

Barriers/Challenges to Career Decision-Making

Sometimes it is very difficult to make a career decision. It seems that the most important and pressured decisions we make in our lives are made with the least amount of thought and with the least amount of information. More time and effort is spent in choosing a new style of clothing or selecting a music CD than in planning and deciding upon a career path. Why? Partly because we may have strong needs and emotions attached to the decision.

Try to answer the following thought questions;

- Do I tend to make decisions based on my emotions or my thoughts?
- Am I influenced by what other people think?
- Do I have a need to conform and feel apart of a group?
- Do I feel confident in my abilities to make good sound choices?
- Am I hard on myself if I make the wrong choice?
- Am I worried that important people in my life, like my family and friends, will not approve of my career decision?
- Do I feel I have the abilities to pursue the career path I am interested in?
- How will I financially support myself as I attempt to follow my career path?
- What additional factors do I need to consider as I prepare to make a career choice?
- Am I experiencing any pressures from my friends and family about the career choices I have in mind?
- Am I experiencing my own pressures and expectations about my choice?

There are many stumbling blocks to good decision-making. First of all, we may deny there is a problem or assume there is no solution or grab the first solution that pops into our mind. Or, instead of making very important decisions, we may postpone making them. Secondly, we may not consider the long-range consequences or values we want to achieve. We overlook possible solutions because our thinking is inflexible or defeatist. Thirdly, we do not take the time to fantasize about the best and the worst possible outcomes for each alternative in order to consider the advantages and disadvantages. We do not gather all the information we need to make the decision. Often, it is wishful thinking that the solution will be quick or our intuition will give us an easy answer. Fourthly, we do not know how or take the time to gather the information needed to carefully weigh all the alternatives. Deciding is a complex process. Fifthly, many of us do not develop a careful plan for accomplishing our goals; thus, undermining our efforts to change. It is common for people--even conscientious college students--to believe that deciding where to go is all they have to do to get there, resulting in no clear-visioned plan of action.

If we can recognize the barriers and challenges caused by our own emotions and the barriers and challenges caused by other external factors, we will be in a better position to make good decisions.

My Barriers and Challenges

1. Now that you have a sense of understanding about the types of things that could potentially make your decision-making process a tough one, try to identify the barriers and challenges that are directly effecting you.

2. What can you do to make some changes so that your barriers and challenges will not have such a heavy impact on your ability to make a clear, conscious choice?

Good luck in challenging your career decision-making barriers!!