

The Purposeful Decision Maker: A Guide to Making Great Decisions in Life and Business

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The Purposeful Decision Maker is an incisive and catalyzing self-help guide to mastering the fine art of good decision-making.

Entrepreneur Pádraig Ó Céidigh's empowering self-help book *The Purposeful Decision Maker* includes strategies for decision-making in business and life.

Arguing that one's vision, values, relationships, resilience, personal experience, adaptability, gut instinct, and detached rationality all play into making good decisions of the nature that are vital to success, this book draws on experiences ranging from buying an airline to starting a newspaper to illustrate effective decision-making. It defines good decision-making as making choices that align with one's values and avoiding biases, which serve as cognitive shortcuts that inhibit freethinking when introspection would be more effective. Its personal anecdotes are ranging, pulling from Céidigh's experiences as a teacher, lawyer, and airline owner. They include memories of Céidigh noticing a dearth of native Gaelic speakers in local business operations, teaching mathematics by explaining the purpose of each class in the context of the course, and leading a school tour to Russia that undid some childhood biases. And there are broader examples, too, as of Steve Jobs observing that dots can only be joined while looking back and not while looking forward.

Throughout this thorough, analytical book appear applicable insights on topics including balancing flexibility with establishing boundaries; how failure can be a great teacher; and overthinking, which is said to lead to poor decision-making. This work is well structured and methodical, and the prose is clear and probing, even when it's addressing potentially overwhelming concepts like heuristics. The book first establishes its underlying concepts before anatomizing good and bad decisions; then, it outlines steps for revolutionizing decision-making, like discerning whether a situation calls for instinct or analysis and learning to mitigate risk and account for unintended consequences. This progression toward the practical application of its ideas is effective. Further, each chapter ends with "action points" that distill its key lessons down, as well as questions for further engagement. The reader's notes are somewhat superfluous, though. And in place of a summary conclusion, the book ends with a chapter on group decision-making, extending its lessons to a company setting to show how leaders might navigate group dynamics, collective responsibility, and other issues that arise when collaborating on decisions.

An incisive and catalyzing self-help guide, *The Purposeful Decision Maker* is about the fine art of good decision-making; it includes keen insights and useful processes to follow.

JOSEPH S. PETE (September 12, 2024)

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