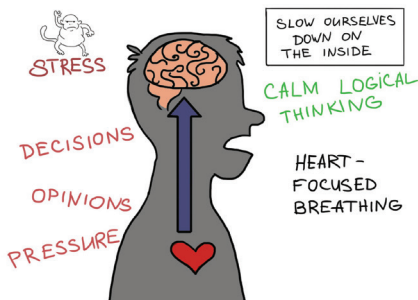


UNIT 7: DECISION-MAKING

From deciding to get up in the morning to whether we should turn on the hot or cold water to how long we will study for a big test, we make lots of decisions everyday.

Most of our daily decisions are pretty easy and no big deal. A handful, however, can have important and maybe long-lasting consequences for us and others, so it's a good idea to be clear-headed when we make them. **Sometimes we make good decisions and other times ... well, not so good. The important thing with all our decisions is to learn from them.**

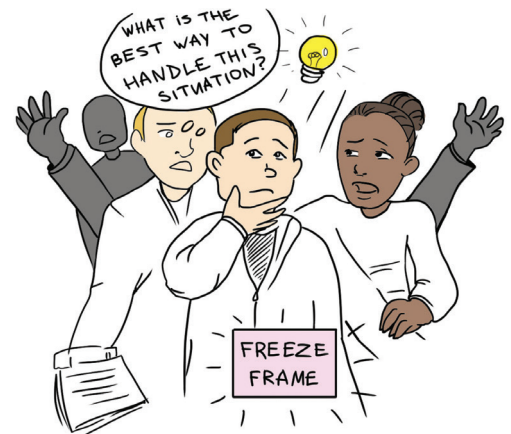


People who've been doing "life" for a long time can tell you it's all about the choices you make. You probably know by now there's no getting around having to make tough decisions. **Getting in sync and what we call coherent when the hard decisions come up in life help you make smarter and more effective decisions.**

One of the best ways to get in sync before a big decision is to stop and take a timeout so your reactive brain doesn't completely take you over. Say your friend wants you to do something that may be dangerous or could get you into trouble. What's to decide: It's your friend, right? And yet, your wiser heart may be whispering, "Not so fast."

The funny thing ... about the hard choices in life is that when they come up, there's often a lot of noise inside our brains. You know, monkey chatter. What should I do? What will my friends think if I don't do this? Why is this happening to me?

Now, what if you had a volume button, so you could lower all the brain noise that happens when you need to make a hard decision? **Make a decision to turn down the volume instead of rushing into important decisions by doing Heart-Focused Breathing for a minute or two.** Then see how your decisions go.



When we make decisions out of anger or when we react to rumors without first getting the facts, there can be bad consequences. Important advice:

Never decide your entire future when you're mad, after a bad haircut or when you happen to overhear some kids talking about the weirdest person on the planet and think they must mean you.



When you're feeling calmer, and the volume is turned low in your brain, you can think clearly about whether you want to wait before making a big decision. For 24 or 48 hours? Maybe even a week?

True, sometimes you can't wait that long, but any extra time you can spare is always better.



Face it, sometimes that smart brain of yours and your wiser heart need a little quality time to think about what's best in some situations.

Pretty much everyone has rushed into decisions or has been pressured into doing things they regretted later on. Sooner or later, you'll find yourself caught up in some craziness or drama, and you know what? **Your brain remembers what you've done before in similar situations. So, guess what? Chances are your brain will replay a message to do what you've done before.**

Good decision-making is a big life skill

Decision-making is a big life skill because it has the power to make your life and others' lives better or worse, happier or sadder. It can make life more meaningful. And think of it: Some day, your decisions could change the course of history.

So, go ahead and do some old-fashioned trial and error, because that's what it takes to become good at anything. **Trial and error and a little practice every day will help you find what works for you to get in sync, be clearheaded and focused and turn down the volume when the tough choices come up.**