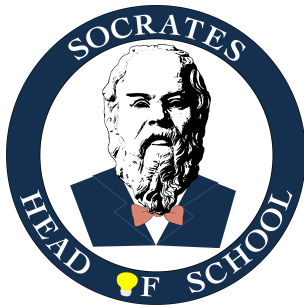


Decisive by Chip and Dan Heath



Think you might want to read this book?

Decisive by Chip and Dan Heath is packed with so many theories, research examples, models and protocols around decision-making that if you are interested in the topic at all, you will fly through each chapter wowed by its applicability. It doesn't matter whether you are well read on the topic or new to the models/ideas, there is plenty here to keep you reflecting on your decisions from the past and mapping out your upcoming choices- simply a great read. *Decisive* is ballasted by the acronym WRAP:

| Idea (WRAP Acronym) | Example |
|---------------------------------|---|
| Widen Your Options | "Spotlight Shift" or "Multitrack" ideas |
| Reality Test Your Assumptions | Ask "What would have to be true for...?" |
| Attain Distance Before Deciding | Use a 10/10/10 protocol: "How will we feel about our decision 10 minutes, 10 months and 10 years from now?" |
| Prepare to Be Wrong | Set a tripwire- like Van Halen did with brown M&Ms backstage |

What would Socrates ask?

- Should schools frame every financial decision in terms of opportunity cost that is ballasted on student learning? (e.g., We can send 8 teachers to the conference or buy 18 laptops for the classroom.)
- Should schools call references for a candidate before the final decision is made (and not just as confirmation that your decision was good)?
- How can we consistently report out on the awesomeness of students?
- How do we give everyone who thinks they want to be a teacher a snippet of the experience before they commit to so many years in college to the idea?
- Should solving hypotheticals be a requisite for any administrative hire?

Research

- As a society we don't have a history of good decision-making (44% of lawyers don't recommend law / an estimated 61,535 tattoos were removed in the United States in 2009 / 88% of New Year's Eve resolutions are broken).
- 70% of married couples reported being happy after keeping a diary of the pleasantness of their marriage.

Concepts

- The "spotlight effect" highlights variables we can see and diminishes variables not

currently right in front of us.

- Ben Franklin's pro/con list process is popular- but we often forget his emphasis on building out the list over a couple of days and the "moral algebra" (striking items off each side of the list that are of equal/similar value).
- There are four villains of decision-making: narrow framing (usually as a binary choice), confirmation bias (seeking data points that support our view), short-term emotion (doing what will feel good immediately) and overconfidence.
- "The psychologist Roy Baumeister draws an analogy to driving- in our cars, we may spend 95% of our time going straight, but it's the turns that determine where we end up."
- High school seniors shouldn't be asking "What's the highest ranked college I can convince to take me?" Rather it should be "What do I want out of life and what are the best options to get me there?"
- Roger Martin says asking the question, "What would have to be true for ...?" is a great way to figure out the best decision possible.
- Ask candidate reference questions that generate data that is useful, like: "How many secretaries has x had in the last five years?" or "How many times did you eat dinner with your family last week?" or "What is your favorite movie, tv show or book?" (you should think about how current/relevant/interesting the answers are.)
- Franklin Delano Roosevelt encouraged mail to be sent to the White House and he used the data that was tallied about it ("zooming out") as well as specific ones that he read himself ("zooming in") to gauge the feelings of the nation.
- "Hunter College at the City University of New York, for instance, does not admit students unless they have spent at least 100 hours observing physical therapists at work. That way, all incoming students are guaranteed a basic understanding of the profession they're preparing to enter."
- "Interview illusion" is the idea we are learning more than we really are in an interview.
- "Productive interruption" is when you set a time interval (maybe your watch/phone goes off every 15 minutes) and each time ask 'Am I doing what I need to be doing right now?'"
- "Realistic job previews" have been proven to reduce turnover in a company.
- Trainees at Zappo are offered \$1,000 to leave. It's a way to weed out those who may not really be ready to fully invest (time/emotionally) in the company.
- The partition effect moderates our consumption- having cookies individually wrapped causes us to eat fewer.

Quotes from the authors

- "...your organization has many checklists and probably zero playlists...a playlist is useful for situations where you need a stimulus, a way of producing new ideas."
- "Research has found that interviews are less predictive of job performance than work samples, job-knowledge tests and peer ratings of past job performance."
- "...in helping break a decision log-jam, the single most effective question might be: 'What would I tell my friend to do in this situation?'"
- "If those people who lose consider the decision process fair, it can make a huge difference in the way they react."
- "When the researchers ask the elderly what they regret about their lives, they don't often regret something they *did*; they regret things they *didn't* do. They regret not seizing

opportunities. They regret hesitating. They regret being indecisive.”

Implement tomorrow?

- “To use 10/10/10, we think about our decisions on three different time frames: How will we feel about it 10 minutes from now? How about 10 months from now? How about 10 years from now?”

Organizations/schools working on answers

- [College Match](#)
- [Learning Analytics Collaborative](#)
- [Teach for America](#)
- [Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development](#)

Referenced books with the potential to impact leading and learning in education

| Author(s) Last Name | Title |
|---------------------|---|
| Kahneman | <u>Thinking, Fast and Slow</u> |
| Martin | <u>The Opposable Mind</u> |
| Welch | <u>10-10-10</u> |
| Shoemaker | <u>Brilliant Mistakes</u> |
| Livingston | <u>Founders at Work</u> |
| Abrashoff | <u>It's Your Ship</u> |
| Russo and Shoemaker | <u>Winning Decisions</u> |
| Ariely | <u>Predictably Irrational</u> |
| Roberto | <u>Know What You Don't Know</u> |

The applicability of this book to education is



This work is licensed under the [CC BY-NC-ND 4.0 International License](#).