steps to Great Decisions*



JUDD M. MILLER

**DECIDE!**

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## Chapter 1. The Utter Joy Of Making Decisions

The title of this chapter may surprise you. The utter joy of making decisions?

*Yes!*

Human beings were created with a most amazing ability. This ability has allowed us to build cities, create breathtaking pieces of art, and invent delectable culinary dishes. This ability enables us to fall in love, move about the country, and most importantly, to create lives as happy and fulfilling as we desire. It's the ability that sets us apart from the animal kingdom. Interestingly, it is also a hotly debated ability, particularly among philosophers and theologians.

This fantastic ability is our free will, our ability to make choices about what we think, how we feel, and what we do. It is this ability – the ability to imagine a life better than the one we're living and to go out and create it for ourselves – that makes human life so magical.

And yet many of us face decisions with confusion, overwhelm, and worry. We get so caught up in avoiding the wrong decision that we have trouble moving forward with the right one. We sometimes lack a fundamental clarity about what we want for ourselves and our loved ones, a deficit so severe that we can get stuck for months, sometimes even years, in relationships and careers that don't suit us and which drain our energy. We get stuck in that frustrating no-man's-land between decisions. And some decisions are painful because they force us to face realities that we prefer to avoid. Whether it's an ailing loved one, or child with a drug addiction, or a significant financial loss, we can fret and stall for weeks, until the decision gets made for us, often in a way that we don't want.

What a tragedy that our most precious ability – the ability take action today to create utterly happy and fulfilling lives for ourselves – is one of our most confusing, feared, and misunderstood.

The ability to make decisions is a thrilling experience, for it enables you to take your life into your own hands. It is an ennobling experience, because it allows you to act with conviction, integrity, and love. It is a freeing experience, because it gives you alternatives to, and cures for, situations and responsibilities that dissatisfy you. And decision-making is a joyful experience, because it is the very power that enables you to get what you really want in life. Exercising it is an exercise of your very essence, your fundamental life-energy.

I wrote this book to help you reclaim the power and joy of making decisions in your life. My goal is to give you simple, clear-cut ways to feel clear about every decision you make, to enable you to confidently make decisions that enrich your life and the lives of those you care about.

Of course, not all decisions are difficult and confusing. There are many decisions we make that we thoroughly enjoy. For example, I love to go to the bookstore and pick out a new novel. I love to see what's playing at the movie theater and choose a movie to see. You might enjoy shopping for clothes and picking out the hottest new outfit. Or maybe you like researching companies and choosing which stocks to buy and sell.

Isn't it interesting that we enjoy making some decisions, but dread making others? I'll tell you why that is a little later on. But regardless of how we feel about a decision, it's there to be made, and I'm here to tell you that you are capable of making every decision with total confidence. And while not every decision will always be pleasant in every respect, this book will show you how to make your decisions with enthusiasm and anticipation, and to thoroughly enjoy all the benefits that every decision you make brings you.

Best of all, if you follow the process outlined in this book, you may never have to regret a single decision, ever again!

This claim isn't as outlandish as it sounds. After all, you have an established history of making great decisions.

Think back for a moment. What are some of the best decisions you've ever made? Think of the ones that turned your life around, that brought you and your life partner together, that put you on the path to wealth or career satisfaction, or that healed a relationship that had been wounded and mourned as lost. Maybe you chose to leave a toxic relationship, or change careers, and you have benefited immeasurably as a result.

Whatever they are, in the space below, I want you to take a moment, and write down some of your most winning decisions.

Some Of My Best Decisions:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

Clearly you've made plenty of fantastic decisions in your life. So you innately possess this ability. You may just not have realized the steps you went through to make those great decisions, and so they happened beyond your conscious awareness. Similarly, if you're like me, you've probably also made some lousy decisions, ones you wish you could go back and do over. But that also happened because the principles of great decision-making were beyond your awareness, and whether you made a good decision or a bad one became a somewhat random event.

Unfortunately, those bad decisions, and the regret we carry about them, can take up far too much space in our minds and hearts, which weighs us down and can even cause us to hesitate making other new or important decisions.

In this book, we are going to send decision-making worry packing, and turn great decision-making into a natural and easy habit. And the results you start getting in your life as a consequence will astound you.

In this book, I'm going to show you, step by step, how to make a great decision every time. I'm going to bring that marvelous and inherently brilliant decision-making ability you have right to the foreground, into your conscious awareness where you make your choices every day, and show you how to re-create those great decisions of your past over and over again, until you begin to make

every decision of your life with the wisdom, confidence and enthusiasm you already possess but haven't yet mastered control of.

You see, every decision is an opportunity to add fulfillment to your life. That realization alone should fill you with excitement and anticipation for all the fantastic things to come, because of your innate decision-making ability.

Making decisions is the quickest and easiest way to create the life you want, because it moves you immediately forward in the direction you want to go. Making decisions is your source of opportunity, freedom, happiness and fulfillment. Making decisions is the tool you can put to instant use to get whatever you want in life.

Through this book, I will teach you how to feel good about virtually every decision you make. When you understand clearly what you want, and know how to take immediate, positive action to get it, you will thoroughly enjoy the process of making a decision, even if it concerns a painful or uncomfortable situation.

To prove that this is so, I want you to begin reading this book with a first step. I want you to think about some decision that you would like to make to dramatically improve your life. Or, think of a difficult or important decision you are faced with right now that you want to make and resolve.

Now, write down that decision right here:

\*\*\*\*\*

**My Most Important Decision Right Now:**

\*\*\*\*\*

As you read the book, I want you to apply the powerful principles and enlightening exercises you encounter to that important decision. I guarantee that by the time you're done, or perhaps even before, you will know exactly what to do, and you will be ready to make your decision with total confidence and enthusiasm! How's that for a guarantee?

Are you ready to take charge of your life? Are you ready to bring more fulfillment and peace to your life than you've ever experienced? Are you eager to thoroughly enjoy every choice you make, and relish in the satisfaction that each one brings you?

If you are, then strap in and get ready to put your life on turbo-boost! You're about to enter a whole new level of personal fulfillment and confidence. Not only will you feel great about every decision you make, but others will notice and admire your decisiveness and confidence, and they will be amazed at how every decision you make turns out well.

No more dallying!

In the words of my favorite guitarist, "Let's get rockin'!"

## Chapter 2. DECIDE! – The Six Step Method For Making Every Decision With Confidence and Enthusiasm

When I went to college, there was something I found in every syllabus that stuck in my craw: Whether the subject was international politics or astronomy, we always spent weeks on the theory about the topic, before we ever got to the practical information I could apply right away to make a difference in my life. I found it so frustrating, and I thought it was a waste of my time and education.

I believe that teachers should give people the practical information first, and after students have practiced it, they give the theory behind the practice. The funny thing is, once you've put the principles to use in real life, you find you often don't need the theory. And even if you did, you would find that the theory becomes pretty self-evident from the practice itself. No one needs to explain it to you. Just by practicing it, you begin to see what works and doesn't work, and why.

Besides, you're not reading this book for theory anyway. You're reading it because you have a problem to solve, and you want it solved yesterday! I get that.

So unlike a lot of other decision-making books out there, I'm not going to waste your time teaching you about risk/benefit matrices, or expound on the theoretical underpinnings of game theory.

I'm going to show you right now how to make the right decision every time. I'm going to give you a simple, six-step process that you can follow for any decision in your life, one that will give you great results and enable you to make decisions with total confidence and enthusiasm.

Even if you don't read another chapter in this book, if you read this one, you will have walked away with a tool that can change your life forever, and it will have taken you no more than a few minutes to absorb.

### DECIDE!

The decision-making process I'm going to teach you can be easily remembered through a simple (and most relevant) acronym. I'm going to teach you a powerful method for making decisions; I call it the DECIDE! Method, because by going through each step represented by the letters of this powerful word, you will be able to think clearly about every important decision you make, and move confidently forward with a decision, all while integrating both the rational considerations of your mind with the needs and desires of your heart.

Put simply, DECIDE! spells out six simple, key steps that make for every great decision:

- D – Declare What You Want
- E – Establish Your Decision Frame
- C – Come Up With Alternatives
- I – Investigate And Research
- D – Do It!
- E – Evaluate The Feedback



If we were to view the DECIDE! process visually, it would look like this:



As you can see, it is a circular process. Successful decision-making is not a linear process where you simply make a decision and live with the consequences. And in fact, this subconscious assumption about decision making is what causes so much decision-making paralysis. Successful decision-making is an iterative process, a dance if you will, of making a decision, evaluating the results, and when necessary, making another decision.

Let me explain each of the DECIDE! steps briefly, so you understand more fully what they mean and you can begin applying them right away to your own life.

### **Step #1: Declare What You Want**

To make a great decision, you must first and absolutely know – with as great specificity as possible – what you want.

For some people, this may sound obvious and simplistic, and yet for others it may be the most vexing difficulty they struggle with.

Knowing what you want is the first and most crucial step, for a number of reasons. If you don't know what you want...

- How will you know which alternative is the best one?
- How will you know which pros and cons really matter?

- How will you know if your choice will actually give you the outcome you desire?
- How will you know when to stick with a tough decision, and when to cut your losses?

Clearly, knowing what you want is where every decision begins. But knowing what you want is not as easy or obvious as it might seem. It's not always the first and automatic thing that pops out of your head. We'll talk about "decision framing" in a moment, but how you think about what you want, and the assumptions you make about it, have an enormous and often hidden influence on the options available to you, as well as the likelihood that your decision will actually produce the results you desire.

Obviously, the reason to make a decision is to get something you want. Perhaps you want to change careers, or employers. Maybe you're looking for a romantic relationship that will be fulfilling for you. Maybe you want to get a new car, but you have limited funds and need to get the best price. Whatever it is, some form of personal desire generally compels a decision.

It's worth noting, however, that not all decisions originate in your desires. Often the world will present you with a challenging situation that requires you to make choices, which you are not at all prepared or eager to make. Perhaps a loved one falls ill, and you must make medical decisions that will affect every aspect of that person's life, as well as your own. Perhaps your company folds and leaves you out on the street unemployed. Maybe your spouse said he or she wants a divorce.

There are other ways that you are asked to make choices that did not come from your own internal desires for personal happiness and fulfillment. Your employee may come to you with a difficulty he or she needs help resolving. Or your friend may ask you to attend an important personal event, but the time conflicts with plans you've already made for yourself or your family.

But even when a decision has been thrust upon you by someone else's needs and desires, or by unexpected circumstances, there is usually something that you would like to gain out of the situation, even when that situation is completely unexpected.

You may not have desired your wife to fall ill, but you do want her to be healthy and vibrant. You may not have chosen to be laid off, but you do want to do satisfying work that makes a difference and leverages your talents. You may feel devastated that your spouse is so unhappy that she would want to leave, but you do want to work out the conflict, and find your way back to the love and harmony you experienced when you fell in love, or at least keep yourself healthy and intact should the two of you split.

I'm not going to tell you that you can have everything you want, or that life will ever be perfect. You can't, and it won't. Fortunately, having everything we want, and living perfect lives, are not necessary to living lives of utter peace and happiness!

What's important is that we are clear and honest with ourselves about what we want, that we trust ourselves, that we take resourceful action, and that we stand by ourselves through all manner of difficulty and obstacles. That is the true meaning

of the word “self-confidence.” As long as you trust and support yourself in that way, and continue to move forward positively toward your ideal vision of yourself, you can always feel joyful and at peace with who you are and what you’re doing with your life.

In Chapter 3, I’ll go into much more detail about the role of declaring what you want in making terrific decisions, and how to figure that out if you have trouble knowing it. But for now, know that every great decision is founded in knowing clearly and concisely what you want, so that you can take positive, resourceful, and clearly thought action to get it.

## **Step #2: Establish Your Decision Frame**

As I mentioned before, how we think about a problem defines the depth of our understanding of the issue at hand, as well as the range of options that are available to us.

Let’s take the example of a young family man named Grant. His car is getting old, requiring more frequent mechanical repairs, and he’s always wanted to drive a sleek, new sports car that everyone else seems to look so good in. Put those two together, and Grant naturally assumes, “Hey, I need to buy a new sports car.”

That’s Grant’s decision frame: “I need a new sports car.” A decision frame is how you frame the problem and solution in your mind. If your frame is limited or distorted, it can preclude and skew a number of valuable options that may get you what you want much more effectively and easily than the boundaries of the frame will ever allow you to consider.

If Grant begins his decision-making process with the notion, “I need to buy a new sports car,” what does that lead him to? He might drive down to the car dealership, take a look around the lot, chat with a salesperson, pick out a pretty little number with a high-octane engine and chrome wheels, negotiate the price, and squeal some rubber on his way out of the lot.

Sounds like a great day! Until the next few months roll along and he finds that when all the bills come due, he really can’t afford the car’s monthly payments. Or that he can afford the car, but not the insurance payments. Or that some months ago, he and his spouse Laura had talked about using that money for the down payment on their first home together. Oops!

I’m not saying that people shouldn’t buy new sports cars. But you see in this example that there are all these other things Grant wanted too that didn’t get considered because they didn’t fit in the frame, “I need to buy a new sports car.” He and his wife also wanted to buy a house. He wanted to pay down his credit card debt. He wanted to have a car big enough to accommodate the needs of their growing family. And he also wanted to save money on gas mileage and do his part for the environment by getting a hybrid someday.

And at those times when other people unexpectedly pose decisions for us to make, it’s important to consider the frame they gave us when they presented the problem, by examining their assumptions and determining clearly what the objective is. After all, they may have made the same assumptions and leaps of logic that Grant made with his new sports car. Never take a frame from someone else without thinking it through yourself first.

In chapter 5, I'll discuss in more depth how our decision frame affects and can even hijack the entire decision-making process. I'll also show you how to frame a decision in a way that serves you and ensures a good decision, rather than sabotages you and sets you up for disappointment.

But you can see in this simple example that how you frame the question has an enormous impact on the answer, and if your frame is faulty, odds are that your decision – and the results you get – will be disappointing as well.

### **Step #3: Come Up With Alternatives**

The heart, and ultimate quality, of any decision is the alternatives that you choose from. If you have alternatives that are of high quality, you are very likely to make an excellent decision. Conversely, if you only have a couple of alternatives to choose from, or if they are not very good ideas to begin with, then the odds are not very great that you will make a good decision.

Because we're busy and feel overwhelmed, we often take the first alternatives that are handed to us, either by our own mind (like Grant's immediate assumption that he needed a new sports car), or by those who are asking us to make a choice and give us a limit of choices in the very question: Do you like this fabric or that one? Do you want to go to Alaska or Seattle?

These limited options obscure the bigger picture of what we want and how best to get it. But by knowing clearly what you want, and framing the decision properly, you can use a number of techniques I will teach you in future chapters to generate a variety of resourceful alternatives.

In chapter 6, I'll show you how to turn on your creativity at will, so that you can immediately generate a list of resourceful alternatives that will help you get what you want in the most efficient, productive way possible.

### **Step #4: Investigate And Research**

In order to make a good decision, we often have to do some research. If we're planning on buying a washing machine, we probably need to research what makes a washing machine a good one or a bad one. How is durability measured? Who are the trusted manufacturers? Have there been any models with product recalls? We also need to compare the features of each model, and weigh their significance to us.

Or if you're looking to switch careers or employers, you will need to investigate the field first. You will want to determine what kinds of skills are in demand, what kind of salary you can expect, which companies are good to work for, and so on.

In Step #4, you conduct all the research and gather all the information you need to make your decision wisely. You may need to do some research on the World Wide Web, read a book, make some telephone calls, go on an informational interview, or consult with an expert on the subject.

There are traps here though, one of the most famous being "analysis paralysis," where you get so caught up in analyzing the options that you literally grind yourself into a hopeless and seemingly unbreakable halt.

In chapter 6, I'll show you how to know exactly what information you need to make a decision, and how to know when too much information is throwing you off

track and leading you into the thick jungle of analysis paralysis. I'll give you tips and resources for doing your research quickly and efficiently. And I'll show you how to evaluate the information you gather to know what's important and what's not, whom to trust and whom to disregard.

And should you find yourself inadvertently caught in that quicksand of analysis paralysis, I'll show you how to break it immediately, so that you can move confidently forward with your decision.

### **Step #5: Do It!**

Yippee! You've made it! You've declared what you want, you've established a resourceful frame, and you've come up with a number of good alternatives. We're almost ready to make the decision and take action!

In chapter 8, I will show you how to quickly compare the choices you're contemplating in a sensible, organized fashion, so that you don't go stir crazy with all the pros and cons that each decision presents. Once you've chosen the best alternative, based on all the information and research you've gathered, you are ready to act.

Step #5 is the most exciting step, because here you are actually taking purposeful action to get the outcome you desire. You know that your decision is a good one and are ready to pull the trigger.

You've educated yourself, considered the benefits and costs, and you are confident that the decision you have made is the best way to get what you want, or at least to get you closer to it. You trust yourself and are prepared to implement your decision with confidence and enthusiasm for all the good that's about to follow.

But we're not done! Because we always finish the DECIDE! method with step #6...

### **Step #6: Evaluate The Feedback**

Every decision results in only one thing: feedback from the outside world. The feedback is not always exactly what we wanted or intended, because we do not control the universe or other people. But the feedback is always enlightening and informative; it's up to us to be willing to notice it, and apply it!

Many people get hung up on making a decision, because they think that once they've made a decision, that's it. They've made their decision, and now it's over. There's no going back. But nothing could be further from the truth.

While it's true that some decisions in life are irreversible, you never lose your ability to reflect and, if you don't like the results you get, to go out and make another decision!

The ongoing loop of feedback you get from your decisions, and the actions to which it leads, are how you reach any goal.

Think of a jumbo jet flying from New York City to Paris, France. Because of the wind currents, the jet is almost never precisely on course. Pilots rely on flight planning and computer systems to continually correct their course. And yet while the pilot of the jumbo jet is almost always off course, somehow he or she always manages to get to Paris.

In order to get what we want in life, we must usually make a number of decisions that, put together in the right way, produce the result we want. It's almost never just one decision that produces all the results. The point of evaluating the feedback you get is to see, like the jet pilot, what minor course corrections you might need to make to get to your destination.

Imagine that our jumbo jet pilot notices she is off course, thirty miles out of New York. Now imagine she says, "Oh, no! I'm off course! I'm never going to get to Paris this way. I'm a lousy pilot. I never should have gotten into this business. Forget it. I'm turning this hunk of metal around and taking these passengers back home." That pilot wouldn't make a very good pilot, that's for sure!

And yet that's often how we react to the feedback we get from our decisions. If we don't get exactly what we want, right away, we write the whole thing off as a horrible mistake, and we tell ourselves that we're just lousy decision-makers. What do you think that does for our confidence in making other important decisions in the future?

Evaluating the feedback we get from our decisions helps us stay on course, and reminds us each step of the way that we are making our life better for ourselves and those we care about.

Evaluating the feedback from our decisions not only ensures that we get what we want, it also helps us evaluate our own decision-making process, so that we can make improvements and get more of our desired results, more quickly and easily, in the future.

In chapter 9, I will show you how to interpret the feedback of your decisions in a resourceful way that helps you continue to move confidently and joyfully forward, no matter what happens. I will also show you how to evaluate your process of making that decision, so that you can make any appropriate improvements in the future for consistent, desirable results. Finally, I'll show you how to free yourself forever from the regret you may be carrying around about "bad decisions" you've made in the past, and how to make those decisions – and their outcomes – work to your advantage.

### **You've Done This Before!**

I've just introduced you to the DECIDE! method for making great decisions. But the fact is, you've done this process many times in your life.

In the last chapter, I asked you to write down some of the best decisions you've ever made. Go back to that list now, and see how you applied each step in the DECIDE! method to make that decision.

I'll admit that sometimes we do something sudden and emotional (Las Vegas newlyweds know what I'm talking about), and we get lucky. Even though we acted impulsively, we got favorable results. But this is often due to luck and good fortune, particularly if it wasn't a decision that we'd already been mulling subconsciously for some time.

What I'm talking about here are the important decisions in your life that you made carefully, the ones that you took the time to contemplate, and which you finally made with full confidence that you were making the right choice. Perhaps it was the decision to get married. But maybe it was your decision to pursue your

Master's degree. Whatever it was, can you see how you applied each of the DECIDE! steps to your winning decisions in an ordered and thoughtful way, and came away not only with a great decision, but with ultimately great results as well? That's no accident.

Conversely, if you take a moment to think about those decisions you've made in the past that you regretted, you'll probably notice that you skipped one or more of these steps, or that you didn't take the process seriously enough to consider all the ramifications and do all the research you needed to do before acting (or maybe you did too much research and missed out on the opportunity!).

The point is, making decisions confidently – of any scale and level of importance – is not rocket science, nor is it a rare, divine gift. It's a common, intelligent, ordered way to present the mind with your heart's desire, and to craft the most effective route to fulfilling that desire.

The great news about this fact is that great decision-making is replicable! It's not an accident!

You can use this process over and over again, and feel confident about every decision in which you apply the process, just as you've done in the past with those fortunate "winning decisions."

Decision-making may have been somewhat random for you before, and your results and day-after feelings about them were probably just as inconsistent and unpredictable.

But now that I've shown – or should I say, reminded – you of how you went about making great decisions in the past, you can apply this same process to every important decision in your life and expect great results.

The power of the DECIDE! process is two-fold. Firstly, it gives you a systematic, ordered way to approach important or complex decisions, thus removing the feelings of confusion and overwhelm. Secondly, it turns you into a proactive decision-maker, empowering you to create what you want for yourself and your loved ones. No longer will you be a reactive decision-maker, limited by whatever the world happens to present to you.

### **Making Decisions With Your Whole Self**

Good decision-making is an integrated process. We have the resources of desire and emotion in our spirit and heart, and we derive the benefits of reason and long-term thinking through the wise use of our rational mind. The fact is, we make decisions with our heart and our head, and any decision-making process worth its salt must account for, and integrate, these two aspects.

The DECIDE! method does this very well. Although the heart and the head are involved in each step, one or the other will often lead. But they always work together to create a decision integrated by both heart and mind.

For example, in the act of declaring what you want (Step #1), it is your heart that is speaking most loudly. Even though your head does make a contribution here (after all, few people open 401(k) accounts because they feel so good), it's usually the desires of the heart that lead us to consider various choices and to contemplate the decision in the first place.

Or consider how establishing your decision frame, and doing investigation and research on the issue that faces you (Steps #2 and #4), tend to be more rational actions, processes of the mind, where you place the motivating desire of your heart in its most resourceful context and identify the best, practical ways to fulfill it.

Throughout the DECIDE! process, you will take both your heart and your head into consideration, so that your decision not only makes sense, but feels right to you as well. This is what makes it possible for you to make decisions with total confidence and enthusiasm.

### **DECIDE! Is A Powerful Feedback Loop**

An important thing to remember is that the first four, deliberative steps of the DECIDE! method – declaring what you want, establishing your decision frame, coming up with alternatives, and doing investigation and research – all reinforce and refine each other.

You will begin the process with step #1 and follow the method sequentially, but you will find yourself coming back to previous steps as you refine what you want, rethink your decision frame, discover new ideas, and gather information that clarifies your needs and opportunities. You don't need each step to be perfect and final the first time you do it.

When you declare what you want, you will be painting a relatively broad and, yes, important vision for yourself, but it may not be your final answer once you've thought through all the ramifications. As you frame the decision, come up with alternatives and gather information, you might refine your desired outcome, making it more specific or including elements that you hadn't considered the first time around.

Similarly, the information you gather before you make a decision may cause you to reframe it, or to consider new alternatives. And those refinements may call for more investigation.

It is normal and appropriate to go back and forth, refining each step until you craft the best decision for you and for those you care about.

But just because you go through the first four steps organically does not mean you need to feel disorganized or disordered at the same time. You continue to follow the order and perspective that the method gives you, even as you move thoughtfully between steps.

Indeed, the whole point of following a process is to give you a framework for thinking clearly about a situation that may be complex and/or emotional. If you are to see your way clearly through the minefield of your myriad fears, confusion, and worry, you need a simple, reliable process to follow that takes all of your needs and opportunities into consideration and gives you a clear view of the situation at hand. This is the only way that you can make the best decision possible.

The DECIDE! method is designed to give you this powerful ability.

### **Four Reasons Why We Need A Decision-Making Process**

You may wonder why you should bother with a systematic process like DECIDE! to make decisions. Freedom from endless hand-wringing and confusion ought to be reason enough. But let's not be glib. There a number of real benefits to



following a consistent process in making your decisions, and a number of reasons why such a process is essential to getting good results.

### **Reason #1: An Inconsistent Approach Leads to Inconsistent Results**

Most people approach decisions in an inconsistent way. It's not because they're incapable of making good decisions, but because they've never been shown how good decisions are made in a systematic, repeatable way. Sometimes they are lucky and make good decisions, and sometimes they are unlucky and make bad decisions. You just never know which team is going to show up on the ball field, and when it's the World Series, you don't want to be left with hoping for the best!

One example of how we approach decisions inconsistently is how we treat "big" decisions differently than "little" decisions. We tend to approach decisions with long-term consequences with much greater fear and consternation than we approach decisions with seemingly short-term or even no consequences. I'll explain why this is a little later. For now, just notice that decisions about things that are really important to us are often the most vexing ones to make, and the ones where conflicting emotions are the most vocal and most disorienting.

Unfortunately, we tend to approach such important decisions inconsistently, despite the fact that every decision is the same! Each decision is an opportunity to get something we want by generating alternatives, doing research, making comparisons, and committing ourselves confidently to a course of action. That is how any good decision is made, and how you've made all your own best decisions.

That process doesn't change just because the decision feels more scary, or because we've made the consequences more important than for many other decisions that we make. In fact, the stakes we have riding on the most pressing decisions of our life make using the DECIDE! process all the more important, because the process helps us moderate all those disorienting emotions and worries, and creates the structure we need to integrate those emotions while thinking clearly about the issue. This is how we avoid "psyching ourselves out" when making important decisions.

Because the way we approach our decisions is so inconsistent, it should be no surprise that our results, and the feelings we have about those decisions, are inconsistent as well.

If you want to get consistently favorable results, and feel consistently good about the choices you make, then you must consistently follow a proven process for making choices, one that honors and integrates your feelings, but which also maintains the perspective you need to make a good decision. After all, have you ever made an important decision well, that you weren't thinking clearly about?

Every quality decision is made by consistently following a high-quality process that encompasses your desires and resources, and helps you think clearly about the issue. You've proved this fact when you corresponded your own winning decisions from the past with those of the DECIDE! method. When you followed the method, you got great results, and even if the initial feedback wasn't ideal, you knew how to adapt and keep moving forward.

With the DECIDE! method now revealed to your conscious awareness, you have a high-quality process that you can consistently and consciously apply to make every decision that matters to you a good one, no matter how important or trivial it may be to you.

### **Reason #2: A Good Decision-Making Process Takes Both Short-Term and Long-Term Gains Into Account**

Many decisions – certainly the ones most important to us – have a short- and long-term component to them. For example, because you care about your future, you can choose to invest some of your monthly income in a retirement plan. This is good and sensible planning. Of course, you may also enjoy eating out every night, which gobbles up whatever money you might be able to save for the future.

While I firmly believe that decision-making is all about creating fulfilling lives for ourselves, the short-term, happy choice is not always the best one. You may love to shop, but you can shop yourself right into bankruptcy if you're not careful, a frightening reality many Americans actually face today.

Having a decision-making process like the DECIDE! method enables you to take into account both the long-term and the short-term gains to be had by any decision, and enables you to make a wise choice that is neither self-indulgent nor self-denying, but which honors and balances your desires in both the short-term and the long-term.

### **Reason #3: We Need A Sensible Structure For Our Excited and Conflicting Emotions**

The purpose of following a process is not to eliminate the heart and soul of a decision. We do not want to ignore or downplay our very important feelings about the issues that define our lives. In fact, those feelings are very important guides for us.

But feelings can be like preschoolers on caffeine. They jump around our mind, yelling and shouting, throwing things, calling for attention, and crying when they get hurt. Unchecked, our emotions can quickly overwhelm us with their noise, urgency, and erratic motion. This obviously interferes with our ability to make good decisions.

Any parent knows that one kid bouncing off the walls is challenging, and three kids bouncing off the walls are just about unmanageable. Imagine trying to make an important, pressing decision with three rowdy kids screaming, running, and wreaking havoc around you. That's what it's like to make decisions without having a structure for your emotions.

This is where a systematic process like the DECIDE! method becomes invaluable. The DECIDE! method enables you to think clearly about your conflicting and sometimes wild feelings. The process helps you place them in context and listen to them one at a time, and to give them the weight and perspective they deserve – not too little, not too much – in order to make the best decision.

In this way we can be sure to give each feeling the attention it deserves, while remaining as “the adult in the room,” able to think clearly about our own desires and direction in life.

#### **Reason #4: We Need A Cure For Confusion and Stress When Making Important Decisions**

Most of the confusion and stress people feel when faced with an important decision stems from the fear, worry, and sense of loss or disappointment caroming from wall to wall in our brains...a classic case of lunatics running the asylum. We've talked about how the DECIDE! method solves that problem by providing a constructive framework for those feelings to be heard and considered.

But decision-making stress also stems from the very lack of a reliable and consistent way to think about complex and emotional situations. By having a consistent way to think about our varying desires and opportunities, we enjoy the sense of calm, order, and clarity that such a structure brings to what would otherwise be a chaotic and distressing experience.

Not only do we get to enjoy the calm, order and clarity of such a process, but having those qualities in the midst of our deliberation does wonders for our confidence in making the decision when we finally do.

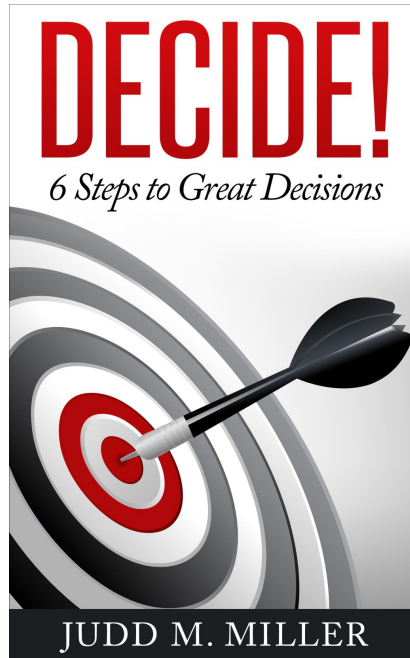
#### **Conclusion**

Now that you've learned the basics of the DECIDE! process and how it helps you make great decisions, I will explore each of the method's six steps in greater detail in the chapters that follow, and I will provide you with tips and resources that you can apply right away for making each step as productive and resourceful as possible.

I'll also address the most common decision-making traps that get people stuck, and how to break through them if you find yourself caught in one. And I'll reveal the top decision-making mistakes that sabotage people's effort in making a great decision, and show you how to avoid them yourself.

Finally, I'll show you how to super-charge your decision-making, so that you can make every decision faster and with greater confidence, freeing your mind once and for all from worry, so that you can focus your time and energy on actually creating the life you want.

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### **About the Author**

Judd Miller has more than 20 years of professional experience in the commercial, nonprofit, and government sectors. Judd's broad experience includes public affairs, association management, information technology, project management, organizational management, process improvement, and leadership.

Judd has been published in USA Today and various trade publications, and has been featured in the Monterey County Herald and the Kingman Daily Miner newspapers. He has created and taught local seminars on wealth-building, and serves as a volunteer member and former National Staff officer in the United States Coast Guard Auxiliary. He is a Certified NLP Practitioner, and a former volunteer firefighter.

Judd is also the founder of the Meta-Human Institute (MHI), an organization developing an integrated and comprehensive curriculum in excellence, including physical and mental well-being, communication, leadership, and wealth-building. You can learn more at <http://www.metahumaninstitute.com>.

Judd lives with his family in California.