

Ten steps to perfect decisions

By Cathy Goodwin

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Some folks believe there are no bad decisions. . If you turn left instead of right, you think you've made a mistake -- till you realize this detour is actually a shortcut to the destination of your dreams.

But if you're standing at a fork in the road, here are some guidelines that others have found helpful.

1. Know who you are and what you want -- today. You spent a life as the quintessential urban resident and now seek the countryside. You enjoyed twenty years of law or medicine or sales, and now you find yourself writing poetry and making time to help a third-grader learn to read. Yesterday's decision rules won't work any longer.

2. Be willing to walk away if you're not ready to sign on the dotted line. You always have choices. If you're supposed to have that house or that job, it will be there tomorrow.

3. Share your plans with friends, family and colleagues. Pay attention to how you feel when you share. Pay less attention to their reactions.

4 Uncertainty is a sign that you need more information. Talk to people who have been there. Book knowledge and internet knowledge will be outdated by the time you read it.

5. If you turn right, what is the worst that could happen -- a year from now? Five years down the road? How does that compare to the worst case scenario of turning left?

6. Some people sleep soundly when they don't know where they will get the next mortgage payment. Others toss and turn when their checking account falls below ten thousand dollars. When you live in your own comfort zone, you attract more opportunity.

7, Decisiveness may be valued by your corporate or social culture. In a transition, fast decisions can actually slow you down. Most people have more energy for starting up than starting over.

8. Intuition is your source of power. Keep your batteries charged. Meditate, write in a journal, spend solitary time outdoors. If you feel uncertain or intimidated, go away until you feel stronger.

9. Don't dive right in. Dip a toe into the water. Warm? Start wading. Do you find yourself waving good-bye to the people left behind? Are your toes curling happily into the wet sand? Or are you

finding sharp rocks, icy water and harsh tides? Do you feel ready to take off and swim to the other side of the world? You can still turn back, but do you want to?

10. Once you've committed to the decision, keep looking ahead. One of my happiest friends says, "I don't agonize over a decision. I assume whatever I chose is right for me and go full speed ahead."

At the same time, remember that few decisions turn into a life sentence. You can always review your new life, get out the maps, and chart a new course for your future.

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