

DECISION MAKING IN CAREER PLANNING

So, you've been accepted to Aalto University! Now what? You have the possibility to make choices that support your best interests and goals in life: which specialization area and which minors to choose, what about going on exchange, doing an internship, choosing a master's thesis topic, choosing the first steps in your career! But, but, but.... You have so many talents and interests and you want to make a right choice. What if there is an only one choice right and you just don't get it and everything goes wrong! A wrong choice that begins to ruin your career while you are still in the university. How could you know?

Decision-making is a door from motivation to action and you should find the best way for yourself to make decisions also in the future while you are a professional. The inherent temperament type affects the way of characteristic decision-making: somebody gets immediately a clear vision and is filled with energy like a balloon and will get going. Another one will plan and analyze the alternatives before taking the first step, and having made a decision will open it once again to examine the logic of details.

ENGINEER ANALYSIS

You want to feel you have made a good choice. At first, you could try this kind of "engineer analysis":

- 1) Collect a manageable amount of information about the options and compare these options. Reflect and record at the same time, which criteria are important to you. The aim is an analysis based on facts. While you collect facts, your own feelings start to become aware. If there are lots of factual material, you will find that a couple of stronger arguments will support some options. The aim, therefore, is an analysis based on facts. With this kind of an analysis you will get a feeling that your own decision is not made hastily but based on deliberate judgement. Therefore, you can come back to the argumentation later, if doubts come to mind at some point. Of course, talking to your friends or specialists can clarify your own thinking and they can bring new points of view. When this rational process is done, it should help to limit your choices to a few options.
- 2) Now shift to another gear: How do you feel about these options that are left? What is your gut-feeling? If the feeling and the fact meet, a decision should be easy. You can justify it to yourself and explain to others, if necessary, from different angles.
- 3) If there is a conflict between feeling and fact, think:
 - Why does the facts-option seem to be wrong? Is it you - or does it come from other expectations? Can you explain the reason to yourself?
 - Why does the feelings-option seem to be wrong according to facts? Are the facts correct? Are the facts, in fact, after all, really important? Could you find some facts that support your own "feel"?

In short: collect facts, analyze and reflect them, think what the different options would feel like and why. Take first one perspective and then another, on the basis of the first one or with the attitude of challenging the first one.

When your decision is made and it is based on versatile thinking, the by-product of the process is a greater confidence in the correctness of your decision.

Still not easy?

BELIEFS AND VALUES

When decision-making is difficult, the reason for that might be one's own inhibitory beliefs. Typical beliefs concern belonging to a community, for example:

"I have to go where everyone else goes."

"If I make choices based on my values, I will be rejected and I will suffer."

"If I choose otherwise, I will only cause myself a new disappointment."

"A well paid work will ensure a safe future."

"I am able to make a more relevant choice later."

Your values are like a compass of direction in life. The career choices you make are stepping stones and goals to be achieved one after another when you have the direction right. The lack of direction leads to emptiness or feeling of disorientation. Values can be found in where all your attention is focused on and in meaningful themes you easily get immersed in because they are just so interesting.

Life experiences are greatly affected by how relevant choices a person makes in their careers. Answering questions below might help you find some words to describe the direction of your values:

"How would you like to spend your time and money at best?"

"Who did you admire when you were growing up? Describe the character traits that you admired."

"What is your favorite book or movie? Describe the story. If you were in the setting also, what would be your role?"

"What would be so valuable that you would want to make your best effort to achieve it? What kind of potential would that fulfil in yourself? "

Positive psychology examines the forms of happiness in life. According to findings, a way to experience happiness in life seems to be connected to a feeling that your personal contribution serves a valuable purpose. The question is about in-depth aspirations to a good life: how you want to use your unique life, to spend your time and resources.

"If decision-making is a science, judgement is an art."