

Module 7: Share the Road: Peer Relationships

Topic 1 Content: Making Healthful Decisions

Introduction



Have you ever made a difficult decision? Have you ever thought you made the wrong choice? Have you ever had friends pressure you into doing something illegal or immoral?

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Decisions



People make decisions every day. Decisions can be something as simple as choosing a meal at a restaurant or a bit more substantial, like what type of car you plan to buy. But many times, decisions can greatly affect your life, either positively or negatively. For example, if you choose to participate in an illegal event, you could go to jail, lose a scholarship, or alienate a friend.

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Be Empowered



How do you make smart decisions? How do you see what might lie ahead before you act on a decision? Smart decisions begin with being empowered or having control over yourself, because you have the knowledge and skills to guide you through making those choices.

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Accept Responsibility



Empowered decision-making also means accepting responsibility for your choices. If you make the wrong choice, the only person you can blame is yourself. If you make the right choice, you can enjoy the benefits of your positive outcomes.

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Decision-Making Model

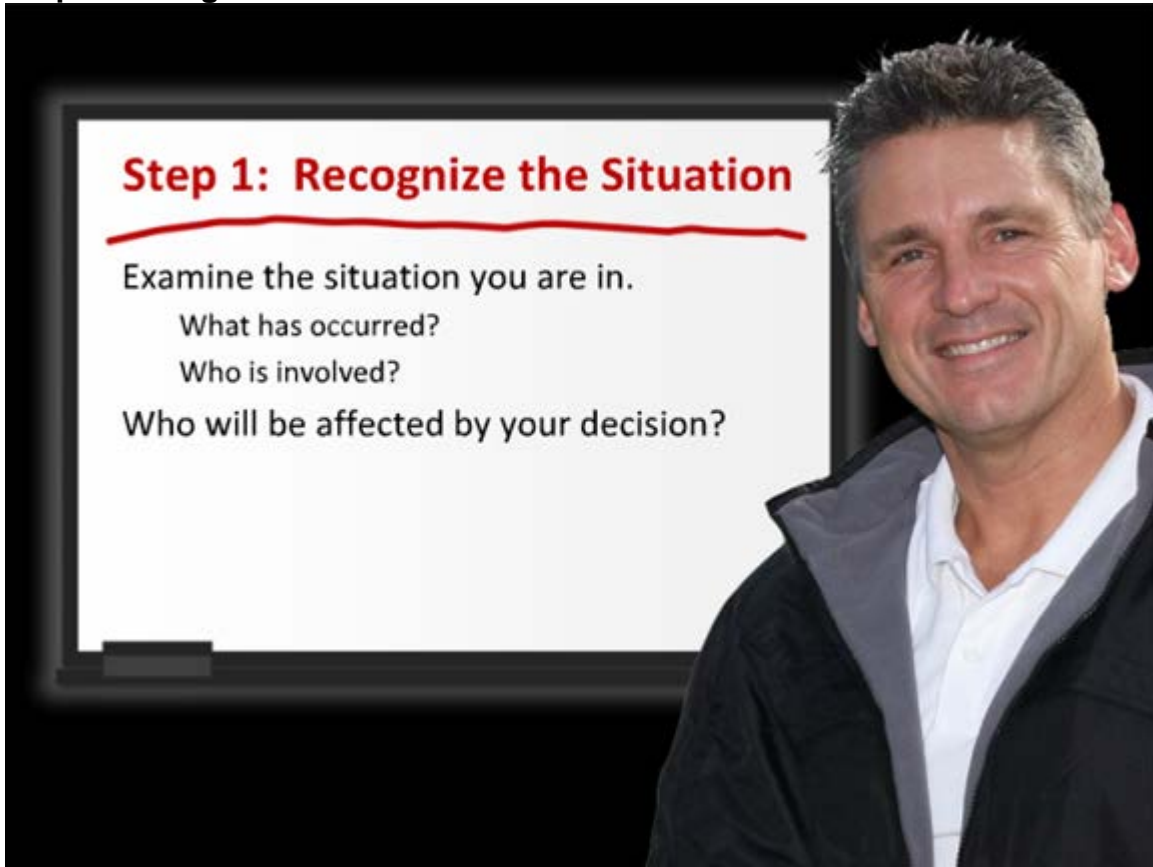


A decision-making model is a six-step process to guide you through making a decision. When followed closely and practiced regularly, you will be empowered with the ability to make careful, calculated decisions.

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Step 1: Recognize the Situation



In the first step, mentally examine your situation. What has occurred? Who is involved? Who will be affected by your decision?

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Step 2: Brainstorm All Possible Options

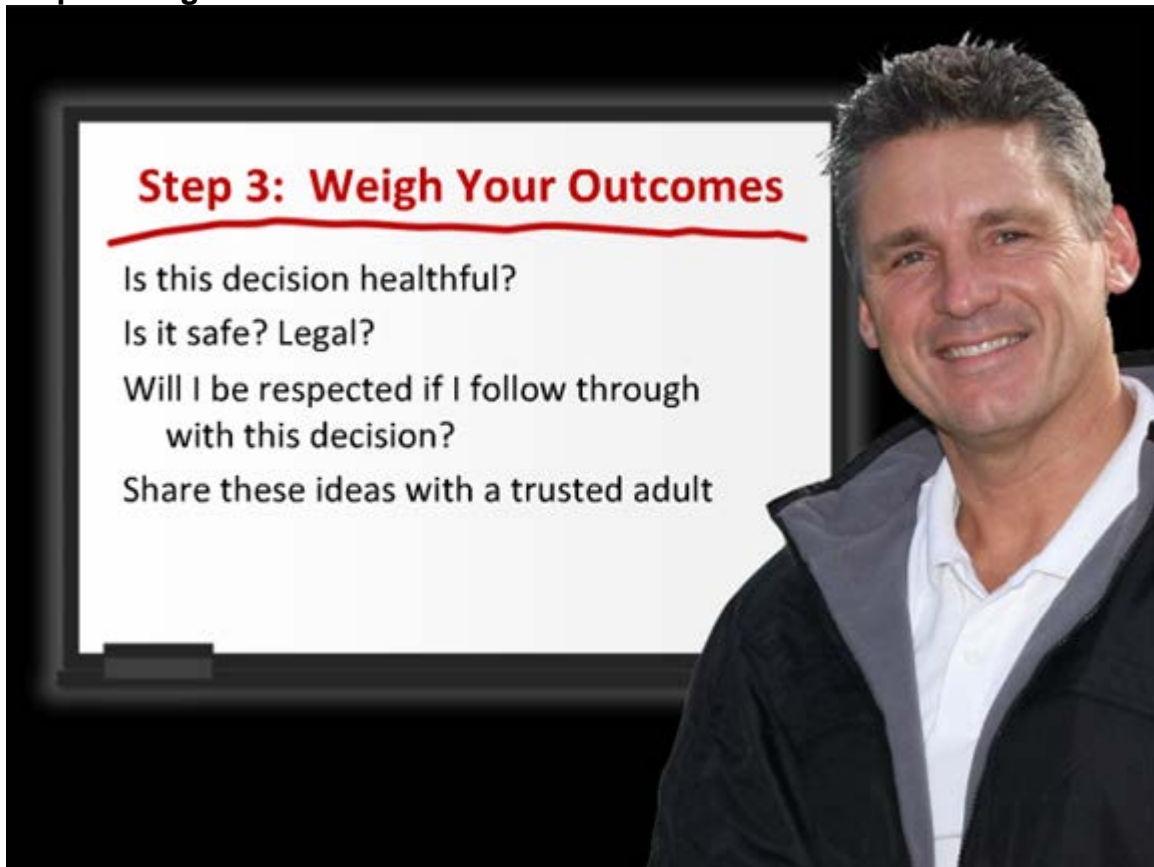


For step two, brainstorm all possible options. Write down all the viable options, which means options that are practical or possible. It might be helpful to format these options into a list. One of your options will always be to do nothing, so make sure to include that.

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Step 3: Weigh Your Outcomes



Once you have listed all possible options, then as part of step three, write the consequences that go along with your options. What are the effects of your decision-making? You may even choose to share your list with a trusted adult. That adult may be able to help you sort through your options and give you support in making your decision.

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Step 3: Weigh Your Outcomes Chart


Step 3: Weigh Your Outcomes
CHART

Options	Positive Outcome	Negative Outcome
Do nothing...	✓ No stress; problem goes away for now	✗ You do not get what you want ✗ Additional problems evolve

This is a chart I have started for you as an example. Notice I included “Do nothing...” and wrote both positive and negative outcomes for that option.

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Step 4: Which Option Is Most Appropriate?



Step 4: Which Option Is Most Appropriate?

Consider your core values.

Will my family be happy with my choice?

Will the community like my choice?

How will I feel after my actions?
In a week? In a month?

Now, in step four, look over the list and reread everything you have laid out. Answer the questions: Which option is most appropriate? Will this choice go along with my core values? Will my family be happy with my choice? Will the community like my choice? How will I feel after my actions, now, in a week, or in a month?

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Step 5: Take Action

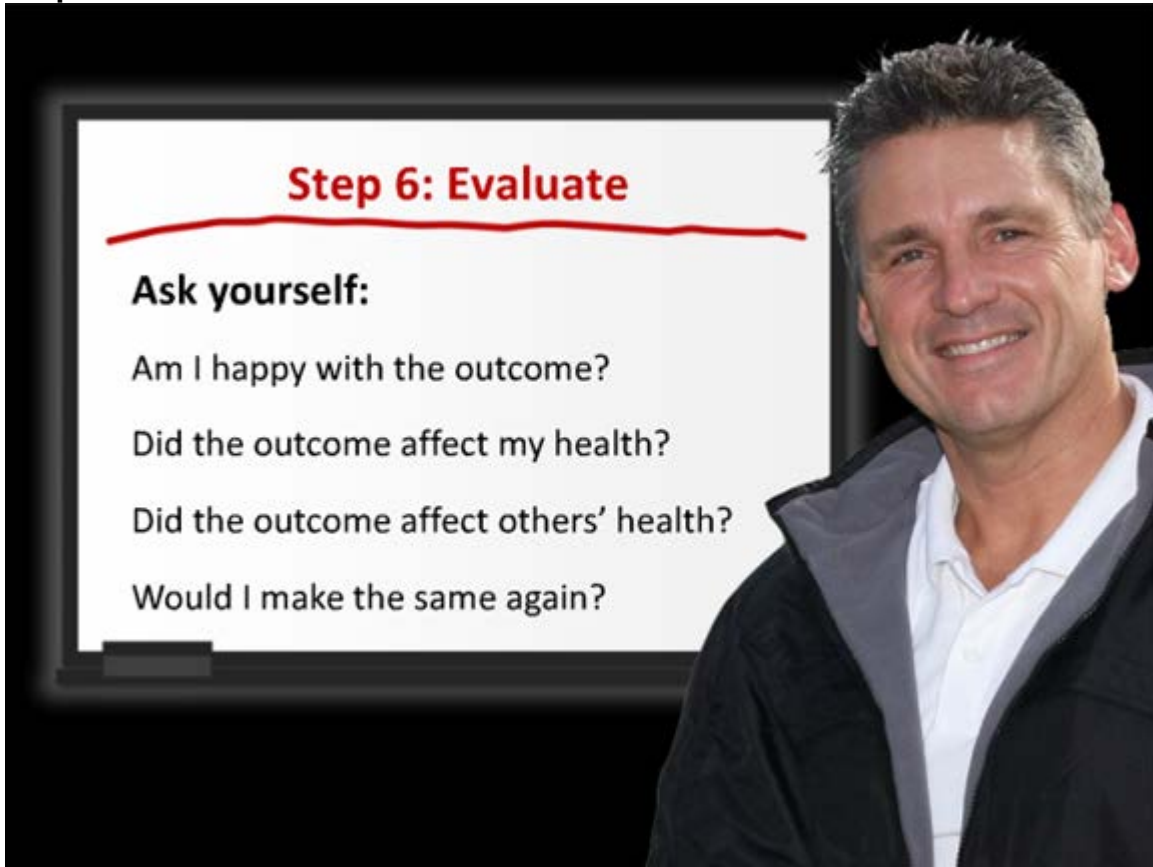


Now, it is time to take action in step five. Once you have made the decision, take action. Be satisfied with your choice and comfortable with the consequences it brings

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Step 6: Evaluate



Step 6: Evaluate

Ask yourself:

- Am I happy with the outcome?
- Did the outcome affect my health?
- Did the outcome affect others' health?
- Would I make the same again?

When all is said and done, evaluate your outcome, status, and future. Do not dwell on the results, just make notes as to whether you would make changes in the future when a decision must be made again.

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Practicing Your Decision-Making Skills



Taking the time to practice your decision-making skills will condition you to use the six-step process. Now, watch Amanda use the decision-making model to solve her own problem.

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Amanda's Problem

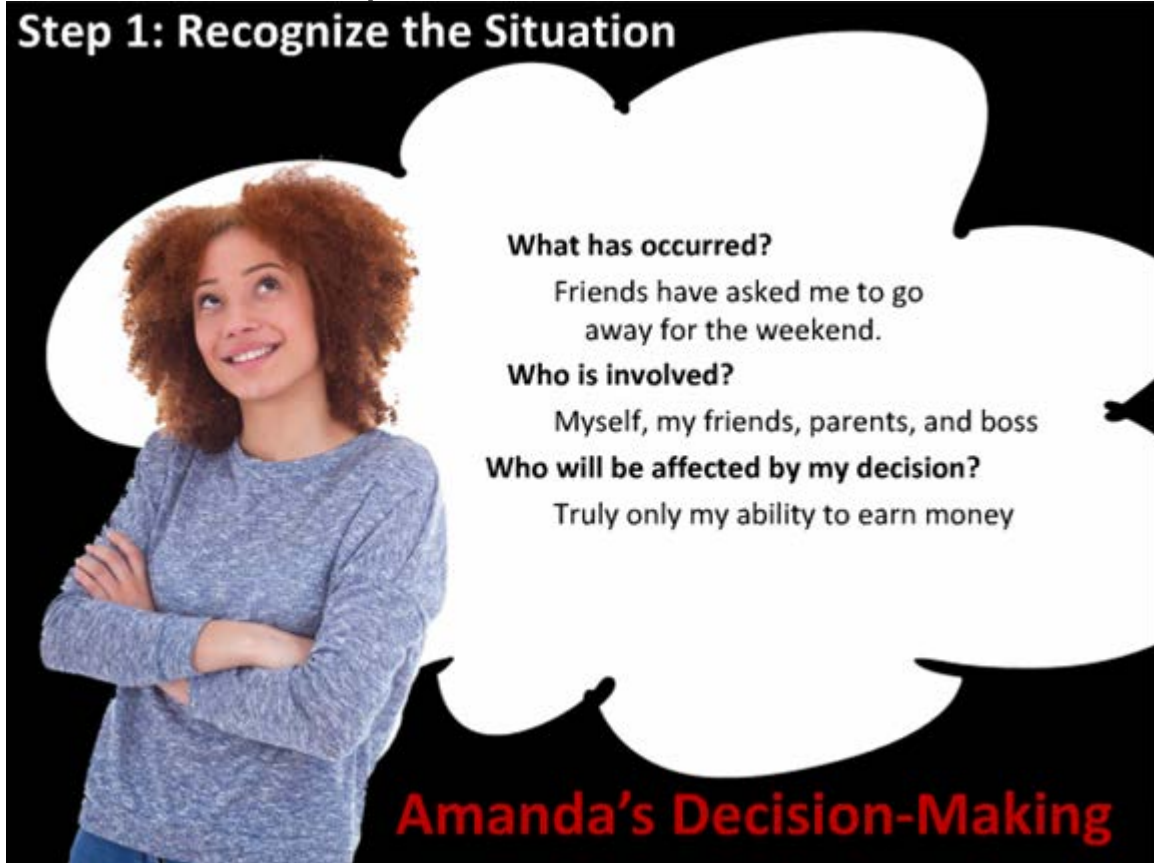


Here is Amanda's problem: She has a job working at an automobile garage after school three days a week and on weekends. She is saving money to buy a car when she graduates. On a Monday in late May, her friends are planning a trip to the shore and asked her to go with them for the upcoming weekend. Accepting their invitation would mean she has to take off three days from work. That is a lot of money lost, but it would be nice to take a break from work and spend time with friends.

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Amanda's Problem: Step 1

Step 1: Recognize the Situation



What has occurred?
Friends have asked me to go away for the weekend.

Who is involved?
Myself, my friends, parents, and boss

Who will be affected by my decision?
Truly only my ability to earn money

Amanda's Decision-Making

Amanda has a big dilemma - but it is no problem because she has practiced the decision-making model. Step one, Amanda recognizes the situation. What has occurred? Some friends have asked Amanda to go away for the weekend. Who is involved? She is involved, along with her friends, her parents, and her boss. Who will be affected by her decision? Amanda and her ability to earn money will be directly affected.

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Amanda's Problem: Step 2

Step 2: Brainstorm All Options
CHART

Options	Positive Outcome	Negative Outcome
Do nothing...		
Go with friends to the shore for the weekend		
Stay home and work over the weekend		
Meet friends at the shore Saturday after work		

In step two, Amanda wrote down all the possible, viable options. Do nothing is at the top of her list, just like she practiced. She also listed: Go with friends to the shore for the weekend; stay at home and work over the weekend; or meet friends at the shore Saturday after work. Can you think of any other options?

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Amanda's Problem: Step 3

Step 3: Weigh Your Outcomes
CHART

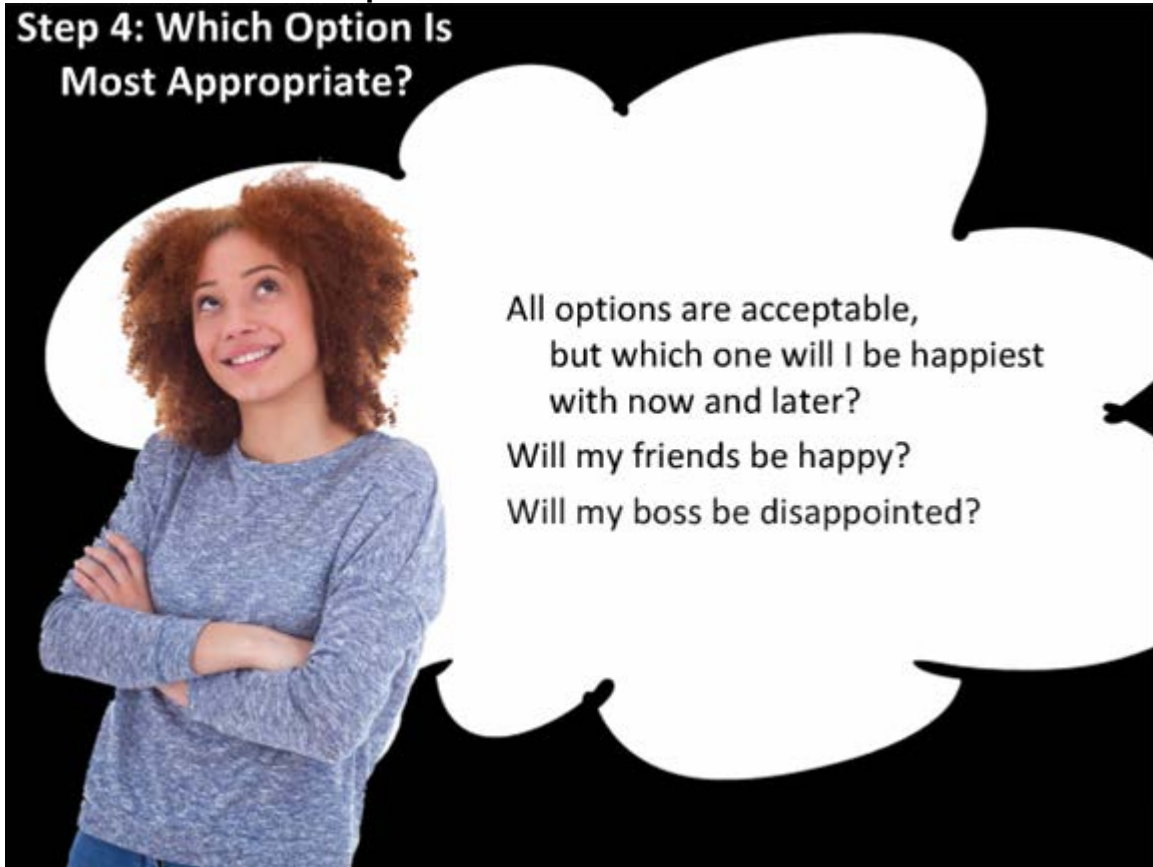
Options	Positive Outcome	Negative Outcome
Do nothing...		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✗ Friends & boss would be angry ✗ I would be bored
Go with friends to the shore for the weekend	✓ Have a wonderful time with friends and relax	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✗ Decline the potential to earn money for a car ✗ Spending money at the shore
Stay home and work over the weekend	✓ Earn money and get closer to buying a car	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✗ Not spending time with friends ✗ Being ridiculed
Meet friends at the shore Saturday after work	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Able to work two days ✓ Able to go to the shore 	✗ Driving to the shore by myself

Amanda then moved onto step three and weighed her outcomes. I cannot think of anything positive that can come of doing nothing that weekend. Neither can Amanda, as you can see in her chart, but the negative outcomes would be awful -- her boss would be angry because she did not work, her friends would be angry because she did not go with them, and Amanda would be bored doing nothing. If she went with her friends, she would have a wonderful time, but she would not be earning money and she would probably be spending money. If Amanda stayed home all weekend, she would be that much closer to buying a car, but she would not get to spend time with her friends, and they probably would ridicule her for not coming. The last option would be to meet up with her friends after work on Saturday. She would have two days of work and only have to take one day off, and she could go to the shore with her friends. The only bummer is that she would need to drive to the shore by herself.

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Amanda's Problem: Step 4

**Step 4: Which Option Is
Most Appropriate?**



All options are acceptable,
but which one will I be happiest
with now and later?

Will my friends be happy?

Will my boss be disappointed?

Now that all the brainstorming and weighing are over, Amanda needs to make a choice, which is part of step four. To help her make a choice, she asks herself the following questions: Which option is most appropriate? Which option will she be happiest with now and later? Will her friends be happy? Will her boss be disappointed?

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Amanda's Problem: Step 5

Step 5: Take Action



Meet friends at the shore Saturday after work

- Has the fewest negative outcomes
- Will make myself happy
- Friends and boss will be happy


In step five of the decision-making model, Amanda chooses the last option -- meeting her friends at the shore on Saturday. This option has the fewest negative outcomes, it will definitely make her happy, and it will make sure that no one else is unhappy or inconvenienced.

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Amanda's Problem: Step 6

Step 6: Evaluate



Am I happy with the outcome? "Yes. I was able to earn money and spend time with friends."

Did the outcome affect my health? "No. I did not stress over my decision."

Did the outcome affect others' health? "No. My friends were happy, and glad I was able to join them."

After the weekend, Amanda evaluates her situation. She asks herself if she was happy with the outcome. It turns out, she was happy because she was able to earn money and spend time with friends.

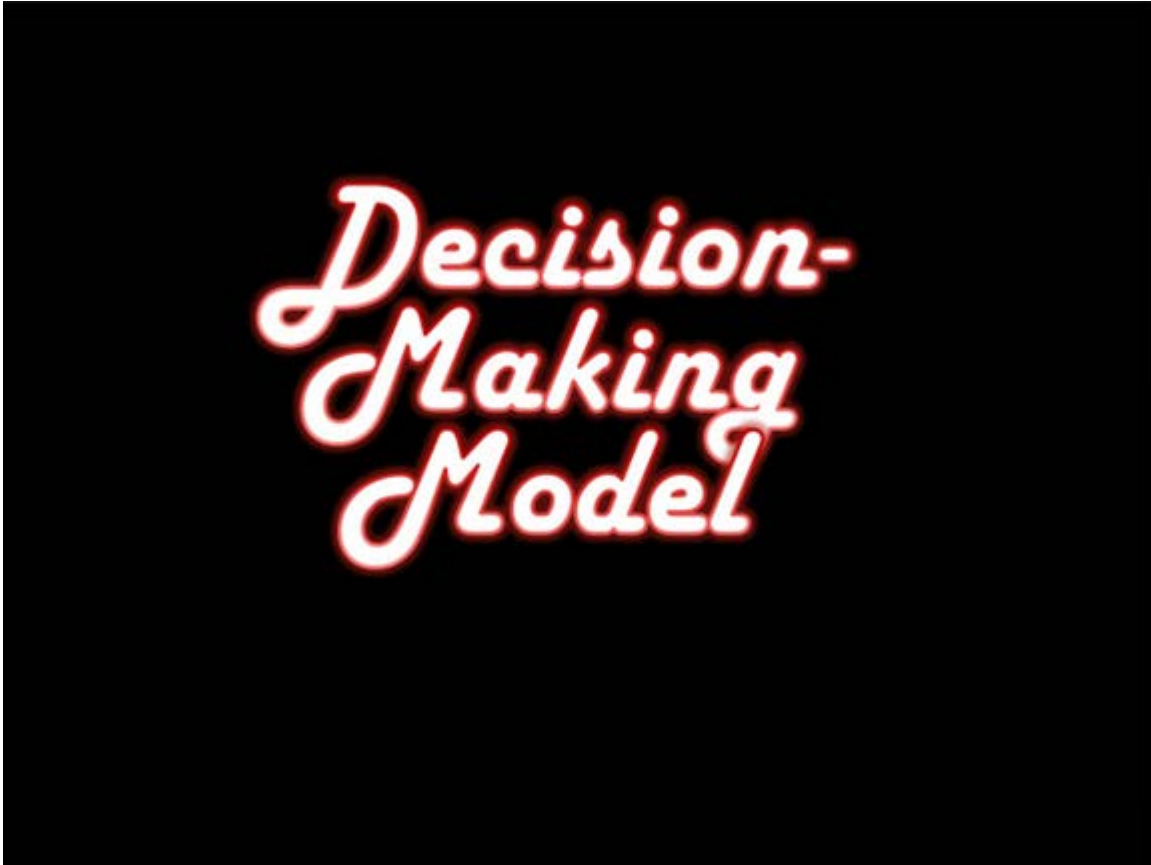
Did the outcome affect Amanda's health? No, because she did not have to stress over her decision.

Did the outcome affect others' health? No, because her boss was satisfied, her friends were happy, and Amanda was glad she could join them.

Would she make the same choice in the future? Yes, Amanda would make the same choice because sometimes it is good to split your time between work and play.

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Conclusion



Now, you see how you can keep your decision-making engine rolling along with the decision-making model.