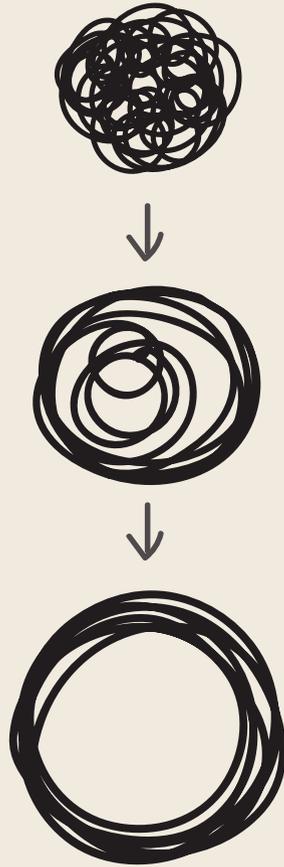


MAKE A MOVE

How to **Stop
Wavering** and
Make Decisions in
a Disorienting World



Stephanie Williams O'Brien

APPENDIX

DECISION-MAKING TOOLBOX

This toolbox includes simple tools to help you make decisions. Different tools will work better for different decisions. Read through the various tools and apply the one that seems most helpful for the decision you are facing.

Go to PastorSteph.com/makeamove for a downloadable version of this toolbox and corresponding worksheets.

LOSING MY MARBLES: HOW SURE IS SURE?

This tool is part of one of the case studies for chapter 11 about vocational experiments. When it comes to making decisions, we often struggle with just how sure we need to be to make the final decision. Because 100 percent certainty isn't an option, you must ask yourself, What level of assurance do I need to feel in order to make a move? We can easily flip-flop, going from yes one day to no the next depending on our feelings that day, the conversations we had, and so on. Here is a practical and tangible way to move forward:

- Step 1: Find or buy a mason jar (or another clear container) and one hundred marbles.
- Step 2: Determine what your percentage of certainty must be in order to make this decision.
- Step 3: If you've decided it's 80 percent, then count out and remove twenty marbles; if it's 70 percent, remove thirty; and so on. Put them aside in a drawer.
- Step 4: Put a bowl next to the jar. In the jar, place the number of marbles that represent how sure you are about the decision at that moment. Talk with a friend if you need help gauging the amount. Place the remaining marbles in the bowl next to the jar.
- Step 5: Over the next few weeks, as you talk with friends and family, spend time in prayer, and think through the logistics of the decision, consider the marbles. After each day, reflect on the process and add marbles to the jar for experiences that increased your assurance or take some out and put them in the bowl if you felt your experiences decreased your assurance.
- Step 6: Give yourself a deadline and tell a friend that you plan to decide by that day.

FEEDBACK RUBRIC: NOT ALL FEEDBACK IS CREATED EQUAL

When it comes to making life decisions, the opinions of others inevitably impact our discernment. In most decisions, it is important that others weigh in. See the Clearness Committee tool for a structured way to receive feedback. Our friends and family members will share their opinions throughout our regular conversations and interactions. But if we aren't intentional,

we may give too much weight to one person's opinion and not enough to another's. When we give feedback from others the appropriate weight based on these factors, then that feedback can be critical in helping us make a move.

Get out a sheet of paper and turn it sideways so you can make four long lines from the left to the right, representing four spectrums. Put a minus sign on the left side of the paper and a plus sign on the right. On the left side of the page, label each of the four spectrums as follows:

1. Kind of Feedback
2. Kind of Person
3. Clarity of Feedback
4. Relevance to Context

Now consider a piece of feedback you have received and circle where on each spectrum the feedback fits. The minus sign represents putting little or low weight on the feedback, and as you move closer to the plus sign, it represents high or significant weight to this feedback. Use the following steps for each spectrum.

Kind of Feedback

You are not evaluating whether someone critiqued or affirmed you here. Rather, you are evaluating the way the feedback is delivered, which is more important as we judge the weight to put on the specific feedback.

An explicit accusation would land on the lowest end of the spectrum and a passive-aggressive comment a bit to the right. In the middle would be neutral or generally affirming comments.

A specific compliment or a constructive critique would move toward a heavier weight. Perhaps the most significant weight would be put on a positive challenge that affirms who you are but also challenges you to grow or go farther.

Kind of Person

Who is giving the feedback is nearly as important as the feedback itself. This spectrum can help you determine how much weight to give feedback based on the kind of person offering that feedback.

On the low end of the spectrum is an enemy or a “hater.” Though it can be hard, you must not give much weight to the opinions of those who do not have your best interests in mind. Unhealthy friends and family members would still be low on the spectrum. It’s difficult to realize that those you love are not always in a place to give you helpful feedback because of their personal struggles. A knowledgeable acquaintance would be in the middle of the spectrum, followed by healthy family members or friends. The highest weight can be given to trusted experts in this area or a mentor who has your best interests in mind.

Clarity of Feedback

When feedback is unclear, it is unhelpful, but when it is clear and direct, it can be gold! This spectrum can help you determine how much weight to give feedback based on its clarity.

On the low end of the spectrum is inaccurate information; next would be unclear or confusing information. In the middle are

exaggerated statements or generalizations. Even if the feedback is positive, it's wise to avoid giving significant weight to feedback that isn't clear or is hyperbolic. Specific feedback that can help you think through its application should be given the most weight.

Relevance to Context

Some feedback is irrelevant to the context in which you want to apply it. People often give feedback that doesn't fit the context in which you are trying to grow, and giving that feedback too much weight can confuse you as you try to make decisions. This spectrum can help you determine the weight you should give feedback based on its relevance.

On the low end of the spectrum is completely irrelevant feedback, followed by feedback whose relevance is unclear. In the middle is potentially or partially relevant feedback. More weight should be given to feedback that applies to the context and is highly relevant to the current realities you are facing.

After you mark the significance of the feedback on each of the four spectrums, you will have an idea of how much weight you should give to various pieces of feedback that you receive throughout your discernment process.

THE FOUR TENS

This is an adaptation of a tool created by business writer Suzy Welch that has come to be known as the 10-10-10 rule. I like to add an additional "10," so that's why I call it "The Four Tens." Imagine that you've hypothetically chosen one of your options. Now think through the following questions:

- How will I feel about it ten minutes from now?
- How about ten weeks from now?
- How about ten months from now?
- How about ten years from now?

After trying to imagine how you would feel, now ask the same four questions, but this time, imagine that Jesus is there with you in the room. Imagine Jesus there with you ten minutes from now. What is his posture? What do you imagine he may say or do? Now ten weeks, ten months, and ten years—imagine Jesus is there with you and what his reaction may be.

CLEARNESS COMMITTEE: WHO ARE YOUR PEOPLE?

Many groups within our faith tradition have held up the value of community discernment and listening to God together. The Catholic Jesuit tradition calls this practice “communal discernment,” modeled after church father Ignatius of Loyola. Others in the contemplative tradition have “spiritual direction groups” that meet regularly. In the 1600s, the Quaker tradition developed what was later termed “clearness committees,” acknowledging just how hard it can be to discern how God is leading us and showing us why we need others to help bring clarity, or clearness.

Spiritual writer and activist Parker Palmer has written about the clearness committee concept.¹ Based on his writings, I’ve developed a simple outline to help guide a clearness committee (see chapter 5). Here are some questions you can use as you follow that outline with your own clearness committee:

What do you hear when you pray and listen to God?

What emotions do you experience when you think or pray about this decision?

What is the dynamic between you and others whom this decision impacts?

What have others you trust in your life said about this decision?

If Jesus were here physically right now, how do you imagine he would respond to you as you face this decision?

Imagine each decision you could make: What emotions do you have as you imagine each scenario?

For more great resources on the idea of a clearness committee and the “Circle of Trust” method designed by Palmer and his organization, the Center for Courage and Renewal, head to CourageRenewal.org.

WORTH THE RISK: RISK ASSESSMENT

Everyone has a different tolerance for risk. When it comes to making decisions, it can be helpful to perform a risk assessment. Here is a short example of a general risk assessment that could apply to many decisions. You can add up your score below.

How much is at stake for your emotional and physical health and well-being?

1	2	3	4	5
Low risk		Moderate level of risk		Significant level of risk

How much is at stake for your financial health and resources?

1	2	3	4	5
Low risk		Moderate level of risk		Significant level of risk

How would this affect your relationships with those close to you or the situation?

1	2	3	4	5
Little change		Moderate change		Significant change

How will this affect your calendar? What will you have to adjust?

1	2	3	4	5
Little change		Moderate change		Significant change

How many other aspects of life will you need to adjust if you make this decision?

1	2	3	4	5
Little change		Moderate change		Significant change

How big of a learning curve will there be if you make this decision?

1	2	3	4	5
Mild curve		Moderate curve		Significant curve

If you decide not to make this decision, will you miss out on ways that you could otherwise grow and learn?

1	2	3	4	5
Significant growth		Moderate growth		No growth

If you decide not to make this decision, will you miss out on potential opportunities?

1	2	3	4	5
Low risk		Moderate level of risk		Significant level of risk

30–40 Significant Risk: Be cautious as you move forward.

Sometimes high-risk decisions are still good decisions, but make sure you do some lower-risk experimenting if possible. It is critical to bring in wise counsel as you consider this decision.

20–29 High Risk: Many important decisions in life are on the risky end of the spectrum. The fact that they are risky is part of why they are important. Examine each area you marked as a high number and consider the ramifications of your decision before you move forward. Bring those you trust into the discussion regarding high-risk decisions.

10–19 Moderate Risk: You can often make these decisions by thinking them through or talking them out with a trusted conversation partner. However, pay attention to which areas you marked as high risk.

5–9 Low Risk: Low-risk decisions can still be important, but the low-risk designation can help you avoid the trap of letting a low-risk decision cause high levels of stress.

THE WELL-BEING WHEEL: DECISIONS THAT ARE GOOD FOR YOU

When it comes to making good decisions, we need to remember that we are whole people. Decisions need to be good for you—*all* of who you are. Our holistic well-being will depend on making sure the decisions we make are good for all aspects of our lives. My friend Dr. Christine Osgood developed the Well-Being Wheel for the Center of Wellbeing at Bethel University. She would say the wheel is “designed to remind you of six foundational aspects of life that influence your intrapersonal wellbeing.”

Here are the six aspects of the Well-Being Wheel described by Dr. Osgood:

1. *The Spiritual Dimension.* Your spirit is the part of you that can sense, communicate, and interconnect with our transcendent God. This is the part of you that notices the promptings of the Holy Spirit, the part of you that desires to be like Jesus.
2. *The Cognitive Dimension.* Your “mind” has a cognitive side and an emotional side. The cognitive side of the “mind coin” refers to your thoughts and thinking processes and also includes your memory and imagination.
3. *The Relational Dimension.* You are a social being. You were designed for connection with other humans. You have been shaped by the social context you grew up in and were socially conditioned to relate with other humans in certain ways.
4. *The Meaning Dimension.* Your sense of meaning and purpose for life influences your intrapersonal well-being. Specifically, once you identify why you exist, you begin to make choices and exert your will to make certain things happen

in life. Your will aligns your life with your sense of meaning and purpose.

5. *The Physical Dimension.* This dimension focuses on caring for various biological systems in the human body because of how these systems influence your cognition and mood.
6. *The Emotional Dimension.* Your emotions are the other side of the “mind coin.” Your emotions are a mix of physiological experiences and cognitive appraisals. Each person needs to become savvy at identifying, navigating, and managing their emotions.

When you are making an important decision, take time going through each of the six aspects and think about how the different options would affect each area of your life. If you can journal your thoughts, that could help you assess the different dimensions of your well-being. It could also be helpful to process your reflections with a conversation partner.

To see a visual of this wheel, head to <https://www.wellbeing-at-bethel.com>.

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