

HOW CAN I IMPROVE MY DECISION-MAKING?

by Glenn Williams



You make thousands of decisions every day—ranging from smaller insignificant ones, to those of great importance. But have you ever stopped to think about *how* you make decisions?

Why is it that some leaders find it easier to make certain decisions than you do? When you are confronted with a difficult decision, do you go with your instinct or do you seek consensus or approval from others?

- Imagine that the CFO has come to you with an alarming set of figures that reveal you are on track to deliver results lower than expected at an upcoming board meeting. What do you do?
- Perhaps you need to let one of your senior leaders know that she is being overlooked for a promotion because she has poor interpersonal skills. What do you say?
- You realize that you need to reinvigorate growth but there are no new products in the pipeline. What steps can you take?

'Prudence' is one of the four cardinal virtues, along with courage, self-control, and justice. All four of them relate to our ability to make the right decision—irrespective of the situation's complexity, simplicity, or cost.

Making a prudent decision is not always easy. What is best for one party is not necessarily the best outcome for another. We are confronted with the conundrum of doing what is right regardless of the cost—personally or corporately!

Revelations of scandal, corruption, rumor, abuse, and cover-ups have led us to question the ability of many leaders to make *prudent* decisions. However, a good place for us to start is by rediscovering the importance of 'prudence' in our own decision-making.

Alexandre Havard argues that it's our commitment to practice these virtues that shapes our vision of the world and desire to see people flourish under our leadership. He proposes three things to help us make more prudent decisions (Havard, 2007, pp. 57) –

- **Deliberation** - gather all of the relevant information to analyze it critically. This includes sourcing information in such a way as to avoid making a decision with prejudice
- **Judgment** - carefully consider and evaluate the information gathered from a range of different perspectives
- **Deciding** - make a decision, but be willing to evaluate it and change it later if needed.

What's the bottom-line?

The decisions you make each day have significant implications for your work and key relationships—including your family. Below are some more helpful questions to reflect on –

- What is the key motivation behind my decision?
 - Have I looked at the problem from a number of different angles before considering alternative solutions?
 - Do I have a plan to manage the implications of my decisions on others?
 - How does this decision reflect on my character?
 - How will I evaluate the impact of my decision?
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References

Havard, Alexandre. (2007). *Virtuous Leadership: An Agenda for Personal Excellence*. New York, NY: Scepter Publishers.