

# DECISION MAKING



Pathwork Lecture 32  
January 2022

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## DECISION MAKING PL 32

### *Outline:*

1. Decision Making as a process vs. an event.
2. Examples of conscious decision-making.
3. Addressing unconscious Decisions
4. Developing Awareness
5. Spiritual aspects of Decision Making
5. Using Meditation for Three Voices PL 182 to differentiate between the Ego and the Real Self



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## DECISION MAKING AS A PROCESS VS. AN EVENT



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## DECISION MAKING AS A PROCESS VS. AN EVENT

*Decision making is:*

1. A process or starting point
2. Willingness to take responsibility for beginning a process, taking a step, making an initial choice
3. An acknowledgment of reality; that something needs to be started, moved forward, adjusted, completed, or re-started
4. An opportunity to explore cause and effect
5. An agreement for the process to be conscious.



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## DECISION MAKING AS A PROCESS VS. AN EVENT

### *Decision making is NOT:*



1. About any single, specific choice
2. Exclusionary: most of the time, a decision can be altered to some degree -- if we want to make a change, and are willing to take responsibility for any effects our original decision may have caused. That is, if we are willing to 'pay the price' for changing our minds
3. The end of a process.

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## DECISION MAKING AS A PROCESS VS. AN EVENT

### *NOT making a decision:*



1. Is a decision.
2. Allows others to maintain or practice active control of a situation.
3. Allowing the status quo to continue when we do not agree or approve of it can be an abdication of our values and beliefs.
4. Allows us to live in fantasy, of 'what might have been' or 'what could be'.
5. Allows us to blame others for making decisions.

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## DECISION MAKING AS A PROCESS VS. AN EVENT

### *Creating and changing habits requires*



1. Awareness: of ourselves and our environment.
2. Understanding: of what we are trying to do, and why it isn't already done! If something isn't easy to change, it may be held in place (or resisted by) something we are not aware of, or that we have underestimated.
3. Effort, or things will stay the same.
4. Commitment. This includes not becoming discouraged by the effort required and the trial and error process, honesty about any inner resistance, and a willingness to practice!

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## EXAMPLES OF CONSCIOUS DECISION-MAKING

### *Example 1: How to change habits*



- 1) Create a new trigger
- 2) Associate it with a positive routine
- 3) Create a mental or physical reward associated with maintaining that habit

The 3-Step Method to Changing a Habit

[Entrepreneur.com](https://entrepreneur.com)

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## EXAMPLES OF CONSCIOUS DECISION-MAKING

### *Example 2: How to change habits*



1. Set a specific goal
2. Create a detailed, cue-based plan
3. Make it fun to repeat
4. Foster flexibility
5. Find the right kind of social support

How to build a habit in 5 steps, according to science:

[CNN - Mindfulness](#)

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## EXAMPLES OF CONSCIOUS DECISION-MAKING

### *Example 3: Create a gratitude habit*



1. Start small.
2. Create a reminder, such as a sticky note next to your bedside table, clock, or lamp.
3. Make it easy and fun to repeat, like a note that says.

“Someone” – to be grateful to  
 “Something” – to be grateful about  
 “Yourself” – express appreciation to yourself.

4. Verbalize your feelings of gratitude! Write thank you notes, whether or not you post or email them.

[Take the Gratitude Challenge](#) - New York Times

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## ADDRESSING UNCONSCIOUS DECISIONS



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## ADDRESSING UNCONSCIOUS DECISIONS

What the brain doesn't 'see', it cannot process.

Paradigms are generally held beliefs, a distinct set of concepts or thought patterns that we absorb as part of our socialization process. They become pre-conceptions, shortcuts that enable us to understand complex realities.



*"Paradigm: A set of assumptions, concepts, values, and practices that constitutes a way of viewing reality for the community that shares them, especially in an intellectual discipline."*

[YourDictionary.com](https://www.yourdictionary.com/paradigm/)

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## ADDRESSING UNCONSCIOUS DECISIONS

Paradigms reduce a chaotic mass to some form of order. They simplify, and allow us to not have to 'reinvent the wheel' every time we want to do something.



If paradigms work (as shortcuts, producing pleasure, approval, or positive consequences), these beliefs are allowed to operate without the involvement of the conscious mind.

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## ADDRESSING UNCONSCIOUS DECISIONS

Why paradigms are useful:

Try and focus for a minute on the sensory input in the room where you are now.



Listen to all of the sounds, the hums, rustling and extraneous noises. Look around the room at all of the detail, the colors, the textures, the shapes. Allow awareness about smells, and itches, aches and pains. Don't forget the different tastes in your mouth.

You may become aware of a great number of things, but you will have to ignore some of them.

<https://www.honolulu.hawaii.edu>

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## ADDRESSING UNCONSCIOUS DECISIONS

Why paradigms are useful:



There is simply too much sensory information bombarding our senses for us to be aware of it.

Our survival as individuals and as a species depends on our perception. Our evolutionary advantage is our brain.

In order to make sense out of the world, we have to simplify it to a level that our brains can deal with it.

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## ADDRESSING UNCONSCIOUS DECISIONS

Why paradigms are useful:



Our brains decode which information is important and which can be ignored.

The brain must make processing decisions as to which information is acted upon, which is stored without review, and which is ignored entirely.

Those decision are done in ways we do not understand, and influenced by other factors in ways we also do not understand.

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## ADDRESSING UNCONSCIOUS DECISIONS

Why paradigms are useful:



A paradigm may be personal or cultural, and we each have many different paradigms for different contexts.

Paradigms affect the types of questions we ask as individuals and as cultures, when we are trying to make sense of the world around us. They incorporate the knowledge and experiences we have acquired since birth as we become conditioned to our physical, social, and spiritual environment.

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## ADDRESSING UNCONSCIOUS DECISIONS

Why paradigms are useful:



That reason we go on "autopilot" sometimes is not to overburden the brain with trivialities, thus freeing it for important things, like surviving.

Paradigms color our perception by filtering information.

The filters are conditioned by our experiences throughout life as we learn about our surroundings.

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## ADDRESSING UNCONSCIOUS DECISIONS

Examples of how the brain reacts when a paradigm is breached:



Time flies like an arrow. Fruit flies like a banana.  
Groucho Marx

Notice how putting the two concepts of the plural 'flies' next to each other is disturbing at first.

7even oranges and 5ive apples 5mell wonderful.

What's funny about these, or rather, why does it not register right at first?

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## CHANGING UNCONSCIOUS DECISIONS

Examples of sociological paradigms:



What foods are appropriate for breakfast?

How hungry would you have to be before you ate a pet?

What clothing is appropriate to wear to school?

The book *Flatland* by Edwin Abbott chronicles the difficulties encountered by 2-dimensional creatures as they try to comprehend the 3<sup>rd</sup> dimension. If we don't have words to describe something (like 'up' or 'down', which don't exist in a 2-dimensional world) we may not be able to see such motions, even if they occur.

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## ADDRESSING UNCONSCIOUS DECISIONS

Changing unconscious beliefs requires

- Awareness of what they are
- Understanding why we kept them (why they have been useful)
- Making a decision to change them.



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## ADDRESSING UNCONSCIOUS DECISIONS

Example: Beliefs we may have learned in school that may still be operating in our daily lives:



1. Seeking "credit" for the right answer.
2. Seeing problems as having a right answer; thinking that by articulating a solution, I have solved the problem.
3. Seeking external validation for choices, as in "What should I do?" (I can't just choose, can I? How do I know it's the right choice? I had better go ask someone.)
4. Work: a matter of completing assignments.
5. Life: a process of graduating from one externally provided program to the next.
6. Status: defined by rank within an institution.
7. Personal worth: dependent on external evaluations.

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## ADDRESSING UNCONSCIOUS DECISIONS

Additional beliefs we may have retained from schooling:



8. Information is knowledge, and that to know about something is to know something.
9. Knowledge and intelligence can and should be quantified, or at least evaluated.
10. Constantly evaluating yourself as well as others.
11. Measuring performance by external standards . . .
12. Seeking external validation for performance and achievements.
13. Wanting to be recognized as smart.
14. Wanting to be recognized as right.
15. Wanting to be right.

From [Time to Cut Class](#) UTNE Reader

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## EXAMPLES OF UNCONSCIOUS DECISIONS

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## EXAMPLES OF UNCONSCIOUS DECISIONS

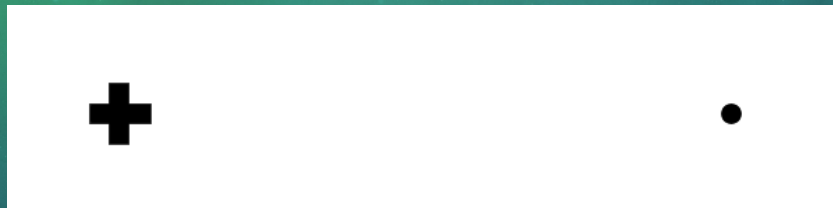
### Physical Blind Spots and the "Filling in" phenomenon

[www.colorcube.com/illusions/blndspot.htm](http://www.colorcube.com/illusions/blndspot.htm)

- Did you know that your eyes have blind spots (and not just at the back of your head)?
- Each of your eyes contains an area that has no photoreceptors because it is occupied by the optic nerve.
- You may not have noticed these areas because they are on opposite sides of your visual field. However, this exercise is designed to isolate your blind spot and you will be amazed at the results.

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## EXAMPLES OF UNCONSCIOUS DECISIONS



### Instructions:

- Close your **left** eye and fixate your **right** eye on the cross in the first diagram.
- If your eye is about 12 inches (30 cm) away from the monitor, you should notice that the round dot disappears. This distance may vary according to the screen resolution you have set.
- You may be surprised to see that the dot is replaced with blank white space. The brain simply "fills in" the most probable stimulus (in this case, a uniform white area) where there is none.

[www.colorcube.com/illusions/blndspot.htm](http://www.colorcube.com/illusions/blndspot.htm)

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## EXAMPLES OF UNCONSCIOUS DECISIONS



### Instructions:

- Close your **left** eye and fixate your **right** eye on the cross in the first diagram.
- If your eye is about 12 inches (30 cm) away from the monitor, you should notice that the red X is replaced by the most probable pattern that your brain is able to perceive.

[www.colorcube.com/illusions/blindspot.htm](http://www.colorcube.com/illusions/blindspot.htm)

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## EXAMPLES OF UNCONSCIOUS DECISIONS



### Instructions:

- Close your **left** eye and fixate your **right** eye on the cross again..
- If your eye is about 12 inches (30 cm) away from the monitor, you should notice that the red X is replaced by the most probable pattern that your brain is able to perceive.

[www.colorcube.com/illusions/blindspot.htm](http://www.colorcube.com/illusions/blindspot.htm)

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## EXAMPLES OF UNCONSCIOUS DECISIONS

Physical blind spots aren't usually an issue because we have binocular vision; what one eye doesn't see, the other one does!

One of the ways we get biological feedback is proprioception, the body's ability to sense movement, activity, and location.

Psychological and spiritual blind spots can also be realized, by

- Listening to and seeking feedback from others
- 'Connecting the dots' = exploring cause and effect dynamics
- Internal feedback through development of an Observer Self

Ref: Chapter 3 of [The Undefended Self](#) by Susan Thesenga, [download here](#).

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## EXAMPLES OF UNCONSCIOUS DECISIONS

One of the biggest 'blind spots' to self-development is the Ego.

Pathwork encourages the development of a strong and healthy Ego; one that:

- Knows its 'place' = understands there is a larger spiritual reality
- Chooses to accept life, despite disadvantages
- Chooses to want to understand itself
- Seeks to integrate itself with its own divine consciousness
- Strives to move out into real life as the Real Self

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## SPIRITUAL ASPECTS OF DECISION MAKING

*Creating and changing spiritual habits is no different than changing any other habit.*



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## SPIRITUAL ASPECTS OF DECISION MAKING

Spiritual decisions are made by the Real Self, and enacted through the functions of the Ego.

Ego can	Ego cannot (and the Real Self CAN)
Memorize	Feel, Produce deep feelings
Learn	Deeply experience
Collect creative knowledge	Give a deep flavor to living
Repeat / Copy	Deeply know
Remember	Be creative
Sort out	Be spontaneous
Select	Reconcile all apparent opposites
Make up the mind	Always have answers
Move in a certain direction	Always have solutions
Die	Render man more alive, fulfilled
	Continue into the world of Spirit

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## SPIRITUAL ASPECTS OF DECISION MAKING

In Pathwork, the goal is to develop a healthy Ego that can integrate its own earth-based decision-making functions with the spiritual decisions made by the Real Self.

Ego can	Ego cannot (and the Real Self CAN)
Memorize	Feel, Produce deep feelings
Learn	Deeply experience
Collect creative knowledge	Give a deep flavor to living
Repeat / Copy	Deeply know
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## SPIRITUAL ASPECTS OF DECISION MAKING

Because the mind can imagine all of these functions, the Ego may believe it is already moving in life as the Real Self. The Ego starts to take over the all the decision-making processes.

Ego can	Ego cannot (and the Real Self CAN)
Memorize	Feel, Produce deep feelings
Learn	Deeply experience
Collect creative knowledge	Give a deep flavor to living
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Remember	Be creative
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Make up the mind	Always have answers
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## SPIRITUAL ASPECTS OF DECISION MAKING

*The process is of self-development is outlined in  
Four Stages of Spiritual Evolution PL 127 as:*



1. **Automatic Reflex** (lack of conscious awareness)
2. **Awareness**, which leads us to seek -
3. **Understanding**, which leads us to greater awareness. Stages 2 and 3 toggle back and forth, as increased awareness leads to deeper levels of understanding, which allows for a more expanded awareness. At some point, we will be able to drop into:
4. **Knowing**, when the truth of a given situation is fully realized and accepted, and we are able to fully connect with the spiritual principle.

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## SPIRITUAL ASPECTS OF DECISION MAKING

*Creating and changing spiritual habits requires*



1. Awareness: of ourselves and our environment.
2. Understanding: of what we are trying to do, and why it isn't already done! If something isn't easy to change, it may be held in place (or resisted by) something we are not aware of, or that we have underestimated.
3. Effort, or things will stay the same.
4. Commitment. This includes willingness to accept unexpected realities, such as discovering more effort is required than was anticipated, and any inner resistance uncovered in the process.

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## SPIRITUAL ASPECTS OF DECISION MAKING

*Become aware of your current beliefs:*



1. Understand what you actually believe, vs. what you want to believe / say you believe.
2. Compare what you believe with what you value.
3. If there are any discrepancies, start the process of making a decision; which do you want to align with?
4. Compare what you believe and value with your behavior. If there are any discrepancies, revisit your decision about what you want to align with.
5. Repeat this process whenever you notice a discrepancy between beliefs, values, and behavior.

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## SPIRITUAL ASPECTS OF DECISION MAKING

*Example 1: Deciding to believe that all things work together for good.*



1. Make a list of tragedies, difficulties and troubles in your life up to now.
2. Believe, if only for this moment, that these experiences were the only way, the best way, -- or, the only way that you could not manage to avoid -- understanding a truth that you have /had been resistant to.
3. Try to verbalize this for each incident. It may not work for all of them; just notice if your perceptions shift a bit from the conclusion you have been carrying all these years.

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## SPIRITUAL ASPECTS OF DECISION MAKING

*Example 1 cont'd: Deciding to believe that all things work together for good.*



4. Simply keep asking about each incident; "what if whatever happens must be for some good..."
5. Make a personal commitment: *"I will work to find any grain of truth. When I find it, I will admit it."*
6. Try finishing these sentences:  
 "I was resistant to learning about \_\_\_\_\_"  
 "This was is how I learned about \_\_\_\_\_"

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## SPIRITUAL ASPECTS OF DECISION MAKING

*Example 2: Find your resistance to believing that all things work together for good.*



1. Select one painful, disruptive, or negative experience from your childhood.
2. What conclusion did you come to at that time? Try to express this as a belief or world outlook you held, such as "I never want to do /say / be \_\_\_\_\_ again"
3. Consider if that experience may have been the least painful, most direct, or unavoidable way for you to face an aspect of spiritual truth. Simply keep asking; "what if whatever happens must be for some good..."
4. How would you phrase this today, in more constructive terms such as 'I learned to \_\_\_\_\_' or 'I realize now that \_\_\_\_\_'.

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## MEDITATION FOR THREE CHAIRS PL 182

*A process for differentiating between the voice of the Ego and the voice of our inner divine knowing.*

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## MEDITATION FOR THREE CHAIRS

*A process for differentiating between the voice of the Ego and the voice of our inner divine knowing.*

*Props such as chairs, clothing, or objects can be used to signal which voice we believe we are expressing.*



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## TWO VOICE MEDITATION USING OBJECTS

Exercise: Discerning differences between the voice of the Ego/Adult self and the aspect that connects with spirit/ Real Self



- The original exercise encourages using different chairs, so that there is a stronger visceral experience and a change in visual perspective.
- Different sitting positions in the same chair can also work (stiffly on the edge of the seat, vs. relaxed).
- Or, simply elect 2 objects; one that resonates with your Higher Self / Real Self / Inner Divine, such as a candle or sacred object. The other should resonate with your adult Ego consciousness, such as a phone or a souvenir from an event you enjoyed.

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## TWO VOICE MEDITATION USING OBJECTS

Exercise: Discerning differences between the voice of the Ego/Adult self and the aspect that connects with spirit/ Real Self



- While holding the Ego object, speak about your issues with decision making ; your reluctance to commit, your fear of discovering you were wrong, your feelings of vulnerability when criticized.
- Then hold the Higher Self/Real Self object. Take a few moments to connect with a deeper aspect of yourself, your inner divine. Speak a few words about what you sense from this place.

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## TWO VOICE MEDITATION USING OBJECTS

Exercise: Discerning differences between the voice of the Ego/Adult self and the aspect that connects with spirit/ Real Self



- As you speak from the HS/RS, notice when the Ego comes forward and takes over. Describe the difference.
- Switch your focus back and forth between the two energies by holding the different objects or changing your seating position.

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## TWO VOICE MEDITATION USING OBJECTS

Exercise: Discerning differences between the voice of the Ego/Adult self and the aspect that connects with spirit/ Real Self



- This practice is similar to the practice of Voice Dialogue; see [www.voicedialogueinternational.com](http://www.voicedialogueinternational.com).
- Videos and manuals are available online to assist you in practicing on your own or with others.

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## 2022 Workshop: Decision Making PL 32

Jan 26 7-10pm   Jan 28 2-5pm   Jan 31 10am-1pm

Identical Workshops, replacing the 4<sup>th</sup> week regular meetings

Reservation Deadline 48 hours prior

Fee \$10 to \$40 (select what works for you)

Email [janrigsby@gmail.com](mailto:janrigsby@gmail.com) for details.

*Workshop will focus on experiential exercises:*



- Grounding and movement exercises - Core Energetics
- Differentiating the voice of the Ego from that of our inner divine, Real Self or Higher Self, using PL 182: Meditation for Three Voices
- Group demonstrations and opportunities to practice this technique in groups of 2-3.
- Realize how the Ego makes decisions based on pride, self-will, and fear as well as negating beliefs (conscious or unconscious) while pretending to be the voice of the Real Self.
- Group meditations from the lectures.

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