

4 Signs You're Making a Bad Decision

"It's not my fault!" ranks in my top 10 most frequently used phrases and may well be No. 1.

Don't get me wrong—I'm not the kind of person who always has to be right.

But heaven protect anyone who implies that I might be wrong.

My favorite family game?

"Pin the Blame on Someone Else."

Asking myself the hard questions

But over the last few years, I've started asking a hard question when I start feeling overwhelmed by the latest curve ball life's thrown at me.

Where might I have gone wrong?

This question stems not from an unhealthy urge to shame myself but an honest desire to pray-cess (process with prayer) the present problem so I can avoid feeling overwhelmed in the future.

Understanding my faulty decision-making

More often than not, I discover my current overwhelm is the result of faulty decision-making that falls into one of these five categories.

1. I decided to do something off-limits.

I did what I knew I shouldn't do ... or didn't do what I knew to do.

Like the time I drove for four straight hours without a rest or bathroom break, even though I know I need both every hour or two, and ended up totaling my husband's car.

Is there forgiveness available in such situations? Of course.

Are there still consequences, often long-term ones? Absolutely.

Learning to live with the long-term consequences of a short-term poor choice without letting those consequences overwhelm me? #Adulthood. And humility. And surrender.

2. I decided to get involved where I didn't belong.

I've learned the hard way that there's a word for "helping" without an invitation: meddling.

No matter how well-qualified I may be, no matter how badly other people may be messing things up, stepping in where God hasn't called me has never once turned out well.

I'm slowly learning my life is far less overwhelming when I stay out of things that are NOMB: None of My Business.

I'm also learning to ask myself the uncomfortable but vital question: *What am I avoiding in my own life that makes me want to take over someone else's?*

3. I decided too fast.

My driver, get-it-done-yesterday personality gets me into trouble. Too often, I make knee-jerk choices because I'm an achievement junkie—doing something, anything, feels better than waiting.

Only in hindsight do I realize I left key people out of the decision process. Often, I've failed to pray, seek wise counsel and listen for the Holy Spirit to lead before taking action.

My Personal Manifesto is helping me to make wiser, more considered choices with far less overwhelming consequences. My Personal Manifesto is a simple declaration of who I am and who I aspire to be with God's grace and power. As I re-read it, I ask myself, *What decision will keep my integrity in tact? What choice will my Future Self thank me for?*

4. I waited too long to decide.

Sometimes, I do the exact opposite: I wait far too long to make a necessary decision.

As a recovering perfectionist and a Highly Sensitive Person, I can become so terrified of making a wrong choice that I make none. Surely no choice is better than a bad choice, right?

Wrong. No choice is actually a choice.

I'm learning to make the best possible intentional choice rather than allowing no choice to win by default.

5. Someone else's decisions are affecting me.

Sometimes, things go wrong even when I don't. I hold up my end of the bargain, but someone else drops the ball. And then, they won't admit that their poor choice is now hurting me. To add insult to injury, they may even blame the consequences of their bad decision on me.

I may not have made the initial decision, but now I have a vital decision to make: How will I respond?

Will I indulge in an off-limits reaction, such as anger or malice? (See No. 1.)

Will I react by taking over to make me feel better? (See No.

2.)

Will I react in the moment, rather than giving myself time to pray-cess the situation? (See No. 3.)

Will I withhold my reaction for so long that bitterness and resentment fester? (See No. 4.)

How to Make Wiser, More Intentional Choices

As easy as it is to blame others for the overwhelm in our lives, some of our overwhelm comes from our own faulty decision-making.

More than we realize—or want to admit.

Instead of beating ourselves up for our poor choices, we can “be still” and rest in God’s reassurance: “I am God” (Ps. 46:10b).

As we pray-cess our past decisions, we’ll learn to make wiser, more intentional choices, resulting in less stress and increasing the peace in our lives. {eo}

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