



## DECISION-MAKING

There is decision-making where you can be at your most cognitive, having the time, energy and space to gather information, weigh up all the options and potential outcomes, reaching a rational decision. You factor in your values as part of the process, and your priorities and goals for both the present and the future. You end up with a decision based on maximising benefits and minimising costs. You might find yourself doing this about moving house or whether to search for a new job.

Then there's decision-making under pressure. Under highly pressurised conditions, you carry out defensive decision-making where you focus only on an immediate solution and barely consider options and outcomes. You might try to do a quick pro's and con's list; you might do what you usually do; you might take your basic values into account; you might delay making a decision in the hope that it will resolve itself or look different to you another day; you might pass the buck to others in the hope that they will make the decision for you. However, although often not great for decision-making, sometimes the impulsive decision is better than no decision at all.

There are decisions to be made where you may not be able to gather all the information, and where in any case the outcomes are ambiguous, and there's also some pressure. In these instances, you tend to use intuitive decision-making rather than a structured approach. Intuition involves 'recognition-primed experiences' and 'mental simulation'. RPE is a process of reaching back to think about previous similar situations and their outcomes, and mental simulation is reaching forward with your creative imagination to determine likely outcomes. Researchers have found that people often prefer intuitive decision-making to rational decision-making, even when it means defying the laws of probability.

And finally, another kind of intuition can come into play... the kind where you have ideas and knowledge about something but couldn't say exactly how you 'know' what you know, and prefer to make decisions based on this sixth sense. This feeling is often a fusion of life experiences, creativity and being highly-focused on an issue. You might use prayer or other forms of contemplation to access a 'higher being' or 'higher self' to enquire what best to do. Decision-making is often accompanied by a sense that there is an order to life lying behind what is apparent to the cognitive and physical senses.