

## Taking Decisions

*How do we take informed decisions? What do you need to take into consideration?*



Every day and in every moment of our lives we take decisions, we choose what to dress, the food we eat, the friends we meet, and what to think.

When taking individual decisions there are usually two mental processes running in our minds:

- **Intuition**, the gut feeling that we have about possible courses of action. This is a combination of our past experiences and our values. Often we just know what feels right. It can definitely help in taking decisions, but it is based on our feelings and thoughts and not analysis or critical thinking.
- **Reasoning** is based on facts and figures, analysis and critical thinking. It helps us make an informed decision but it doesn't take into consideration our emotional feelings.

When we take important life changing decisions, such as what subject to study at university or who to marry, it is important to combine your intuition with reasoning.

Here are problems that might prevent us making an informed decision:

1. **Not enough information.** This can happen when you have no time to take a decision. Try anyway to prioritise the information needed and take some time to make an informed decision.
2. **Too much information.** This is quite a common problem in the modern digital age when we have so much information that it becomes difficult to select the important aspects to take into consideration in order to make an informed decision.
3. **Group decisions.** When in a group every person brings his/her point of view based on personal values and experiences. Sharing ideas enrich the decision making process as we might widen our point of view or change our perspective. The decision making process might be very fast if all group members share similar positions about what to do and you manage to gather consensus. But it might take a very long time in situations where people have different positions on how to tackle an issue. Therefore, let all participants argue their position and if you don't manage to reach a synthesis of different positions let participants vote for the decision. Bear in mind that group decisions are a creative process and therefore any options not selected might be a useful tool to be kept in your toolbox for future decisions/actions. *(For further information refer to the skill 'Deciding Actions')*.

4. **Hidden interests.** Sometimes we might be influenced by external factors/people that might have an interest for you to take a specific decision.
5. **Emotional attachment.** Decisions imply changing the status quo and sometimes it is difficult to make the first step.
6. **No emotional attachment.** Sometimes it is difficult to take decisions just because we don't care about them. Try to focus and make a list of the advantages and disadvantages concerning how the decision would affect your life.

### Intuitional and Reasoning Activity

Take an A4 sheet of paper and divide it according to the following table. Think about something that you feel you need to take a decision about and take some time to write down your feelings. It will help a lot in taking an informed decision!

	Pro	Cons
Intuitional		
Reasoning		