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Reflections and Connections

1. List some of the decisions that you now make as an adolescent that you did not make as a child.
2. Give examples of some major decisions. How could they affect your life in the long term?
3. Describe some minor decisions you make every day. Why do they not have a great impact on your future life?

How do we make decisions?

You make many decisions every day. The way you make each decision may be different.

Some Ways that Decisions Are

- Habit** We all have things that we do in personally unique ways on a regular basis. It is the way you usually do things. You take the same route to your after-school job every day. Sometimes these habitual decisions provide you with shortcuts. You do not have to spend time thinking about making a choice. Sometimes these decisions can just get you into a rut.
- Custom** Following what others usually do in a given situation is often a result of custom. These decisions are often affected by culture and heritage. Choosing to participate in a religious ritual or wearing a particular clothing symbol are examples of customs.
- Imitation** You make the choice that is frequently made by others. This can be a good way to make a decision, such as when you decide to join many of your peers in a study group after school. However, you must be careful to imitate only if these choices are good for you. Decisions made by others may not always suit your needs, lifestyle, or talents.
- Impulse** You are in a mall and see that your favourite musical group has just released a new CD. You buy it without a thought. In this case, you are not allowing yourself any options but to do what you feel like in the moment. If you make major decisions on impulse, you may not be allowing yourself enough time to consider your options and choose the best course of action.
- Coin toss** The burger or the chicken fajita? This could be decided by a coin toss, leaving the outcome to chance. Leaving choices to chance may be a good strategy when the outcome has no real or long-term implications.
- Default** This is choosing not to make a decision. An example might be not selecting a particular topic for a class presentation, but merely taking the only one left after everyone else has chosen one. Sometimes default decisions are made due to procrastination.

Many decisions can be made lightly, especially when there are no long-term effects. Methods such as the coin toss can be used to make the decision about which movie to see. Many choices and decisions that you make on a daily basis can be made by these methods. Decisions such as which sneakers you will wear, which cereal you choose to eat for breakfast, or which comedy show you choose to watch on TV, do not affect others and have little, if any, affect on your life.

There are decisions made on a daily basis that affect you and others around you. These decisions require more than just a coin toss or an impulse reaction. They require you to act in a way that reflect your values, your inner self, and the way you want to be perceived by others. The examples of these types of decisions might be: which extracurricular activities that you participate in, which university you will go to, or whether or not you'll get a part-time job. A way of making decisions that provides for the best end result is to employ a step-by-step process that involves lots of careful consideration and a minimal amount of risk.



Reflections and Connections

1. Compare with a friend the types of decisions you make out of habit on a regular basis.
2. Describe a recent decision you made on impulse and the effect it had on you and others. Why do you think you make these decisions impulsively?
3. Think about a decision you made by imitating others. Did you find the result of the decision personally satisfying?

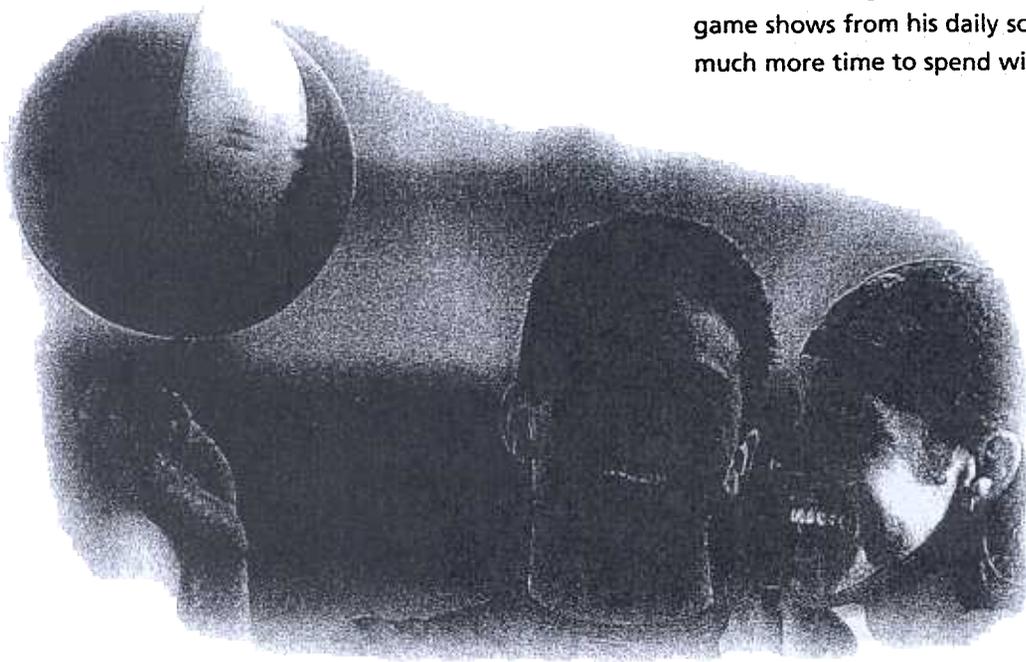
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The Decision-Making Process

The decision-making process is a step-by-step method you can use to guide your thinking. It helps you to take into account all the important aspects of your decision. The process ensures that you make the best possible decision with the information that you have. Each step in the method helps to organize your information as well as your thought process.

Nothing is more difficult, and therefore more precious, than to be able to decide.

Gino is very pleased with the results of his plan of action. Deciding to eliminate video games and game shows from his daily schedule has given him much more time to spend with his friends.



Reflections and Connections

1. Describe a good decision that you made recently. Why do you think it turned out well?
2. Think about a decision that did not turn out well for you. Which of the steps in the decision-making process were problematic?
3. Identify ways in which you have taken responsibility for your decisions.

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