

Making Clear Choices

Choices are not always easy to make. It helps to recognize that the mind is subdivided into parts. Each part has a unique set of interests, beliefs, and objectives. Subdivided parts of the mind attempt to influence us using a variety of strategies.

When faced with a difficult choice, slow down. Take some time to learn about the parts of you that are attempting to influence your choice. Once you have done so, you will have the clarity needed to choose with confidence.

The following exercise, Making Clear Choices, is a 6-step process to accomplish just that.

To explain the exercise, we start with an example. Read and study the example before attempting to apply this exercise to your own circumstance.

Step 1. Describe the decision or commitment you are trying to make or the problem you are trying to solve.

For example: My back pain was getting worse, so I set an appointment with the chiropractor. But the only available time was in conflict with my scheduled coaching session. I forgot to cancel one of these appointments and woke up this morning with no back pain. I don't want to waste money or time on an unnecessary appointment with my chiropractor and have been looking forward to my coaching appointment. I need to decide which appointment to cancel or reschedule.

Step 2. List the parts of you that are activated by the circumstance that requires a decision, commitment, or solution.

For example:

A part that worries that there is still a problem with my back.

A part that doesn't want to miss the meeting with my coach.

A part that is concerned about the cost of the chiropractor appointment.

Step 3. Check in with the parts.

Here are some questions about each part of you that this circumstance triggers.

From the perspective of this part, what is your position on this decision, commitment, or problem?

From the perspective of this part, what are your concerns?

From the perspective of this part, what do you need?

Anything else to say about this from the perspective of this part that you should consider before deciding?

Making Clear Choices

For example:

From the perspective of the part that is worried that there still may be a problem with my back...

- *What is your position on this decision, commitment, or problem?*

Answer: If there is still a problem with my back and I don't keep this appointment, I may be in pain and have trouble getting another appointment. I could make the problem worse.

- *From the perspective of this part, what are your concerns?*

Answer: I've been putting off dealing with this problem for too long. It's time to find out what is going on and to learn what there is to do about it. If I don't address this, I will continue to suffer from this problem and that could limit me physically and mentally.

- *From the perspective of this part, what do you need?*

Answer: I need to know what is going on with my back and to know how to deal with it.

- *Anything else to say about this from the perspective of this part that you should consider before deciding?*

Answer: My coach will understand. I can reschedule with him. I'm sure this is what he would want me to do.

From the perspective of the part that doesn't want to miss the meeting with my coach...

- *What is your position on this decision, commitment, or problem?*

Answer: My back isn't hurting right now. It's important to keep my appointment with my coach. If it starts hurting again, I can make another appointment with the Chiropractor.

- *From the perspective of this part, what are your concerns?*

Answer: My coach may not be willing to reschedule. He told me that he wanted 24 hours- notice to reschedule. If I miss this session, I may not be able to make it up and I will still have to pay for it. And my coach might judge me for trying to reschedule on short notice.

- *From the perspective of this part, what do you need?*

Answer: I need to know if the coach will let me reschedule and if he will judge me.

- *Anything else to say about this from the perspective of this part that you should consider before deciding?*

Answer: I don't want to be so concerned about what my coach thinks of me.

Making Clear Choices

From the perspective of the part that is concerned about the cost of the chiropractor appointment...

- *What is your position on this decision, commitment, or problem?*

Answer: Since my back isn't hurting right now, I would be wasting my time and money if I go because there is nothing wrong.

- *From the perspective of this part, what are your concerns?*

Answer: I don't know how much of the cost the insurance company will cover.

- *From the perspective of this part, what do you need?*

Answer: I need to know what the cost of the appointment will be and what my insurance will pay.

- *Anything else to say about this from the perspective of this part that you should consider before deciding?*

Answer: I'd also like to know how many chiropractor visits insurance will pay for each year.

Step 4. How will you address all the stated concerns and needs? Review and address each concern listed in Step 3.

For example:

If I don't keep the appointment today, I will schedule one for next week, so I know the extent of the back problem and what will be required to manage or solve the problem.

I will contact my coach and ask if he is willing to reschedule. If he is not willing to reschedule, will he still charge me for the appointment because I didn't give him enough notice?

I will ask my coach if he is judging me for asking to reschedule. I will also ask him to help me work with this concern.

I will contact my chiropractor's office to see what the cost is, how many visits my insurance allows, and how much insurance pays for.

Step 5. Thank all parts for letting you know about their perspective, their concerns, and their needs.

Don't skip this step. Even if it feels silly to do so, the subdivided parts of your mind are like separate individuals who crave respect and appreciation. Thank them for their interest in helping you.

Step 6. Your decision.

For Example:

After contacting the coach and discussing my concerns, and after contacting the Chiropractor office, I decide to keep the appointment with the Chiropractor.

Making Clear Choices Worksheet

Working with your parts before making a commitment or a decision can bring clarity and enable you to maintain your integrity. A decision made after going through this process will be much more sustainable because it comes from clarity.

Use this worksheet for completing each of these steps or record your answers separately.

Step 1. Describe the decision or commitment you are trying to make or the problem you are trying to solve.

Step 2. List up to four parts of you that are most activated by the circumstance that requires a decision, commitment, or solution.

#1, A part that:

#2, A part that:

#3, A part that:

#4, A part that:

Making Clear Choices Worksheet

Step 3. Check in with the parts.

Here are some questions about each part of you that this circumstance triggers.

From the perspective of Part #1:

What is your position on this decision, commitment, or problem?

What are your concerns?

What do you need?

Anything else to say about this from the perspective of this part that you should consider before deciding?

Making Clear Choices Worksheet

From the perspective of Part #2:

What is your position on this decision, commitment, or problem?

What are your concerns?

What do you need?

Anything else to say about this from the perspective of this part that you should consider before deciding?

Making Clear Choices Worksheet

From the perspective of Part #3:

What is your position on this decision, commitment, or problem?

What are your concerns?

What do you need?

Anything else to say about this from the perspective of this part that you should consider before deciding?

Making Clear Choices Worksheet

From the perspective of Part #4:

What is your position on this decision, commitment, or problem?

What are your concerns?

What do you need?

Anything else to say about this from the perspective of this part that you should consider before deciding?

Making Clear Choices Worksheet

Step 4. How will you address all the stated concerns and needs?

Step 5. Thank all parts for letting you know about their perspective, their concerns, and their needs.

Step 6. Your decision.