

Decision-Making Isn't a Big Deal, After All

Don't let the process wear you down. Follow these simple tips, take it step by step, and you're sure to make it with your sanity intact

ELANGO R

I am going through a period of tough decision-making and if that were not enough, it is hitting me at a time when I am getting closer to the release date of my very first book, 'You don't need a God Father'. I am suspecting the decision-making is going to get even more intense as the decisions move from the mundane, "Which author portrait picture should I go with?" to the bigger ones such as, "Should I say no to a bulk corporate order and push it to retail?" or the nail-gripping ones such as, "What do we put up as the book cover?" Initially, all decisions are made with a lot of excitement, like when you first dig into a triple-decker choconut sundae. But half-way through, it starts taking a toll, the excitement wears you down and it feels like a gigantic insurmountable task. Like the extras on the sundae, if you have a team of well-wishers and advisors, then decision-making gets even more complex. The cherry on top of this sundae is the existence of a day job that demands attention.

So what do you do in such a situation? You will probably feel what I did last Sunday and refuse to get out of bed! Contrary to the expectation that the yummy sundae was going to be your energy booster and extra dose of sugar, you find yourself zapped! What can be worse, you think? How about zapped + without a choice? You still have deadlines, the publishers, corporates that have placed orders and your day job to keep.

What's the way out?

Well, I decided to take a deep breath, and turn to my passion of writing as an outlet. I put together an 'Idiots guide to taking decisions when you have very many to take'.

UNDERSTAND THE OBJECTIVE & IMPACT

This is the first step to making an informed decision. Make sure you fully understand the objective and the impact of the decision you are going to take. A clear understanding of the impact will help you prioritise the objectives the impending decision may have. Once the objective and its impact is zeroed in on, the decision will seem obvious.

For instance, when I had to choose a picture of myself for the book, I simply could not decide. I then realised, the impact of this decision is minimal. Once this struck me, I had selected a picture in a jiffy. However, the decision on the book cover was more crucial and I spent a good two days arriving at the decision.

TAKE ADVICE

There is no harm in seeking advice from the pros. Jot them down, take time to ponder over them, arrive at a shortlist by filtering the relevant ones, and you will slowly see the haze lifting.

Publishing a book is no child's play. Without the advice of veterans in the field, I would not have been able to take mindboggling decisions, like who the publisher should be, who I should source design to, etc.

GO BACK TO VALUES

Ensure you are in tandem with your conscience. A decision should not be at the cost of peace of mind. I said no to a plethora of deals only because my conscience felt I was giving the party an undue advantage.

FIX A DEADLINE

Not having deadlines only prolongs the decision-making process. This is where the other stakeholders help with followups and timelines. So, when given a deadline, do not frown, instead look at it as a mechanism to ease your decisionmaking process. If this means, not taking a decision, so be it. Sometimes, things simply fall into place!

FORGET IT ONCE YOU HAVE TAKEN IT

Once decided, forget it. Reality always looks obvious in hindsight. Remember the two-years-ago test? How many of us actually think about decisions made two years ago? All the fuss and sweat seem such a waste of time.

AVOID THE BLAME GAME

Just like the final decision is yours, the consequences of the decision are also yours alone. Don't resort to blaming the stars, the sun, the moon and your spouse. And, when nothing works, trust your gut! Intuition, after all, is a result of experience accumulated over the years. The book here is only an example. Replace it with your day-to-day work scenarios, your daily dilemmas and try tackling them using the steps above.

Take that long-pending decision today and share the same via a comment!

The writer is chief human resources officer at Mphasis

