

WELCOME TO MODULE 4: EVALUATE ALTERNATIVES

In the last module, you gathered a great deal of information on your options. Through that process, your list likely got smaller, as it may have become obvious that some of them did not warrant further consideration. The options remaining—the serious contenders—are the subject of this module. It is now time to prioritize, to make a decision based on the research you've done, so that you can set goal(s) and plan action. It is now that you must merge the ideal with the reality of the world around you.

It might be helpful to consider issues and circumstances you need to take into account. We all have to deal with the reality of our lives; your Personal Career Profile is a critical piece of information but does not exist in isolation. For example, if you are in a significant relationship and/or have a family, you must consider how any career or educational decision will affect those close to you. If a particular choice requires a move, that might not be possible. It is important to examine any obstacles and to determine alternatives in light of the realities of your personal situation.

Core Exercise: Choose your tools, it's decision time!

Numerous methods have been developed to help individuals make decisions. Scan the ideas below and choose an option, or options, that you believe will aid your decision-making.

- If you had to choose an option right now, what would it be? What criteria are most important for you in making this choice?
- What does your heart say? What does your head say? Do they agree? If not, why not? When you recall previous decisions you've

made, which of the two was more influential? How did it work out? Would you do it the same way next time?

- Evaluate the consequences. If we choose an alternative without considering the costs, we risk making a poor decision. So first write down your choices at the top of a sheet of paper. Then, list as many positive and negative consequences as you can think of for each one...take your time with this, and even consider using some of the brainstorming techniques you learned in the previous module. Once you've generated all you can think of, see if you can find it any easier to rank your choices.
- Enlist the help of someone close to you who is a good and non-judgmental listener. Ask this person to (a) ask questions that will give them a better understanding of the decision you're facing and of each of your possibilities; (b) ask questions that will help you clarify your position on each of the selections; (c) help you explore the pros and cons of your options; and (d) help you explore your feelings about each choice. It is not this person's job to make the decision for you. You are asking them to be a sounding board – to give you an opportunity to talk things through and hopefully further your decision-making.
- Construct a decision-making matrix. Many find this a very systematic and helpful way to make important decisions. The following is an excellent example of a decision-making matrix:

 www.business-analysis-made-easy.com/Example-Of-A-Decision-Matrix.html

A similar approach can be used for educational decisions, although by giving careful consideration to choosing your career you will also be answering many of your questions about what to study.

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Managing Your Options List

Some people take a linear approach to decision making, some prefer a more intuitive one. The ideal is probably a balance of both. To help you organize and compare the information you have collected, try using the worksheets on the following pages. On one, we have filled in common categories; on the other you can fill in your own. In either case, use whatever symbols (© ✓ ✕ ?, etc) or ratings (1-5, etc) are helpful to best evaluate and compare the options you are considering. Here are some specific notes for categories on the page 3 form:

- **Interests:** How interested are you in this type of work? How likely is it you will get up most days and look forward to doing this kind of work? Will it motivate you?
- **Personality:** Does this work suit the ways in which you typically deal with the people, things and information in the world around you? Are there elements of your personality that might conflict with this type of work?
- **Abilities:** Think about the intelligences and strengths identified in Module 1. Are they well utilized in this type of work? Does it avoid areas of weakness?
- **Work Values:** Does this career have the potential to satisfy all your must-have (MH) values? How many of your like-to-have (LTH) might be addressed too?

 Click orange mouse for live web link.

- **Outlook:** What is the future growth outlook? “Good” is ideal. “Fair” it still okay. If it is “poor” can you foresee a way you can likely still find success and employment?
- **Education:** Assuming everything else looks good for this career option, how realistic are the educational/training requirements for you?

Optional Exercises: Measuring Your ‘HEART’

Once you have made a decision, use this quick ‘test’ to see how it stands up. Ask yourself the following questions:

- H** – Does this decision come from the heart?
- E** – Can you embrace this decision fully?
- A** – Does this choice adhere to your values?
- R** – Does this decision reflect the direction you want to take?
- T** – Are you being true to yourself?

Career Decision-Making Difficulties Questionnaire

If you’re having trouble with career decision-making, this is an excellent tool to help you determine the source of your difficulty.

 <http://www.cddq.org>

The CCDQ web site also includes The Choice Questionnaire, a useful tool when you have it narrowed down to a few options but need to compare and decide which is most suitable.

Still having trouble with decision-making? Don’t worry, this is natural. To choose one alternative is to leave another behind, which is hard to do. Take the time you need. If you haven’t already, try the HEART exercise above. Once you’ve set goals go to the final module to put them into action through education.

