

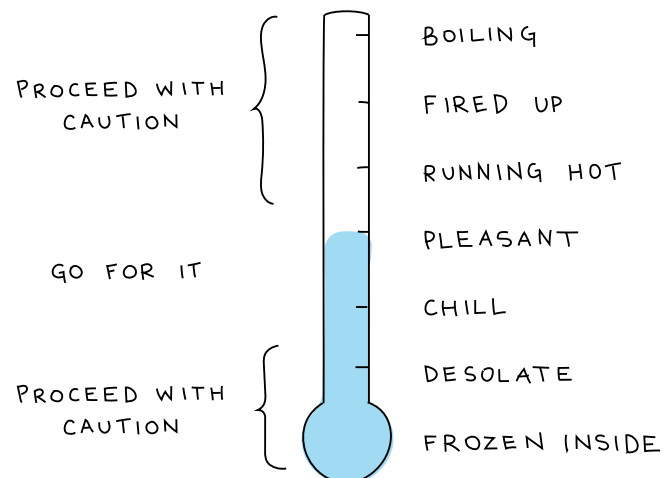
The No Hard Feelings Guide to:

DECISION MAKING

Checklists save lives: after pilots and surgeons started using checklists to make sure they weren't skipping important steps, accidents, infection rates, and deaths all nosedived. We've put together a "manage your mind" checklist.

- ❑ **Write out your options.** If you've only written down two things, take a moment to see if you can introduce an additional alternative. Choices usually aren't binary. When you limit your decision to "yes or no," "A or B," you make the stakes much higher than they might actually be. So if you've listed "Stay at my current job" and "Take the new job," think about whether you could broaden your menu by adding something like "Stay at my current job and ask for a promotion."
- ❑ **List everything you're feeling.** Are you irritated? Afraid? Craving caffeine?
- ❑ **Cross out each emotion that is not relevant to the decision at hand.** Say you're upset because traffic was terrible or anxious because you had an argument with your partner. These are real feelings, but you should not let them impact your broader decision-making.
- ❑ **Link the remaining emotions to specific options.** Notice if they're tied to a specific choice. Are you most excited when you imagine yourself picking Option A? Are you afraid you'll regret choosing Option B?
- ❑ **Ask what, not why.** Compare "Why are you afraid?" to "What are you afraid of?" You can easily answer the first question with a self-pitying platitude ("Because I never try anything new"), but the second forces you to address your specific feelings about the decision at hand. "Why questions draw us to our limitations; what questions help us see our potential. Why questions stir up negative emotions; what questions keep us curious," writes psychologist Tasha Eurich.
- ❑ **Run your thinking by another person.** Walk a mentor, colleague, or friend through your options. Verbalizing your thought process to another person forces you to synthesize the information you've been collecting. The other person can also help identify biases that may be affecting your decision-making.

BEFORE YOU MAKE A DECISION
TAKE YOUR EMOTIONAL TEMPERATURE



No Hard Feelings teaches you how to figure out which emotions to toss, which to keep, and which to express in order to be successful at work. Available everywhere books are sold on January 22.

The No Hard Feelings Guide to:

DECISION MAKING

- **Make a decision.** After completing the above steps, you should be able to rule out a fair number of options and be confident you made the best decision you could. And luckily, research shows our minds work hard to help us stay content with whatever we choose-- even when what actually happens is different from what we expected.

Still stuck? Here are some additional tips:

Narrow down your choices tournament style:

- Divide your options into equal piles (for example, if you have six options, make three piles of two)
- Pick the best option from each pile
- Put the winners into a new pile
- Pick the best option from the pile of winners

Arbitrarily limit the number of choices you consider. Say you're deciding where to go to lunch. You can tell yourself you'll only look at three places, instead of thirty. "'Good enough' is almost always good enough," advises Barry Schwartz, author of *The Paradox of Choice*.

Don't rush through the final decision. Going back and forth between two options isn't all bad. When you're faced with a novel decision, anxiety or indecision might just be your brain's way of slowing you down so it has enough time to more accurately weigh the evidence for or against each option.

INDECISION JEOPARDY

GOOGLE SEARCHES I THOUGHT WOULD HELP	THINGS I SHOULD BE DOING INSTEAD OF WORRYING	POTENTIALLY CRIPPLING REGRETS	PEOPLE WHO HAVE LISTENED TO ME OBSESS	OUTLANDISH WORST CASE SCENARIOS
\$ 200	\$ 200	\$ 200	\$ 200	\$ 200
\$ 400	\$ 400	\$ 400	\$ 400	\$ 400
\$ 600	\$ 600	\$ 600	\$ 600	\$ 600
\$ 800	\$ 800	\$ 800	\$ 800	\$ 800
\$ 1,000	\$ 1,000	\$ 1,000	\$ 1,000	\$ 1,000

No Hard Feelings teaches you how to figure out which emotions to toss, which to keep, and which to express in order to be successful at work. Available everywhere books are sold on January 22.

The No Hard Feelings Guide to:

DECISION MAKING

Sources:

Atul Gawande, "The Checklist," *New Yorker*, December 10, 2007, <https://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2007/12/10/the-checklist>.

Therese Huston, *How Women Decide: What's True, What's Not, and What Strategies Spark the Best Choices* (New York: Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2016).

Tasha Eurich, "To Make Better Decisions, Ask Yourself 'What,' Not 'Why,'" *New York Magazine*, May 2, 2017, <https://www.thecut.com/2017/05/to-make-better-decisions-ask-yourself-what-not-why.html>.

Sheena S. Iyengar et al., "Doing Better but Feeling Worse Looking for the "Best" Job Undermines Satisfaction," *Psychological Science* 17, no. 2, (February 2006): 143-150, <http://journals.sagepub.com/doi/abs/10.1111/j.1467-9280.2006.01677.x>

Tibor Besedeš et al., "Reducing Choice Overload without Reducing Choices," *Review of Economics and Statistics* 97, no. 4 (October 2015): 793-802,

Stephen M. Fleming, "Hesitate! Quick decision-making might seem bold, but the agony of indecision is your brain's way of making a better choice," *Aeon*, January 8, 2014, <https://aeon.co/essays/forget-being-boldly-decisive-let-your-brain-take-its-time>.

No Hard Feelings teaches you how to figure out which emotions to toss, which to keep, and which to express in order to be successful at work. Available everywhere books are sold on January 22.

www.lizandmollie.com